HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND/BASIS FOR THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (ASTD) HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT MODELS OF PRACTICE: A CONTEXT FOR DEFINING COMPETENCIES AND IDENTIFYING ROLES

Dr. John A. Henschke

Associate Professor of Adult Education
and Chair
Department of Educational Studies
University of Missouri - St. Louis

and

Continuing Education Specialist
East Central Region
University Extension-
University of Missouri

269 Marillac Hall
Department of Educational Studies
University of Missouri - St. Louis
8001 Natural Bridge Road
St. Louis, Missouri 63121--4499
Phone (314) 553-5946

HISTORICAL AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND/BASIS FOR THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT (ASTD) HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT MODELS OF PRACTICE: A CONTEXT FOR DEFINING COMPETENCIES AND IDENTIFYING ROLES

The context for the current ASTD Human Resources Development Models of Practice seems to require a definition of competency, especially competency in adult education/human resources development.

DEFINITION

McLagan (1989) defines competency as personal knowledges and skills for producing and delivering the human resources development outputs. Shelton (1987) however, affirms competency as a performance-based process leading to demonstrated mastery of basic and life skills necessary for the individual to function proficiently in society.

On the other hand, Knowles (1980) almost equates competency with ability and asserts that it is a cluster of knowledges, understandings, skills, attitudes, values and interests that are necessary for the performance of the adult educator/human resources developer function. To explain, for this purpose knowledge is generalization about experience, internalization of information; understanding is application of information and generalizations; skills are incorporating new ways of performing through practice; attitudes are adoption of new feelings through experiencing greater success with them than with old feelings; values are adoption and priority arrangement of beliefs; and, interest is satisfying exposure to new experience.

Lindeman (1938) adds to Knowles' definition and penetrates the idea deeply when he indicates that competency is to carry conviction supported by valid feelings, sound reasoning and a cultural meaning which clearly comprehends why adults should study and what sort of equipment an adult educator/human resource developer needs to possess in a given situation.

Since McLagan is a major contributor to the 1983 and 1989 ASTD competency, there is some difficulty with her view of competency given that she only includes knowledge and skill. Along with McLagan's idea of competencies, fifteen "roles" of the training and development specialist in the 1983 study and eleven "roles" of the human resources development specialist in the 1989 study were a prominent part of each matrix. Eaves (1985), in discussing the basic tenents of role theory suggests that "role", a social concept, provides a means for understanding the relation between an individual and the behavioral expectations of that individual, expectations which are established by individuals fulfilling some function as well as by persons tangential to and/or interacting with the functioning of the role incumbent. This combination of behavioral patterns is called a role set and includes the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, understandings, interests, etc., which comprise the respective behavioral pattern(s).

Although in both of McLagan's studies, the competencies are mostly listed as understandings, skills, general abilities or competencies, her definitions of some competencies include values, styles, interests and biases. The definition of competency is limited to knowledge and skill in delivering HRD outputs. Thus, at best, her definition of competency is inadequate or at least inconsistent and imprecise and Shelton's definition only includes basic and life skills. On the contrary, the definitions of competency by Knowles and Lindeman appear to be more comprehensive and take into account role theory more adequately. They include a role set of knowledge, skill, attitude, value, understanding, interest, conviction, feeling and cultural meaning.

EARLY CONTRIBUTORS

Lindeman (1938) is the earliest contributor to the discussion on competency. He expressed concern over a deep-seated conflict in the United States of America regarding the purposes of adult education being "mechanistic" on the one hand and "organic" on the other hand. Lindeman stated these contrasting points of view as:

1. Those who represent the mechanistic viewpoint seem to believe that adult education is designed to meet the needs of illiterate, unfortunate, or underprivileged persons. To such theorists adult education always means extending something which is already here; that is, extending the existing patterns of education to an older group. The ideas with which they surround adult education are consequently quantitative, if not static, in character. At best, such persons seem to think of adult education in naively instrumental terms; that is, in terms of giving these neglected learners something which other people have acquired in the normal course of experience. Among the mechanistic thinkers in this field, one also finds a strong ingredient of philanthropy. They present adult education as a sort of benefit to be given to the underprivileged.

2. On the other hand, those who hold the organic point of view assume at the outset that adult education represents a need which is universal. It is, or should be, designed to meet the needs of all citizens. It is not merely "more of the same"; that is, an extension of something which the privileged already enjoy, but rather a new quality and a new dimension in education. Also, such theorists insist that adult education is a right, a normal expectancy, and not charity. Its purpose is to do something for adults which cannot be achieved by conventional education.

This early contrast mechanistic and organic viewpoints on the purpose of adult education seems to underscore and anticipate Collins' (1987) assertion that competency-based education programs were developed as a means to counteract the perceived negative characteristics and effects of traditional approaches to education. Although he is himself wary of competency-based educators because of what he perceives to be their strongly behaviorist orientation, he states that proponents have argued that competency-based education emphasizes acquired knowledge instead of the learning process, life coping skills instead of disciplinary content, learner-centered knowledge rather than socially or institutionally centered knowledge, learner-relevant goals instead of abstract goals, and curriculum flexibility in response to changing environmental conditions rather than curriculum rigidity.

However, to return to Lindeman (1938), he states in competency terms that an adult educator/human resource developer should: first, know a great deal about motivational psychology, the purposes of people, processes by which purposes come into being, cultural history, logic, ethics, aesthetics and contemporary social movements including corporate purposes; second, know the relation between growth and learning; third, understand the work experience of his students; fourth; be able to interpret and make use of the inter- and the intra-relationships of various disciplines of knowledge; and fifth, be familiar with techniques of group work and able to participate in a group activity.

Ten years later Hallenbeck (1948) (in Brookfield, 1988) only focused on the need for the adult educator to have knowledge of: instructional methodology and materials, adult psychology, sociology of adulthood, history and philosophy of adult education, administration, community organization, programming function and knowledge of a particular subject.

Eight years later Houle (1956) (in Eaves, 1985) casts his competency list more in terms of abilities. He says adult educators should achieve: a sound philosophical conception of adult education; knowledge of basic sociological and psychological concepts germane to adult education; knowledge of various agencies in which adult educaiton is practiced; the ability to plan, develop, implement and evaluate educational activities; the ability to train leaders; the ability to council and guide learners; the ability to develop and promote programs; the ability to coordinate and supervise program and personnel; the ability to evaluate; and, personal effectiveness and group leadership. Five years later Chamberlain (1961) (in Jensen, 1964) identifies forty-five competencies and lists the top ten as belief in people's potential for growth, imagination in program development, ability to communicate effectively in both speaking and writing, understands conditions under which adults are most likely to learn, ability to keep on learning, effective as a group leader; knowledge of own values, strengths and weaknesses; understanding of what motivates adults to participate in programs, openmindedness to others' ideas and committment to the field of adult education.

Parallel in time with Chamberlain's study, Malcolm Knowles, a fellow doctoral student at the University of Chicago, was invited by Boston University to start a graduate program in adult education. Foundational to this step he published "A General Theory of the Doctorate in Education" (1962). His statement of the purpose of a theory is at least as important now for developing a curriculum guide for "Models for HRD Practice" as it was when he wrote it. Knowles suggested the theory's purpose as providing guidelines which will: result in a clear image of curriculum, provide a consistent basis for planning, promote functional evaluation and program improvement, and, define areas of freedom for individualization.

In the theory, Knowles listed relevant competencies for each required function or role set at each stage in the program, some for educational generalist and others for adult education specialist. The eight competencies relating to the role of adult education specialist included: an understanding of the function of adult education in society; ability to diagnose adult educational needs and translate these into objectives and programs; an understanding of the unique characteristics and processes of adults as learners; ability to plan and execute strategies of institutional and community change; an understanding of the theory and dynamics of organizations; skill in selecting, training and supervising leaders and teachers; skill in institutional management; and, such specialized competencies as used in mass media, preparation of materials, organization and community consultations, human

relations training, etc. The competencies were identified as knowledge, understanding, skill, attitude, ability, and specialized. This theory became the basis for the program at Boston University from which this author received his doctoral preparation in adult educator competency development and in his opinion, it was a truly competency-based program. This theory also became the basis for Knowles' own competency lists which include some eight to ten roles with seventy to eighty competencies stated as abilities (1970, 1984, 1986, 1987). Such roles are learning facilitator, program developer, administrator, teacher, designer of learning experiences, selector of methods, techniques and devices, skilled user of various learning techniques, and consultant. Abilities are not limited to, but include constructing a wide variety of program designs to meet the needs of various situations (basic skills training, developmental education, supervisory and management development, organization development, etc.); and, describing and implementing the basic steps (e.g., climate setting, needs assessment, formulation of program objectives, program design, program execution, and evaluation) that undergird the planning process in adult education.

Eaves (1985) identifies six other competency studies conducted during the decade of the 1960's with homogeneous results such as: knowledge of adult psychology and learning, skill in teaching, knowledge of group dynamics, knowledge of organization and administration, skill in program planning and evaluation, skill in marketing and promotion, and skill in communication. Jensen, et.al. (1964) contributed to the literature in graduate adult educator programs during this decade.

THE ASTD STUDIES AND OTHERS

Started in 1969 and completed in 1974 ASTD published its first major project focusing on competencies entitled Professional Development Manual. Although no mention was made in the manual, if this author's memory is correct, Knowles was acknowledged for his major assistance in the project. This included one hundred and thirty-seven competencies mostly stated as abilities within the six phases of training-needs assessment and problem identification, objectives planning, training design, development of training materials, the training effort, evaluation and follow-up-plus communication skills and abilities as well as management skills and abilities in the trainer's role as resource. Bibliographical materials for each competency were included.

Knowles (1970) and Davis (1974) each outlined a process for developing competency models as needs assessment processes such as through research, through the judgment of experts, through task analysis, and through group participation. Grabowski (1976), after reviewing competencies in several studies, distilled ten competencies of adult educators, such as: understands and takes into account the motivation and participation patterns of adult learners; understands and provides for the needs of adult learners; is versed in the theory and practice of adult learners; knows the community and its needs; knows how to use various methods and techniques of instruction; possesses communication and listening skills; knows how to locate and use education materials; has an open mind and allows adults to pursue their own interests; continues his or her own education; and, is able to evaluate and appraise a program.

Conducted in 1976 and published in 1978 were two well researched competency studies; Bunning & Rossman (in Brookfield, 1988) with forty-eight knowledges and fifty-three skills; and, Pinto-Walker with four roles and fourteen knowledges and skills. The Pinto-Walker competencies included: manage external resources; manage internal resources; manage the T & D function; maintain working relationships with managers;

program design and development; conduct training needs analysis; develop material resources; determine appropriate training approach; training research; conducting training programs; job/performance-related training; group and organization development; individual development planning and counseling; and, professional self development. The Bunning and Rossman competency study was clustered into six categories: the adult educator, the field of adult education, the adult learner, the adult education environment, adult education programming, and the adult education process.

Up to this time most of the studies produced models focused on the tasks and broadly defined roles relating to the training and development field. In 1981 and 1986 Knowles published his own well researched models. By 1981 ASTD launched and in 1983 published the Models of Excellence with one hundred two outputs, fifteen roles and thirty-one competencies. Most of the competencies were stated in understanding and skill terms, but the study was based on a series of questions focused on the emerging direction of the field. They included: such broad abilities as--computer competence, intellectual versatility, and relationship versatility; such knowledges as--career development, unique characteristics of adult learners; such understandings as--adult learning, industry, organizational behavior, organization, personnel/human resources field, training and development field, training and development techniques; and, such skills as--audiovisual, competency identification, cost-benefit analysis, counseling, data reduction, delegation, facilities, feedback, futuring, group process, library, model building, negotiation, objectives preparation, performance observation, presentation, questioning, records management, research and writing.

Shortly before Models of Excellence was published, Daniel and Rose (1982) (in Brookfield, 1988) compared professor and practitioner competencies on thirty knowledges and thirty-seven skills. The six knowledges ranked as highest priority were: the ever changing nature of the adult and his needs; professionalization-a sense of mission and purpose and how the professional functions; community resources; designing innovative programs; functions of the adult educator; and, the community: its organization and power structure as well as methods of development. The eight skills ranked as highest priority were: communicating (including listening); administration or management of adult programs; leadership-group, academic and/or community; continuous self-improvement; designing learning experiences based on need; being accountable to the public; fiscal aspects of the education process; and, as a change agent for himself, individuals, organizations and/or the community.

Shortly after Models of Excellence, in 1986 the International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction published the Instructional Design Competencies. There were sixteen competencies with accompanying rationale, performances, assumptions, conditions, behavior, and criteria, are to be used by an instructional designer, a training manager and a training evaluator. The sixteen competencies include: determining projects that are appropriate for instructional design; conducting a needs assessment; assessing the relevant characteristics of learners/trainees; analyzing the characteristics of a setting; performing jog, task and/or content analysis; writing statements of performance objectives; developing the performance measurements; sequencing the performance objectives; specifying the instructional strategies; designing the instructional materials; evaluating the instruction/training; designing the instructional management system; planning and monitoring instructional design projects; communicating effectively in visual, oral and written form; interacting effectively with other people; and, promoting the use of instructional design.

In 1987, Henschke published his rationale for keeping research and practice closely linked in Adult Education/Human Resources Development. He made the case for five categories of competencies including: beliefs and notions about adult learners, perceptions concerning qualities of effective teachers, phases and sequences of the adult learning process, teaching tips and learning techniques, and implementing the prepared plan.

Brookfield (1988) clearly emphasizes that the major competency to be coveted by Adult Education/Human Resources Developers is critical reflection.

In 1987, Models for HRD Practice was launched and published in 1989, with over eight hundred people involved in the revision. The forward states that Models for HRD Practice (1989) builds on the work begun in Models for Excellence (1983). But Models for HRD Practice goes beyond the scope of Models for Excellence. The most important changes include the addition of organization development and career development to training and development as the key components of human resource development. Updated competencies (35), roles (11), quality requirements (300+), outputs (74), ethical requirements (13), future key work and business forces (13) most likely to affect the future are presented, application tools are also provided in The Practitioner's Guide and The Manager's Guide. Most competencies from the 1983 study were retained, but the new ones added were: such knowledge as self-knowledge; such understandings as--subject matter, business organization development and business theories and techniques; and, such skills as: electronic systems, project management, coaching, relationship building, information search, observing and visioning.

CONCLUSION

ASTD competency studies have their own historical and theoretical bases. However, they are certainly not without connection to parallel studies from other sources. Each study has its own strengths and weaknesses. Of a certainty there will be more studies conducted as a part of future history. The refinement and soundness of the theoretical bases will be improved as we take into account the past as prologue.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Armore, Carol, Organization Development Practitioner: Self-Development Guide. American Society for Training and Development: Alexandria, VA, 1984.

Brookfield, Stephen, Ed., Training Educators of Adults: The Theory and Practice of Graduate Adult Education. Routledge: New York, 1988.

Collins, Michael, Competence in Adult Education: A New Perspective. University Press of America: Lanham, MD, 1987.

Davis, Larry Nolan, Planning, Conducting and Evaluating Workshops. Learning Concepts/University Associates, Inc.: San Diego, 1974.

Eaves, Thomas A., Trainer Competencies: An Examination of Existing Research. Milwaukee: National Adult Education Conference, a paper presented 11/6/85.

Foshay, Rob, Silber, Kenneth, and Westergaard, Odin, Instructional Design Competencies: The Standards. International Board of Standards for Training, Performance and Instruction-University of Iowa: Iowa City, 1986.

Grabowski, Stanley M. and Associates, Preparing Educators of Adults. Jossey-Bass, Inc.: San Francisco, 1981.

Henschke, John A., "Preparing Non-experienced Teachers of Adults: Research Issues," in the Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Midwest Research-to-Practice Conference in Adult and Continuing Education. Michigan State University: East Lansing, October, 1987.

Jensen, Gale, Liveright, A.A., and Hallenbeck, Wilbur, Eds. Adult Education: Outlines of an Emerging Field of University Study. Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.: Washington, D.C., 1964.

Knowles, Malcolm S., "A General Theory of the Doctorate in Education," in Adult Education Quarterly, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1962.

Knowles, Malcolm S., and Nichols, Robert E., Facilitator's Guide: The Adult Learner Video Workshop. Gulf Publishing Company Video: Houston, 1987.

Knowles, Malcolm S., Taped Interview with Steven Becker, 1980.

Knowles, Malcolm S., The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species. Gulf Publishing, Inc., Houston, 1984.

Knowles, Malcolm S., The Modern Practice of Adult Education: Andragogy vs. Pedagogy. Association Press: New York, 1970.

Knowles, Malcolm S., Using Learning Contracts. Jossey-Bass, Inc.; San Francisco, 1986.

Lindeman, Edward, "Preparing Leaders in Adult Education." Speech to the Pennsylvania Association for Adult Education, 11/18/38. Reprinted in Training Teachers of Adults, Edited by Stephen Brookfield.

McCullough, Richard C., "Professional Development." in Training and Development Handbook: Third Edition, McGraw-Hill, Inc., New York, 1987.

McLagan, Patricia A., Human Resources Development for the 90's: A Video on the ASTD Models for Practice. American Society for Training and Development: Alexandria, VA, 1989.

McLagan, Patricia A., Models for HRD Practice: The Models. American Society for
    Training and Development: Alexandria, VA, 1989.

McLagan, Patricia A., Models for HRD Practice: The Practitioner's Guide. American
    Society for Training and Development: Alexandria, VA, 1989.

McLagan, Patricia A., and Suhadolnik, Debra, Models for HRD Practice: The Research
    Report. American Society for Training and Development: Alexandria, VA, 1989.

McLagan, Patricia A., and McCullough, Richard C., Models for Excellence: The
    Conclusions and Recommendations of the ASTD Training and Development
    Competency Study. American Society for Training and Development,
    Washington, D.C., 1983.

Pinto, Patrick R., and Walker, James W., A Study of Professional Training and
    Development Roles and Competencies. American Society for Training and
    Development, Madison, WI, 1978.

Professional Development Manual. American Society for Training and Development:
    Madison, WI, 1974.