

Voices of Graduate Learners: Unveiling Effective Andragogical Teaching Practices in a State University

Marife N. Daga¹

¹ Associate Professor, Leyte Normal University, Tacloban City 6500, Philippines. Email: marifen.daga@lnu.edu.ph

Corresponding Author:

Marife N. Daga^{1*} (Email: marifen.daga@lnu.edu.ph)

Abstract: This study explored graduate learners' perceptions of effective andragogical teaching practices in a state university in Eastern Visayas. Grounded in Knowles' theory of andragogy, the study examined instructional approaches that support adult learners' academic engagement, professional growth, and meaningful learning experiences. A qualitative single-case study design was employed involving 18 Doctor of Education students majoring in Educational Administration enrolled during Academic Year 2025–2026. Participants were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through written feedback, semi-structured interviews, and focus group discussions and were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis framework. Findings revealed six major themes that characterize perceived effective andragogical teaching practices: (1) the use of inclusive and contextualized learning materials, (2) preference for face-to-face and interactive learning environments, (3) scaffolded instruction and reinforcement of foundational knowledge, (4) experiential and collaborative learning approaches, (5) reduction of excessive reporting activities, and (6) positive perceptions of professors' competence and instructional strategies. A seventh theme highlighted graduate learners' perceptions of how these practices contributed to their professional and academic development through problem-centered and professionally relevant learning experiences. The findings underscore the importance of learner-centered, experience-based, collaborative, and context-responsive instructional practices in fostering engagement, critical thinking, leadership, and reflective learning among adult learners. Drawing on the perspectives of doctoral students, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on graduate education and provides insights that may inform the enhancement of andragogical teaching practices in higher education institutions. The study highlights the value of instructional approaches that promote meaningful, relevant, and professionally connected learning experiences for adult learners

Keywords: Graduate Learners, Andragogical Teaching Practices, Adult Learning, Graduate Education, Qualitative Inquiry

INTRODUCTION

Quality teaching in higher education plays a crucial role in achieving positive student learning outcomes. However, fostering quality teaching requires higher education institutions to ensure that the education they provide continuously responds to the evolving needs and expectations of students, both in the present and in the future (Sulaiman & Abdulla, 2024). Beyond its economic benefits, graduate education contributes significantly to the development of an educated citizenry capable of promoting and safeguarding democratic ideals (Timidi & Okuro, 2024). Studies suggesting that educational problems primarily originate outside the school context may overlook the classroom as the central environment where learning takes place. According to Putra and Yanto (2025), the relationship between classroom practices and student academic performance indicates that teachers can contribute substantially to student learning, often to the same extent as the learners themselves. This highlights the critical role of instructional practices in shaping educational outcomes.

As emphasized by Khuntia and Sahoo (2025) teachers' ability to maximize instructional time, effectively manage classroom resources and learning spaces, and facilitate positive student engagement

significantly influences learning outcomes. Moreover, teachers are expected to possess a deep understanding of teaching and learning processes, curriculum implementation, and appropriate instructional strategies that support student success (Xu et al., 2025). Within the framework of andragogy, adult learners are viewed as autonomous individuals who are capable of making informed decisions regarding their learning. The theory emphasizes that instruction should build upon learners' prior experiences and existing knowledge. Consequently, professors are encouraged to employ instructional approaches such as group discussions, collaborative learning, and problem-solving activities that enable learners to draw from their personal and professional experiences in constructing new knowledge (Ningsih et al., 2025).

Adult learners tend to place considerable value on institutional quality and on learning experiences that establish meaningful connections between academic content and their professional responsibilities (Green, 2024; Bahr et al., 2025). Julhamid and Asiri (2026) observed that higher education institutions play a critical role in advancing sustainable development through curriculum, research, community engagement, and institutional leadership, underscoring the importance of educational experiences that prepare learners for broader societal contributions. Graduate education, therefore, is expected to cultivate these connections by utilizing instructional strategies that promote relevance, application, and reflective practice. Effective graduate instruction should not only facilitate knowledge acquisition but also support learners in integrating theoretical concepts with real-world professional contexts. Maintaining academic integrity remains an important component of quality graduate education because it promotes ethical scholarship, responsible knowledge production, and professional accountability among adult learners.

Contemporary research on adult learning has largely focused on secondary education settings and alternative learning environments. Existing studies frequently examine adult learners' learning styles, self-concept, readiness to learn, prior experiences, and learning needs. However, relatively few studies have explored adult learning within the context of higher education, particularly in identifying specific instructional approaches employed by professors that effectively support the learning processes of adult graduate students. This gap in the literature underscores the need for further investigation into the teaching practices that facilitate meaningful learning experiences among graduate learners.

In response to this gap, the present study explored the voices of graduate learners regarding effective andragogical teaching practices in a state university in Eastern Visayas. Specifically, the study focused on students enrolled in the Doctor of Education major in Educational Administration (EdD–EdAd) program. It sought to answer the following research questions: (1) What effective andragogical teaching practices are perceived by graduate learners? And (2) How do these teaching practices influence the professional and academic development of graduate learners? The findings of this study may provide valuable insights for faculty members, graduate program administrators, and higher education institutions in designing instructional interventions and enhancing andragogical teaching practices. Furthermore, the results may contribute to the growing body of knowledge on adult learning and graduate education by highlighting instructional approaches that support meaningful, relevant, and transformative learning experiences among adult learners.

LITERATURE

2.1 Adult Learning and Andragogical Foundations

Adult education and learning are fundamental components of the right to education and lifelong learning. According to Vaculíková and Kočvarová (2024), adult education encompasses all forms of formal, non-formal, and informal learning through which individuals recognized as adults in their respective societies develop and enhance their knowledge, skills, competencies, and capabilities for personal, professional, and social advancement. Adult learning enables individuals to participate more actively in society and the workforce while contributing to the development of their communities, organizations, and broader social systems. The importance of adult education extends beyond individual development. UNESCO (2015) further emphasized that adult learning contributes

significantly to economic growth, social inclusion, cultural development, and political participation. This importance is reflected in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which recognizes adult education and lifelong learning as essential components of sustainable and inclusive development.

One of the most influential frameworks guiding adult learning is Knowles' theory of andragogy. Knowles proposed four overarching principles that characterize adult learning: adults should participate in planning and evaluating their learning; prior experiences serve as valuable resources for learning; adults are most interested in learning that has immediate relevance to their personal and professional lives; and adult learning is most effective when it is problem-centered rather than content-centered (Knowles & Associates, 1984). These principles underscore the unique characteristics of adult learners and provide a theoretical basis for designing meaningful learning experiences.

Supporting these principles, Murry (2022) explained that adult learners are more likely to engage in learning when they understand its purpose, relevance, and practical value. Adult learners seek educational experiences that connect with their existing knowledge and professional responsibilities. Consequently, instructional activities should acknowledge learners' prior experiences and provide opportunities for meaningful application and reflection. Similarly, Pace (2020) identified ten principles that guide effective adult learning. These include self-direction, experiential learning, relevance, sensory engagement, repetition, personal development, goal orientation, learner ownership, and recognition of the distinctive ways adults learn compared with children. Collectively, these principles reinforce the importance of learner-centered educational approaches that recognize adults as active participants in the learning process.

2.2 Instructional Strategies for Effective Adult Learning

The successful implementation of andragogical principles requires instructional strategies that address the unique characteristics and learning preferences of adult learners. Atkinson (2024) identified ten high-impact teaching strategies that promote effective adult learning. These include establishing clear learning goals, organizing structured lessons, employing explicit instruction, utilizing worked examples, encouraging collaborative learning, providing multiple opportunities for practice and exposure, incorporating purposeful questioning, delivering timely feedback, fostering metacognitive reflection, and implementing differentiated instruction. These strategies support deeper engagement, enhance knowledge retention, and facilitate meaningful learning experiences among adult learners.

Among these approaches, collaborative learning is particularly significant because it enables learners to draw upon their diverse experiences and perspectives. Active learning experiences likewise enhance learner engagement by encouraging participation, reflection, and practical application of knowledge. Legarde et al. (2025) found that experiential and participatory learning activities significantly contribute to student engagement and meaningful learning outcomes in higher education settings. Likewise, explicit instruction and worked examples help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, making learning more relevant and accessible to adult learners (Fantinelli et al., 2024). Feedback and metacognitive strategies further support self-regulated learning by encouraging reflection and continuous improvement. Sustained learner engagement is also influenced by instructional experiences that extend beyond content delivery and encourage active participation and retention. Ceneciro (2025) found that workshops designed around experiential learning and participant engagement foster continued motivation and meaningful learning beyond formal instructional sessions.

Complementing these perspectives, Cobb (2024) emphasized the importance of maintaining instructional relevance, recognizing learners' prior experiences, and creating learning environments that encourage active participation. Chavez (2023) emphasized that instructional approaches grounded in humanized teaching encourage greater learner participation and academic integrity, which are essential elements in facilitating effective adult education. According to Broek et al. (2023), adult learners process information through practical and professional lenses; therefore, instructional content should be connected to authentic real-world situations. Storytelling, for example, can serve as an effective teaching strategy because it allows learners to relate emotionally and cognitively to learning experiences. Furthermore, adult learners may be capable of processing complex information; however,

effective instruction requires logical sequencing and organization of content. Timely feedback, visually stimulating learning materials, opportunities for questioning and discussion, and flexibility in instructional delivery also contribute to more effective learning experiences. These strategies acknowledge the diverse backgrounds, responsibilities, and learning preferences characteristic of adult learners.

2.3 Adult Learning in Graduate Education

The application of andragogical principles is particularly important within graduate education, where learners are often experienced professionals seeking advanced knowledge and skills relevant to their careers. Graduate learners typically value educational experiences that establish meaningful connections between academic content and workplace practice. Karim (2024) observed that adult learners often evaluate educational quality based on the relevance of learning experiences to their professional responsibilities and career aspirations. Similarly, Knowles and Associates (1984) emphasized that adult learners are motivated when learning activities address immediate personal and professional needs. In graduate education, this requires instructional approaches that promote critical thinking, reflective practice, collaboration, and problem-solving within authentic contexts.

Despite the growing body of literature on adult learning, Bengo (2020) noted that much of the existing research focuses on adult learners in alternative learning settings and continuing education programs. Studies commonly examine learning styles, self-concept, readiness to learn, prior experiences, and learning needs. However, relatively limited research has examined specific instructional practices employed in graduate education and how these practices influence adult learners' academic and professional development. This gap in the literature highlights the need for further investigation into effective andragogical teaching practices within graduate programs. Understanding graduate learners' perceptions of instructional practices can provide valuable insights into how higher education institutions may strengthen teaching effectiveness, improve learner engagement, and support meaningful professional and academic development among adult learners.

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative single-case study design to explore graduate learners' perceptions of effective andragogical teaching practices. The single-case study design was considered appropriate because it enabled an in-depth examination of participants' experiences, perspectives, and insights within a bounded educational context. Focusing on the Doctor of Education major in Educational Administration (EdD–EdAd) program in a state university in Eastern Visayas, the study generated a contextualized understanding of how adult learners perceive instructional practices in graduate education, particularly in relation to teaching effectiveness, learning engagement, and professional development.

3.2 Participants of the Study

The participants of the study consisted of eighteen (18) graduate learners enrolled in the Doctor of Education major in Educational Administration (EdD–EdAd) program in a state university in Eastern Visayas during Academic Year 2025–2026. Participants were selected through purposive sampling to ensure that those included in the study possessed direct and substantial experiences with the instructional practices under investigation. As active participants in the graduate program, they were considered capable of providing rich, relevant, and information-rich accounts of their learning experiences. The use of purposive sampling facilitated the collection of in-depth qualitative data and contributed to a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon being studied.

3.3 Research Instrument

The study utilized a written feedback form, a semi-structured interview guide, and a focus group discussion (FGD) guide as primary research instruments. These instruments were designed to elicit detailed descriptions of participants' perceptions and experiences regarding andragogical teaching practices within the EdD–EdAd program. The written feedback form encouraged individual reflection,

while the semi-structured interview guide allowed flexibility in probing and clarifying participants' responses. Similarly, the FGD guide facilitated collaborative discussions that generated diverse viewpoints and shared insights. The use of multiple instruments supported data triangulation and contributed to a richer understanding of the participants' experiences.

3.4 Data Gathering Procedure

Data were collected through multiple qualitative methods, namely written feedback, individual interviews, and focus group discussions. Written feedback enabled participants to independently express their perceptions, experiences, and suggestions regarding andragogical teaching practices. Individual interviews were conducted to obtain more detailed explanations, clarify responses, and explore emerging insights. In addition, focus group discussions facilitated interactive exchanges among participants, allowing them to share, compare, and reflect upon their experiences collectively. The use of these complementary methods enabled the researcher to capture participants' perspectives from different angles and provided a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Collectively, these methods enhanced the richness and depth of the data gathered.

3.5 Data Analysis

The data gathered from written feedback, individual interviews, and focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis following the approach developed by Braun and Clarke. This method enabled the systematic identification, organization, and interpretation of recurring patterns and meanings within the qualitative data. The analysis involved familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, identification of potential themes, review and refinement of themes, and the definition and naming of final themes. Through this iterative process, meaningful themes were developed to capture the participants' perceptions and experiences of effective andragogical teaching practices. Thematic analysis facilitated a rich and detailed interpretation of the data and ensured that the findings accurately represented the voices of the graduate learners.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the conduct of the study to ensure respect for participants and the integrity of the research process. Prior to data collection, participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the nature of their participation, and the intended use of the information they provided. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were free to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage without any adverse consequences. To protect confidentiality and anonymity, participants' identities were not disclosed in any part of the study. Codes or pseudonyms were used in place of names, and all information gathered were treated with strict confidentiality and utilized solely for academic and research purposes.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Study

The trustworthiness of the study was established through the qualitative criteria of credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was strengthened through the use of multiple data collection methods, including written feedback, individual interviews, and focus group discussions, which allowed the corroboration of findings across different sources of data. Dependability was promoted through the systematic documentation of research procedures and analytical processes. Confirmability was addressed by grounding interpretations in participants' responses and maintaining objectivity throughout data analysis. Transferability was supported through the provision of sufficient contextual information regarding the research setting and participants, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar educational contexts.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the findings of the study on effective andragogical teaching practices as perceived by Doctor of Education major in Educational Administration (EdD–EdAd) graduate learners in a state university in Eastern Visayas. The findings are organized according to the research questions and the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis of written feedback, individual interviews, and focus group discussions. Each theme is discussed in relation to the

participants' lived experiences and is supported by direct quotations to preserve the authentic voices of the graduate learners. The discussion further relates the findings to relevant principles of andragogy and existing literature to provide a deeper understanding of how instructional practices influence learning engagement, academic development, and professional growth within graduate education. Through this process, the study highlights the instructional approaches that adult learners perceive as meaningful, relevant, and supportive of their academic and professional development.

Effective Andragogical Teaching Practices as Perceived by Graduate Learners

Analysis of the participants' responses revealed several andragogical teaching practices that were perceived as effective in facilitating graduate learning. The participants described instructional approaches that enhanced understanding, encouraged active participation, supported collaborative learning, and promoted meaningful engagement throughout the learning process. Their narratives emphasized the importance of inclusive instructional materials, interactive learning environments, scaffolded instruction, experiential learning opportunities, manageable academic requirements, and competent instructional delivery. Collectively, these practices demonstrate how professors facilitate adult learning by addressing the academic, professional, and experiential needs of graduate learners. The thematic analysis generated six major themes that characterize the effective andragogical teaching practices experienced by the participants.

4.1 Use of Inclusive and Contextualized Learning Materials

Participants emphasized the importance of utilizing culturally responsive, inclusive, and contextually relevant instructional materials that reflect diverse perspectives and authentic learning situations. One student from Educational Learning Alternatives shared that instructional materials should "reflect diverse cultures and perspectives," noting that such practices had been consistently observed in previous courses. Similarly, students enrolled in Evaluation of School Programs recommended the use of "inclusive content" to ensure broader representation, relevance, and responsiveness to learners' varied backgrounds and experiences.

These responses suggest that graduate learners highly value instructional materials that acknowledge diversity and establish meaningful connections between course content and real-world educational contexts. The participants recognized that learning becomes more meaningful when instructional resources are relevant to their professional experiences and responsive to the realities they encounter in educational settings. Such materials allow learners to draw upon their prior knowledge and experiences while simultaneously expanding their perspectives through exposure to diverse viewpoints and contexts. The findings indicate that adult learners are more engaged when learning materials are not limited to abstract concepts but are contextualized within authentic educational and professional situations. This preference reflects the expectation of graduate learners that instruction should be directly applicable to their work environments and professional responsibilities. Contextualized learning materials also promote inclusivity by acknowledging the diversity of learners' experiences, thereby creating a learning environment where multiple perspectives are recognized and valued. The importance of inclusivity is further supported by Leon et al. (2024), who reported that inclusive educational practices enhance learner participation and responsiveness to diverse student needs. Such findings reinforce the value of instructional materials that recognize diversity and foster equitable learning opportunities.

In terms of andragogical principles, this theme is associated with "The Need to Know," one of the six andragogical principles identified by Knowles (1997), and "Adults Desire Relevance," one of the ten adult learning principles discussed by Knowles and cited in Pace (2010). These principles emphasize that adult learners need to understand why they are learning something and how it relates to their personal and professional goals before they are willing to invest significant effort in the learning process. The findings further support the assertion of Boateng et al. (2022) that adult learners place considerable importance on educational experiences that establish meaningful connections between academic content and professional practice. Likewise, Law (2022) emphasized that adult learners demonstrate higher levels of engagement when learning activities are relevant to their existing responsibilities and experiences. The present findings reinforce the importance of designing

instructional materials that are inclusive, context-responsive, and professionally relevant in graduate education.

4.2 Preference for Face-to-Face and Interactive Learning Environments

Many participants expressed a strong preference for face-to-face instruction, particularly in courses that require presentations, technical discussions, collaborative activities, and active classroom interaction. Participants consistently noted that in-person learning environments facilitate better communication, stronger engagement, and greater confidence when delivering reports and participating in academic discussions.

"I am hoping that all reporting/reports will be delivered during face-to-face sessions because not all of us are comfortable delivering the topic assigned to us online."

Similarly, students from Advanced Financial Management and Evaluation of School Programs emphasized that "full face-to-face sessions" are more effective than virtual classes due to challenges related to internet connectivity, limited interaction, and difficulties in maintaining active participation during online sessions.

The findings suggest that despite the increasing availability of online and technology-mediated learning platforms, graduate learners continue to value the interpersonal and collaborative dimensions of face-to-face instruction. Participants perceived in-person interactions as providing richer opportunities for discussion, immediate feedback, clarification of concepts, and collaborative engagement. The importance of meaningful instructional interaction is likewise supported by Salamuddin and Antao (2026), who found that learning environments characterized by limited opportunities for individualized attention and feedback may negatively influence learners' concentration, engagement, and overall learning experiences. This highlights the value of instructional settings that facilitate active communication and timely academic support. Such interactions appear particularly important in graduate education, where learning often involves critical reflection, knowledge sharing, and professional discourse. The participants' preference for face-to-face learning environments may also be attributed to the confidence and sense of connection that emerge through direct interaction with professors and peers. Graduate learners often benefit from immediate opportunities to ask questions, engage in discussions, and receive clarification regarding complex concepts. These interactions contribute to a more dynamic and supportive learning environment that enhances both academic engagement and learning outcomes (Blyznyuk & Kachak, 2024).

Furthermore, the findings indicate that effective andragogical teaching extends beyond content delivery and includes the creation of learning environments that facilitate meaningful interaction and collaboration. This observation is consistent with the andragogical principle of "Self-Concept," identified by Knowles (1997), which recognizes adult learners as self-directed individuals who actively participate in their own learning. Likewise, the principle "Adult Learners are Self-Directing," highlights the importance of instructional environments that support learner autonomy while fostering meaningful engagement with others. Similarly, Bach and Thiel (2024) identified collaborative learning as a high-impact instructional strategy that promotes deeper engagement and understanding among adult learners. The present findings suggest that graduate learners continue to value face-to-face learning environments because these settings provide opportunities for meaningful interaction, collaborative knowledge construction, and active participation in the learning process.

4.3 Scaffolded Instruction and Reinforcement of Foundational Knowledge

Graduate learners highlighted the importance of revisiting foundational concepts before introducing advanced and technically demanding topics. Participants noted that a strong understanding of basic concepts enables them to engage more confidently with complex lessons, particularly in courses involving specialized terminology, quantitative analyses, and technical applications. Students from Advanced Financial Management and Advanced Statistics specifically recommended reviewing fundamental accounting and statistical concepts to facilitate deeper understanding and reduce learning difficulties.

"Some subject terminologies are taught in a technical manner, especially for us who do not have background of the subject."

This response illustrates the diverse academic backgrounds represented within graduate programs. Although graduate learners possess extensive professional experience, they may not always share the same disciplinary knowledge or academic preparation. As a result, the introduction of highly technical content without adequate foundational reinforcement may create barriers to learning and reduce learners' confidence in engaging with course requirements.

The findings suggest that effective andragogical teaching involves recognizing differences in learners' prior knowledge and providing appropriate instructional support to bridge existing knowledge gaps. Graduate learners appear to value instructional approaches that gradually build understanding by connecting new concepts to previously acquired knowledge and experiences (Tsehay et al., 2024). Such scaffolding enables learners to develop confidence, improve comprehension, and actively participate in learning activities without feeling overwhelmed by unfamiliar content. Findings are associated with the andragogical principles of "Readiness to Learn" and "The Role of Experience," which form part of the six principles identified by Knowles (1997). These principles emphasize that adults become ready to learn when educational experiences are relevant to their developmental and professional needs and when new learning is connected to their existing experiences. Effective instruction, therefore, requires professors to acknowledge learners' varying levels of preparedness and provide opportunities for reviewing essential concepts before introducing more advanced material.

It emphasized the value of structured lessons, explicit instruction, and worked examples in facilitating adult learning. Likewise, Liu et al. (2024) argued that adult learners benefit from logically sequenced instruction that presents information in manageable segments, thereby reducing confusion and cognitive overload. Consistent with these perspectives, the present findings suggest that scaffolded instruction strengthens learners' understanding, enhances academic confidence, and promotes more meaningful engagement in graduate-level learning.

4.4 Experiential and Collaborative Learning Approaches

Participants strongly valued hands-on, practical, and collaborative learning experiences that enabled them to apply theoretical concepts to authentic professional situations. Students from Advanced Statistics recommended the inclusion of "hands-on activities/experiential learning," while those enrolled in Comparative Education suggested benchmarking activities that would expose learners to effective practices implemented in other institutions. Likewise, students emphasized the importance of collaboration in conducting group research and encouraged professors to motivate learners to become more confident and competent researchers. These responses demonstrate graduate learners' preference for instructional approaches that move beyond passive knowledge acquisition and actively engage them in the application of concepts and skills.

The findings indicate that graduate learners perceive learning as most meaningful when they are given opportunities to participate directly in authentic tasks and collaborative activities. Experiential learning allows learners to connect theoretical concepts with real-life situations, while collaborative learning encourages the exchange of perspectives, knowledge, and experiences among peers (U-senyang, 2024). Such approaches enable learners to develop not only academic competencies but also professional skills such as teamwork, communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving. This observation is consistent with Ang et al. (2025), who emphasized that motivating and engaging learning environments require active instructional strategies that encourage participation, collaboration, and learner ownership of the educational process. These conditions are particularly important in higher education settings where learners are expected to assume greater responsibility for learning. The participants' responses further suggest that adult learners appreciate learning experiences that mirror the complexities of their professional environments. Activities such as benchmarking, collaborative research, and hands-on exercises provide opportunities to apply knowledge in practical contexts, thereby enhancing understanding and retention. These learning experiences also foster reflection, which is an essential component of adult learning and professional development (Norman, 2022).

The findings are consistent with several andragogical principles “Adults Utilize Experience,” “Adults Learn by Doing,” “Adults Process with their Senses,” and “Adults Appreciate Repetition.” These principles emphasize that adults learn most effectively when they actively engage with content, draw upon prior experiences, and repeatedly apply new knowledge in meaningful situations. Furthermore, the findings support the work of Salma (2020), who identified collaborative learning as one of the most effective instructional strategies for adult learners because it leverages learners’ diverse experiences and promotes deeper understanding. Similarly, Kulachai et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of connecting instruction to real-world situations and providing opportunities for active participation. The present findings reinforce the value of experiential and collaborative learning approaches in graduate education, particularly in promoting professional relevance, learner engagement, and practical application of knowledge.

4.5 Reduction of Excessive Reporting Activities

Although participants acknowledged the educational value of course outputs, presentations, and reporting activities, several learners recommended minimizing repetitive reporting requirements. A participant from Problem Analysis, Decision Making and Development Planning noted that while course outputs were practical and beneficial, “reporting must be minimized.” This response suggests that graduate learners recognize the importance of reporting activities as opportunities to develop communication skills, critical thinking, and content mastery. However, they also expressed concerns regarding the excessive use of such activities, particularly when reporting becomes repetitive or disproportionate to other forms of learning engagement. Participants appeared to prefer a balanced distribution of instructional activities that support learning without creating unnecessary workload or fatigue.

The findings indicate that graduate learners value instructional designs that maximize meaningful learning opportunities while avoiding excessive academic demands. While reporting activities encourage active participation, overreliance on such approaches may lead to cognitive overload and reduce learners’ capacity to engage deeply with course content. Adult learners often balance academic responsibilities with professional and personal obligations; therefore, they may prefer instructional approaches that are efficient, purposeful, and directly aligned with learning objectives (Knapke et al., 2024). Participants’ observations further suggest that effective andragogical teaching requires thoughtful selection of learning activities that encourage active engagement while respecting learners’ time, workload, and professional commitments. Rather than eliminating reporting activities altogether, learners appear to advocate for a balanced approach in which reporting is complemented by other instructional strategies such as discussions, collaborative projects, experiential activities, and reflective exercises.

The findings are associated with the andragogical principles of “Orientation to Learning,” one of the six principles identified by Knowles (1997), and “Adults Guide Their Own Development,” one of the adult learning principles. These principles emphasize that adult learners prefer learning activities that are purposeful, problem-centered, and directly applicable to their professional and personal goals. The importance of structured learning experiences support adult learners while accommodating the multiple responsibilities they often manage. The present findings therefore underscore the importance of balancing instructional rigor with learner well-being to sustain meaningful engagement in graduate education.

4.6 Positive Perceptions of Professors’ Competence and Teaching Strategies

Overall, graduate learners expressed strong appreciation for the competence, dedication, and diverse teaching strategies employed by their professors. Participants consistently described instructional delivery as intellectually stimulating, professionally enriching, and highly relevant to workplace practice. These perceptions indicate that faculty members play a significant role in shaping meaningful learning experiences within graduate education. Cutillas et al. (2025) reported that professional development initiatives contribute significantly to educators’ confidence, instructional adaptability, and professional growth.

"The professors are competent and diligent in the delivery of instructions and sharing their knowledge and expertise."

Another participant explained that the teaching strategies employed in the university contributed to the development of communication skills, decision-making abilities, personnel development competencies, and professional responsibility. These observations suggest that learners perceive effective instruction as extending beyond content transmission to include mentorship, professional guidance, and the facilitation of personal and professional growth. Furthermore, students acknowledged that the program positively influenced their leadership practices and professional development. Participants stated:

"All of the learnings gained were placed in the bucket, serving as reflective guide in all my daily undertakings in school."

These narratives demonstrate that effective andragogical teaching practices contribute not only to academic achievement but also to reflective practice, leadership development, and lifelong learning. Participants viewed their professors as facilitators of learning who created opportunities for intellectual growth, critical reflection, and professional advancement. Such perceptions highlight the importance of faculty competence in fostering a supportive and engaging graduate learning environment. The findings are associated with the andragogical principle of "Internal Motivation," one of the six principles identified by Knowles (1997), and "Adults Learn Differently than Children," one of the adult learning principles. These principles recognize that adult learners are primarily motivated by personal growth, professional advancement, and the practical application of knowledge. Effective professors are therefore those who create learning experiences that align with these motivations and support learners' professional aspirations.

It further support the observations of Lajom et al. (2024), who emphasized the importance of effective instructional practices, learning management, and classroom engagement in promoting positive learning outcomes. Likewise, Hollenstein and Brühwiler (2024) highlighted the importance of teachers possessing deep knowledge of teaching and learning processes as well as expertise in selecting appropriate instructional strategies. Consistent with these perspectives, the present findings suggest that professors' competence, commitment, and instructional effectiveness significantly contribute to graduate learners' academic success, professional growth, and overall learning satisfaction.

Influence of Andragogical Teaching Practices on Graduate Learners' Professional and Academic Development

Beyond identifying effective teaching practices, the participants also shared how these instructional approaches contributed to their professional growth, academic development, and workplace performance. Graduate learners emphasized that the knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired through the program were highly applicable to real-life educational settings and professional responsibilities. Their experiences highlighted the significance of problem-centered, learner-centered, and practice-oriented learning in enhancing decision-making, communication, leadership, and reflective practice. These findings demonstrate that effective andragogical teaching extends beyond facilitating academic achievement and contributes substantially to the development of professional competencies that are essential in contemporary educational settings. From the thematic analysis of the participants' responses, one major theme emerged that illustrates the significant influence of andragogical teaching practices on the professional and academic development of graduate learners.

4.7 Professional Relevance through Problem-Centered Learning

Graduate learners highlighted that instructional delivery becomes more meaningful and impactful when learning experiences are directly connected to their professional responsibilities and real-life workplace situations. Participants emphasized that the knowledge, strategies, and competencies acquired through the program were highly relevant and applicable to their respective fields of practice, particularly in areas related to educational leadership, decision-making, communication, personnel management, and organizational development. The participants consistently recognized the value of learning experiences that enabled them to apply theoretical concepts to actual workplace situations and educational challenges.

"Being here at the university helped me to grow and develop professionally. The strategies, competencies, and skills taught in the university are applicable and useful in our field of work."

Similarly, another participants stated:

"Having been enrolled in the EdD-EdAd program in this university, it gives positive impact or influence as to decision-making and problem-solving is concerned."

These responses indicate that graduate learners highly value instructional practices that establish meaningful connections between academic content and professional practice. The participants perceived learning as more beneficial when classroom discussions, activities, and learning experiences addressed authentic workplace concerns and provided practical solutions to challenges encountered in their professional environments. Such instructional approaches allow learners to translate theoretical knowledge into actionable strategies, thereby increasing the relevance and utility of graduate education. The findings further suggest that adult learners are more engaged and motivated when educational experiences address immediate professional needs and contribute to the improvement of workplace performance. Participants viewed the graduate program not merely as a venue for acquiring academic knowledge but also as an avenue for strengthening leadership competencies, improving communication skills, enhancing decision-making capabilities, and developing greater confidence in managing professional responsibilities. This demonstrates the important role of andragogical teaching practices in supporting both academic learning and professional advancement.

Moreover, the participants' responses underscore the significance of problem-centered learning in graduate education. Rather than focusing solely on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, graduate learners preferred instructional approaches that challenged them to analyze issues, evaluate alternatives, and develop practical solutions to real-world problems. These learning experiences enabled them to become more reflective practitioners capable of applying evidence-based knowledge to professional contexts. The findings suggest that graduate learners derive greater value from educational experiences when learning activities mirror the complexities and realities of their workplace environments. The findings are associated with several andragogical principles identified by Knowles (1997), including "Orientation to Learning," "The Need to Know," and "Internal Motivation." These principles emphasize that adult learners are motivated when learning experiences address real-life concerns, provide immediate value, and contribute to personal and professional growth. Likewise, the findings reflect the adult learning principles namely "Adults Thrive with Goal Setting," "Adults Desire Relevance," and "Adults Require Ownership." These principles suggest that adult learners become more engaged when they recognize the relevance of learning activities to their goals and when they are given opportunities to take ownership of their learning and professional development.

The findings also support the observations of Mahfuz (2026), who emphasized that adult learners place considerable importance on educational experiences that establish meaningful connections between academic learning and professional practice. Ampler et al. (2024) argued that adult learners are more likely to engage in learning when they clearly understand its purpose, relevance, and practical value. The present findings reinforce these perspectives by demonstrating that graduate learners value educational experiences that are directly applicable to their professional responsibilities and workplace challenges.

It reflect the principle of problem-centered learning in andragogy, which posits that adults prefer learning experiences that address immediate life and work situations. Rather than focusing solely on content acquisition, graduate learners appreciate instructional approaches that enhance their capacity to solve problems, make informed decisions, exercise leadership, and contribute effectively to their organizations. Consequently, the integration of practical, work-related, and experience-based learning activities strengthens the relevance, effectiveness, and transformative potential of graduate education (Mabungela & Mtiki, 2024). The findings ultimately suggest that andragogical teaching practices contribute not only to academic success but also to the development of competent, reflective, and professionally responsive educational leaders.

Figure 1. Summary Table on the Results of the Study

Emerging Theme	Sample Responses	Andragogical Principles (Knowles)
Effective Andragogical Teaching Practices as Perceived by Graduate Learners		
Use of Inclusive and Contextualized Learning	"Reflect diverse cultures and perspectives"	The Need to Know Adults Desire Relevance
Preference to Face-to-face Interaction	"Reporting should be delivered face-to-face"	Self-Concept of being Self-Directed Adult Learners are Self-directing
Scaffolded Instruction and Reinforcement of Foundational Knowledge	"Recall the basic concepts"	Readiness to Learn The Role of Experience
Experiential learning and Collaborative Learning Approaches	"Hands-on activities"	Adults Utilize Experience Adults Learn by Doing Adults Process with their Senses Adults Appreciate Repetition
Reduction of Excessive Reporting Activities	"Reporting must be minimized."	Orientation to Learning Adults Guide their Own Development
Positive Perceptions of Professors' Competence and Teaching Strategies	"Learnings serve as reflective guide in school undertakings"	Internal Motivation Adults Learn Differently than Children
Influence of Andragogical Teaching Practices on Graduate Learners'		
Professional and Academic Development		
Professional Relevance	"Useful in our field of work"	Orientation to Learning The Need to Know Internal Motivation Adults Thrive with Goal Setting Adults Desire Relevance Adults Require Ownership

CONCLUSION

This study explored graduate learners' perceptions of effective andragogical teaching practices and examined how these practices influence their professional and academic development within a Doctor of Education major in Educational Administration (EdD–EdAd) program in a state university in Eastern Visayas. Through thematic analysis of participants' experiences and perspectives, the study generated insights into the instructional approaches that adult learners consider meaningful, relevant, and supportive of their learning and professional growth.

1. Graduate learners perceive effective andragogical teaching practices as those that create meaningful, learner-centered, and professionally relevant learning experiences. Specifically, effective teaching is characterized by the use of inclusive and contextualized learning materials, face-to-face and

interactive learning environments, scaffolded instruction that reinforces foundational knowledge, experiential and collaborative learning opportunities, balanced academic requirements, and competent instructional delivery. These practices support active participation, deeper understanding, learner engagement, and the practical application of knowledge. The findings affirm the relevance of andragogical principles that emphasize learner autonomy, experiential learning, readiness to learn, relevance, and meaningful engagement in adult education.

Effective andragogical teaching practices significantly influence graduate learners' professional and academic development by strengthening their ability to apply learning in real-world and workplace contexts. Problem-centered and professionally relevant learning experiences contribute to the enhancement of decision-making, communication, leadership, personnel management, critical thinking, and reflective practice. The participants perceived that the knowledge, competencies, and strategies acquired through the program were directly applicable to their professional responsibilities, thereby increasing the value and impact of their graduate education. These findings demonstrate that andragogical teaching practices contribute not only to academic learning but also to the development of competent, reflective, and professionally responsive educational leaders.

The study addresses an important gap in the literature by providing empirical evidence on the specific andragogical teaching practices perceived as effective by graduate learners and by demonstrating how these practices contribute to both academic and professional development. The findings underscore the continuing relevance of andragogy in graduate education and highlight the importance of instructional approaches that are learner-centered, experience-based, collaborative, context-responsive, and professionally meaningful. Ultimately, effective andragogical teaching serves as a vital mechanism for fostering lifelong learning, professional competence, and transformative educational experiences among adult learners.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are derived from the findings and conclusions of the study on effective andragogical teaching practices as perceived by graduate learners in the Doctor of Education major in Educational Administration (EdD–EdAd) program. These recommendations are intended to support the continuous enhancement of instructional practices, strengthen learner engagement, and improve the quality of graduate education in a state university in Eastern Visayas. The recommendations are directed toward faculty members, graduate program administrators, university leaders, and future researchers.

1. Graduate school professors may continue to implement learner-centered and andragogical teaching practices that encourage active participation, collaboration, reflection, and meaningful engagement among graduate learners. Instructional approaches should continue to recognize the experiences, professional backgrounds, and learning needs of adult learners to promote relevant and transformative learning experiences.

2. Faculty members may further strengthen the use of inclusive, culturally responsive, and contextualized instructional materials that connect course content with authentic educational and professional situations. Learning resources should be designed to reflect diverse perspectives and support the practical application of concepts in real-world contexts.

3. Graduate school faculty and program administrators may enhance opportunities for face-to-face and interactive learning experiences, particularly for activities that require collaborative discussion, presentations, peer interaction, problem-solving, and professional knowledge sharing. Such learning environments may further promote engagement, confidence, and meaningful participation among graduate learners.

4. Professors handling technical, quantitative, and specialized courses may incorporate scaffolded instructional strategies and reinforcement of foundational concepts before introducing advanced content. Providing opportunities to review prerequisite knowledge may help address differences in learners' academic backgrounds and strengthen comprehension, confidence, and academic success.

5. Faculty members may integrate more experiential, collaborative, and problem-centered learning activities that enable graduate learners to apply theoretical concepts to authentic educational and workplace situations. Activities such as case analyses, action-based projects, benchmarking experiences, collaborative research, and reflective exercises may further enhance critical thinking, decision-making, leadership, and professional competencies.

6. In designing course requirements, professors may maintain a balanced combination of reporting activities, collaborative tasks, experiential learning experiences, and other authentic assessments. This approach may help sustain learner engagement while minimizing unnecessary academic burden and promoting deeper learning.

7. University administrators and graduate program leaders may provide continuing professional development opportunities that strengthen faculty members' knowledge and application of andragogical principles and effective teaching strategies for adult learners. Such initiatives may contribute to the continuous improvement of instructional quality and graduate learning experiences.

8. Future researchers may conduct similar studies involving other graduate programs, academic disciplines, or higher education institutions to further examine effective andragogical teaching practices in diverse contexts. Comparative and multi-site studies may provide broader evidence regarding the application of andragogy in graduate education and contribute to the continued development of adult learning scholarship.

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