

KNOWLES, MALCOLM

Malcolm Knowles (1913–1997) was born, lived, and worked in the United States his entire life as a pioneer in the field of adult education. He became known by some as the “father” of the important concept of andragogy, which makes a distinction between the principles for educating children and those for the learning of adults.

Knowles freely acknowledged his debt in early life and learning to both his parents, his schooling, and the Boy Scout movement (1989). He gained a scholarship to Harvard University and was influenced while there by Alfred North Whitehead. On leaving Harvard, he by chance fell into a role with the National Youth Administration, developing skills-based courses for young people entering industrial jobs. It was here he met and became a devoted follower of Eduard Lindeman, author of *The Meaning of Adult Education* (1926).

In the 1940s, between war service, Knowles cut his adult educator teeth in the YMCA movement, first in Boston and then Chicago, and at the same time studied for a master’s degree at the University of Chicago. He published his master’s thesis as *Informal Adult Education* in 1950. In 1951, Knowles became the executive director of the Adult Education Association of the USA, which offered him an opportunity to oversee the development of the field and to chart its progress while studying for a PhD, also at Chicago.

At the end of the 1950s, Knowles became an associate professor at Boston University. He labored there for the next 14 years, where he produced his most important books: *The Modern Practice of Adult Education* (1970) and *The Adult Learner* (1973). These texts brought him to prominence in the adult education field in the United States and put the notion of andragogy squarely on the map. In 1974 he moved to the faculty of the North Carolina State University, where he completed his formal academic career, although he continued to be active as professor emeritus after retiring in 1979.

Knowles’s six key “andragogical” assumptions have become widely accepted and almost axiomatic among adult educators, including Christian facilitators of adult learning:

1. Mature adults are self-directed human beings.
2. Adults have a rich reservoir of experience, which is a resource for learning.
3. Adults’ openness to learning is related to the ways in which they need to develop in their life roles.
4. Adults look for immediate applications of their learning and so become more problem centered than subject centered.

5. An adult’s willingness to learn comes from within rather than from external sources.
6. Adults have a desire to know why they need to learn—or to sum up numbers 5 and 6, perhaps a little too crudely: adults only learn when they want to.

Knowles’s andragogical theory has proved both wide reaching and controversial and is therefore subject to several criticisms. Some question whether it is a comprehensive theory of learning at all, since it appears as a set of assumptions or even “shoulds” about human beings. Knowles himself blurred the distinction between andragogy and pedagogy as he developed his thinking, and the principles take very little account of the social, historical, and cultural context of the learner and seem to be highly individualistic. Nevertheless Knowles’s ideas have endured and continue to influence adult education practice long after his death.

References and Resources

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—NIGEL ROOMS

KNOX, JOHN

John Knox (c. 1505/1515–1572) was a Scottish theologian and pastor who is generally recognized as the leader of the Reformation in Scotland and one of the founders of Presbyterianism.

Early Career and Education

Little is known about John Knox's early life. He was probably born at Haddington, Scotland. Knox was educated at either Glasgow or St. Andrews University and ordained as a priest in 1536. He came to adopt Reformist views that put him at odds with the government of the Scottish regent, Mary of Guise. One of his mentors, Charles Wishart, was burned at the stake by Cardinal Beaton in 1546. When Beaton himself was murdered two years later, Knox was accused of taking part in the plot. Knox retreated to the fortress at St. Andrews, where he tutored the sons of Protestant noblemen and served as chaplain for the Protestant garrison. When the fortress fell to the French at the end of July 1567, Knox was imprisoned aboard a French galley for the next 19 months. He survived despite deplorable conditions and was released, seeking refuge in England in 1549. Knox ministered in England until the restoration of Catholicism under Mary I (r. 1553–1558) forced him to seek asylum on the continent in 1554. It was during this period that Knox traveled to Geneva to pursue theological studies with John Calvin and Theodore Beza. This period strengthened Knox's already passionate commitment to Reformed theology.

Significant Contributions

Knox spent the years 1554–1559 studying at Geneva, pastoring a church at Frankfurt, and briefly returning to Scotland to be examined by the Queen Regent's tribunal. The hearing was canceled, and Knox used the time to preach in Scotland before returning to Geneva. He produced a work entitled *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* in 1558. This pamphlet was a direct attack on female Catholic rulers such as Mary I of England, Regent Mary of Guise of Scotland, and her daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, in France. Unfortunately for Knox, his screed against the "unnatural" rule of women was published on the eve of Mary Tudor's death and the ascension of her sister Elizabeth to the throne. Despite Elizabeth's Protestant convictions, she maintained a frosty attitude toward Knox because of his attack on rule by women. Her hostility extended the length of Knox's journey when he returned to Scotland in 1559, because he was not able to travel through England.

The Scotland that Knox returned to was primed for change. He joined the Scottish Covenanters in rebelling against the regency of Mary of Guise. Mary's death in 1560 led to the end of hostilities and an opportunity for Protestants to shape the religious future of Scotland. The ascendancy of Mary Queen of Scots presented barriers to their ambitions; in 1561 she decreed that she would continue to maintain the old order. Knox clashed with Mary face to face in several personal audiences, one of which, in 1563, left Mary weeping in frustration. As Mary's reign

deteriorated over the course of the decade, Knox openly opposed her. He preached against her marriage to Lord Darnly in 1565, preached at the coronation of her son James in her stead in 1567, and called for her execution in 1568. Mary survived in spite of the efforts of Knox, who labored hard to see her executed. Knox continued to minister in Edinburgh, with the exception of a brief exile to St. Andrews in 1571, until his death in 1572.

Knox is primarily remembered for his leadership of the Scottish Reformation and his chronicle of that movement, *The History of the Reformation in Scotland*. His sermons and letters also helped define the Reformed theory of republicanism and civil disobedience. The ecclesiastical influence of John Knox continues through the numerous expressions of Presbyterianism that survive.

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—SCOTT CULPEPPER

KOHLBERG, LAWRENCE

Early Background and Education

Lawrence Kohlberg (1927–1987) was born in Bronxville, New York, into the family of a wealthy businessman. Although he received his early education from exclusive preparatory schools in New York, Kohlberg was more interested in seeing the world than in academics and joined the Merchant Marines after high school. Having become involved in the Zionist movement, he later joined the crew of a ship that was involved in smuggling Jewish refugees into Palestine after World War II. He would later state that his interest in moral development and morality in general began during the Nazi era, when he was still in boarding school.

In 1948, Kohlberg enrolled at the University of Chicago; because of high test scores, he completed his bachelor's degree in just one year. He continued at the university as a PhD student in psychology, where he was heavily influenced by Jean Piaget's theories on cognitive and moral development. He completed his degree in 1958, and his dissertation provided the basic outline of what became his theory of moral development. Kohlberg taught briefly at Yale University (1956–1961) and then at