Ms. Jarrod: Please get in your seats everyone so that we can begin the meeting on time. If we don’t start on time, I will have to keep everyone until we are finished and you know some people will not be happy about that. And could we all settle down and not make so much noise? Did someone see Mr. Peres outside? Could you ask him to come in and find his group? I can’t believe that I have to start each meeting this way, people. Come on now. We have a lot of work to do to get prepared for the upcoming open house and we have to talk about the new state testing requirements. Could someone close the door? If anyone is still outside they will just have to stay there until we take our 10-minute break. I can’t wait any longer to start.

Ms. Parks: I don’t know why she treats us this way. Every time we have these meetings I feel like I am one of my own students, not an educator with 20 years of teaching experience. I thought when we got rid of Mr. Crandall we would be treated with a little more respect, but Mrs. Jarrod treats us like 6-year-olds.

Mr. Dans: I think she’s actually worse. She can’t get over that “herding” mentality and she is so condescending. I thought she taught high school, not elementary school. What do you think this “group” thing is all about?

Ms. Parks: I heard that we are going to be divided into some kind of “study teams” that will have teachers from each department. What we are going to be expected to do, I don’t have a clue. It should be interesting.

Ms. Jarrod: Okay, everyone, I have given a list of the groups to all department heads and they will tell you which group you will be in and what items you will be review-
ing for today’s meeting. We will break up into groups now and come back together in one hour for each group’s report. “Okay, are there any questions? Mr. Baines?

Mr. Baines: Ms. Jarrod, what exactly are we going to be looking at in these groups?

Ms. Jarrod: Don’t worry—your group leader will let you know. Now please, get into those groups!

Mr. Baines: You asked if we had questions. Why can’t you at least give us an overview of what this new program is all about?

Ms. Jarrod: I don’t want to take the time to go over what your group leader will go over with you. Now get into groups.

In this situation, the principal, Ms. Jarrod, has established several points that are contradictory to adult learning theory. After reading this chapter you will see the “Exchange” section at the end with several reflection questions to consider.

As schools move away from a “top-down” model of learning and move into one of “community of learners” (Sergiovanni, 2000; Lent, 2007), the literacy leadership team will play a vital role in bridging the divide between the administration and faculty, the faculty and parents, and the faculty and students. Along with a knowledgeable literacy coach, these literacy leadership teams will be the conduit that will allow for sustainable positive change or forward shifts in learning and instruction. Because adult learners differ from their younger counterparts in a number of ways, we need to examine just what these differences are. Literacy leadership teams need to understand the different dynamics that make up the adult learner so that there is a seamless transition from individual to group learning.

**Andragogy**

In essence, *andragogy* is the art and science of learning and instruction with adults. We are all different and we have different reasons for learning. As adults, we don’t need the same learning experiences from our “teachers” as younger learners. We don’t need the constant attention to facts and details that our younger counterparts might. We bring years of
life experiences to bear on the learning environment and we can pick and choose when we want to engage in intentional learning.

Based on the seminal work of John Dewey, Eduard C. Lindeman (1961) was a driving force in developing a theory for adult learning. He did not differentiate between the adult learner and the “child” learner; rather, he saw it as those in adult learning environments versus those in “conventional” ones. He stated:

Authoritative teaching, examination which precludes original thinking, rigid pedagogical formulae—all these have no place in adult education. . . . Small groups of aspiring adults who desire to keep their minds fresh and vigorous, who begin to learn by confronting pertinent situations, who dig down into the reservoirs of their experience before resorting to texts and secondary facts, who are led in the discussion by teachers who are also searchers after wisdom and not oracles: this constitutes the setting for adult education, the modern quest for life’s meaning.

Linderman (1961) went on to say that he saw adult education as a “new technique for learning,” one in which the learner can examine his or her life’s experiences and evaluate them. He concluded by saying, “My conception of adult education is this: a cooperative venture in non-authoritarian, informal learning, the chief purpose of which is to discover the meaning of experience.” Lindeman assumed five things about the adult learner: (1) they are motivated to learn because they want to explore the needs and interests that only learning can satisfy, (2) learning has a life-centered orientation, (3) experience is the foundation for all learning, (4) learning as an adult should be self-directed, and (5) our differences only increase as we get older.

Building on Lindeman’s fundamental premise, Malcolm Knowles, the “father” of adult learning theory, refined the term andragogy. When he first used the term, he meant it to mean a way of assisting adult learners in making appropriate choices for furthering their education. Initially, he believed that andragogy was the opposite end of the continuum from pedagogy (Knowles, 1978). He later realized that pedagogy and andragogy were points along a similar continuum, with six underlying principles that govern the adult learner: (1) a need to “know,” (2) the learner’s view of herself or himself, (3) prior background knowledge of the learner, (4) how ready the learner is, (5) an orientation to learning, and (6) motivation to learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005).

What we as learners need to know is based on the “who, what, and why” of learning. We determine what content is important. We see ourselves as self-directed learners (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005), meaning that we can determine what is to be learned, how we learn, as
well as being able to distinguish between learning that is relevant, meaningful, and rich and that which is superficial and limited. Adult learners rely on a wealth of experiences and have a broad schema for individual tasks. We can relate the learning environment to our personal environment. Our learning mirrors our lives. Learning for us is based on a need to solve problems and is reliant on the context of the material to be learned. There has to be an intrinsic motivation to learn and we must see some advantage to having engaged in the process (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). The theory of andragogy revolves around the notion that as learners, we are individuals and our learning is purpose driven.

Andragogy is a way of learning that promotes freedom of thinking. There are no clear lines between the teacher and the learner. The student is a peer as well as a learner. Andragogy promotes a form of learning that is both voluntary and based on using prior knowledge to gain new knowledge.

Understanding what adults need to be successful learners helps the literacy coach working with the literacy leadership team in a number of ways: She or he is better able to plan appropriate agendas, to provide appropriate support, and to become a lead learner herself or himself.

**How Andragogy Differs from Pedagogy**

By contrast, the environment in which a young learner works from a pedagogical stance is characterized mostly by the transmission model of learning and instruction. The classroom for the young learner is highly structured and the curriculum content is produced and directed by the teacher. Lessons and assessment are the purview of the teacher, not the learner.

The word *pedagogy* itself comes from the Greek word *paid*, which means “child” and from *agogus*, which means “the leader of.” One definition says that pedagogy is the art and science of learning and instruction with children. A pedagogical model is one that places the responsibility of learning with the school and/or teacher.

Historically, a pedagogical model promotes “group thinking” and education that has been described as “one size fits all.” In most cases, rote learning is the approach, whereas with adult learners, active, participatory learning is encouraged. The learner depends on the teacher to dispense the information and there are clearly defined roles for the teacher and the learner.

A pedagogical model is one that assumes that the learner needs to learn only what the curriculum content asks the teacher to teach and does not assume that the learner needs to apply the information to his or her own life. Learning is *outside* of the learner. An andragogical model assumes that the learner has input into the curriculum content to be
learned and that it is very important what impact the learning will have on her or his life.

Although learners in a pedagogical model are considered a part of the process of learning, they are living through the experiences the teacher, the text, and the curriculum content has organized for them. A pedagogical model relies on the transmission of information to the learner; thus, lectures, assigned work, and prepared texts in other media are the foundations that support the model.

Finally, the young learner is motivated by extrinsic forces such as grades, parental approval, and in some cases even food. This is markedly different from the adult learner who is motivated by intrinsic factors such as self-satisfaction, self-approval or job satisfaction—although they are also motivated by some external factors such as monetary increases and job promotions. Table 1.1 summarizes some differences in the two groups.

### Models of Adult Learning

We have addressed that adult learners are self-directed and learn by using their personal experiences. Andragogy is one model of adult learning, but there are others that can help clarify, support, and expand our understandings of working with colleagues. We will briefly review five theoreti-

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**TABLE 1.1**

**How Adult Learners Differ from Young Learners**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children</th>
<th>Adults</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Need supervised practice</td>
<td>No need for direct supervision—learners are self-directed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need repetitive practice</td>
<td>Limited need for repetitive practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning how to learn</td>
<td>Learning for change/growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation comes from external stimuli</td>
<td>Motivation is from internal stimuli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher helps children build and enlarge previously developed schema</td>
<td>Adults have enough schema to move forward to acquire new knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher helps children tap into prior knowledge to acquire new knowledge</td>
<td>Adults are self-motivated and can use prior knowledge to build new knowledge</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cross’s CAL Model

Cross’s model characteristics of adults as learners (CAL) focuses not only on what adults need to learn but also how they learn. She believes that adult learners are characterized by either personal characteristics or situational characteristics. Personal characteristics would be those that have to do with our physical, psychological, and sociocultural conditions. They would include such things as getting older, going through developmental stages, and moving from our parents’ home to our own home. Situational characteristics are those that are completely separate from the personal and constitute our ability to choose to learn as opposed to “having” to learn and our ability to decide how much learning we are going to attend to at any given time (Cross, 1981). Unlike children, adults can make choices about where to live and where to go to school.

McClusky’s Theory of Margin

In a 1963 publication McCluskey discussed this theory of adult learners as those who can balance the internal and external factors that are given to them. We seek this balance between the “energy needed and the amount available,” and this is seen as life’s “load.” In addition, we have personal “power” that gives us the ability to deal with the load. What energy we have left is thought of as the “margin in life.”

For us to engage in a process of learning, we must have some “margin of power” (McCluskey, 1970). We need to be able to handle a variety of situations and responsibilities—often simultaneously. This ability to change and adapt to different life events distinguishes us from younger learners.

Knox’s Proficiency Theory

As adults, we are motivated to learn by different stimuli. Often these motivations, as stated earlier, are intrinsic. There is some expectation that as adults, we will be highly capable to engage in a number of roles. This...
capability Knox thought of as “proficiency” to achieve. Knox believes that we are able to perform “satisfactorily” if we are given the opportunity (Knox, 1980). Key elements of this model are performance, aspiration, self, general and specific environments, discrepancies, learning activity, and the teacher’s role (Merriam & Cafferella, 1999). This theory of learning is based on the learner’s motivation to learn, and it assumes that he or she will be able to learn at a proficient level.

**Jarvis’s Learning Process**

As teachers, we know that children need to be able to assemble a schematic working system to be able to learn. Experiences are crucial for newer and broader schema to be created. We know that when students lack these experiences, academic learning is difficult or impossible. Jarvis (1987) believes that all learning is based on experiences. This learning occurs in a social situation and can take any of nine different pathways, three of which do not lead to learning (presumption, non-consideration and rejection) and six of which do (preconscious, practice, memorization, contemplation, reflective practice, and experimental). Merriam and Cafferella (1999) see these as a hierarchy of learning: The first three are nonlearning platforms, the second three are nonreflective learning platforms, and the final three are self-reflective platforms. The last are also higher levels of learning (Jarvis, 1987).

**Lave’s Theory of Situational Learning**

Unlike the kinds of learning we do in the classroom, ones that require learning out of “context,” Lave (1988) suggests that there are learning activities that can be “situational.” This type of learning is based on a community setting, and occurs in a social environment. Situational learning is characterized by collaborative social interaction and requires that information be presented in a relevant context. This applies to adult learners because they are more likely to have realistic problems that need to be resolved. Adult learners are expected to be critically reflective and to question their assumptions about answers to these problems (Stein, 1998). Although we don’t see this as strictly the purview of the adult classroom and we do encourage the community of learning philosophy, we think that adult learners are more inclined to take on these types of learning experiences without direction from a teacher.

Young (1993) believes that there are four distinct components that should be included in this type of learning: situations that promote realistic, problem-centered and complex activities; situations where teach-
ers must scaffold the learners; situations where teachers must be seen as learning facilitators, not transmitters of information; and an ongoing assessment to determine how the learner and the learning community are progressing (Stein, 1998).

Although each theory supports and overlaps, it is under this situational learning orientation that we see the literacy leadership teams functioning to support forward shifts in learning and instruction. Members of the literacy leadership team will engage in realistic solution seeking—searching for answers that are centered on the strengths and needs of the school. Members will develop new knowledge based on their experiences in the school environment and their relationship with members of the total learning environment.

Who Is an Adult Learner?

When does a pedagogical model of learning become less effective and an andragogical model more effective? Who is considered the “adult” learner? According to Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (2005), there are several things to be considered: the biological, the psychological, the social, and the legal aspects.

The biological features to be considered are physical maturation, whereas the legal age of adulthood is determined legislatively. Socially, we are considered adults when we begin to work outside of the home or take on adult roles such as parent and spouse. Psychological adulthood happens when we develop a sense of self and we take responsibility for our own lives. As learners, it is this last one that has the most meaning.

In truth, however, becoming an adult does not happen linearly but rather by stages. People may take on some features of adulthood when they are in their early teens but still maintain a “pedagogical” stance with regard to schooling. Most people, however, will become adults when they take on the responsibility of living on their own and creating their own families.

Summary

In this chapter, we briefly reviewed the differences between young learners and adult learners and what theorists think is involved for adult learners to be successful. The concept of andragogy is a vital foundation to support literacy leadership teams over time in working with their colleagues at school. This information is important for literacy leadership teams because when teams are successful and productive, they recognize that adults have significantly different learning orientations than young
learners. Adults are motivated by different life events that occur at both the social as well as biological levels.

In Chapter 2, we will examine the conditions for learning that should be in place at the school to support professional learning and in the classroom to promote student learning. Based on the work of Brian Cambourne’s *conditions of learning* (1988), we will discuss and illustrate how these conditions can scaffold and encourage forward shifts in learning and instruction.

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**LIBRETTO**

As the middle school literacy coach, Eva has been asked to put together a literacy leadership team to study the needs of the school. She has determined, through various conversations with faculty members, that faculty sees the school’s needs very differently. Additionally, she notices that many faculty members don’t want to be involved in resolving any of the issues the principal sees as significant. Because her charge from the principal is narrowly defined and quite specific, Eva knows that she is faced with a daunting challenge. She needs to include faculty members that aren’t on the same page with her or the principal. She decides that she will focus her efforts on getting this group to join the team first.

Eva identifies three teachers who have been particularly hard to approach—one language arts, one social studies, and one science teacher—and she makes an appointment to talk with them. When they get together after school the following week, this is what transpires.

“Hi everyone, Ea begins, “I’m so glad that you agreed to talk with me. I really need some help with this problem the principal has given me to solve. We have been asked to form a literacy leadership team and address the needs of the school. I know that we all have different opinions about this, so I wanted to get your input and try to determine which are the most crucial issues. Then we can prioritize them and when we meet with all the other team members we will have a good first start.”

Each teacher gives his or her opinion. Mrs. Jones says that she needs more help with her struggling readers and her English language learners. Mr. Gaines replies that as the social studies teacher, he needs more appropriate materials, and Mr. Franks only wants his class to run more smoothly.

Eva asks Mr. Gaines and Mr. Franks why they need these things. They pause for a minute and then Mr. Franks says, “It’s the kids in my classroom. They aren’t motivated, they don’t listen, and they can’t pay attention for five minutes at a time.”

Eva responds, “Why is that do you think?”
“Because, they have low reading scores, and the materials are too difficult,” he replies.
“That’s exactly right,” says Mr. Gaines, “that’s what’s wrong in my classroom too.”
“So, I guess all three of you really are talking about the same situation. You all need help with students who are struggling readers, whether they are first or second language learners.” They all nod in agreement.
“So, do you think if we form this team that we can find a way to address this concern that you all seem to share?” Eva tells the three teachers that she thinks they will be able to study issues and find information that they can use to make these critical changes in their classrooms. They agree to join the team, and Eva tells them that she will be in touch with them soon about the time and place for the first meeting.

**Reflections**

1. What instructional practices from adult learning theory did Eva use to help motivate these adult learners to join her cause?

2. How can she use these instructional practices to further the understanding of the entire team?

3. What concepts of situational learning did she utilize and why was this effective?

**Exchange**

You have read at the beginning of this chapter the scenario about the faculty meeting and you probably have suggestions for exchanging the negative atmosphere for a positive one. What did you find in the chapter that helps you better understand adult learners that could have made the faculty meeting more productive for all the members? What could Ms. Jarrod have done to create a feeling that the faculty was valued as individuals? If you were the literacy coach responsible for setting up the literacy leadership team, what would you say to the principal before the meeting so that this situation does not occur?