INTRODUCTION TO ADULT LEARNING THEORY

Bringing Education & Service Together
Adult Learning Theory

Concept:

Adult learners (and probably any other learners) learn best through **interactive, learner-centered** teaching focused on their **self-defined learning goals**.

1970s: Behavioral Learning Theories

- Learning defined as a change in observable behavior
- Behavioral learning objectives
- Student ratings of teachers became more popular.
1980s: Cognitive Learning Theories

- Learning defined as the active construction of meaning
- Teaching strategies focus on helping learners “encode” new knowledge within existing conceptual frameworks.
1990s: Social Learning Theories

- Learning defined as socialization into a new community of knowledge
- Teachers seek to promote a “learning culture” among students.
- Role modeling becomes particularly important in professional training.
21st Century: New Learning Theories?

Resident teachers and medical faculty can combine and expand learning theories from past decades to create new approaches to teaching and learning.