The trends and characteristics of adult education in the major nations at present
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During the 42 years since 1964, the world of scholars have conducted extensive research about adult education and published a lot of research acheivements. The publication of these acheivements is of great historical significance for the academic exchanges and cooperation of adult education.

The trend of the contemporary adult education would be the topic of my speech here.

1 Introduction of the status quo of adult education in all major nations

Brazil: The exchanging projects with American's adult education, agricultural, engineering technology, arts education, the prevention of family violence, management education, re-education for teacher, re-education of computer and information education.

South Africa: The re-positioning of traditional higher education in lifelong learning: The continuing education of presidents in primary, secondary and higher education institutions; The reconstruction of higher education system; The reconfiguration of preschool education and the future labor force.

Germany: including the liberation from the needs of accepting adult education; the interest in the arts and sciences which supporting adult education; Organizing international conference on adult education; providing patronage for international organizations of adult education and continuing education(Hall of Fame) and holding an introductory opening ceremony; The local adult education activities in schools are very active.

Australia: a new policy for the future of adult education; Establishment and development of "learning city".

Korea: International cultural interaction in educational training.

Thailand: non-formal education such as professional adult education, and the participation of government officials in Doctors' non-formal education project.

Italy: Rediscovery and exploration of Markham's contribution in the field of adult education.

The Netherlands: Development of human resources in university; the education closely related to the constructure of enterprises.

Yugoslavia: SLOUENIA, CROATIA, SERBIA, MONTENERRO, MACEDONIA, BOSNIA-HERZGOVENIA (Names of Yugoslavia's constituent districts): arts and science which supporting adult education; the most solid foundation in the world.

Canada: The adult education which associated with social problems; the adult education which involving independence.

Russia: The art and science supporting adult education is the basic research of adult education; since the collapse of the former Soviet Union, women's leadership is promoted.

Saudi Arabia: Individual autonomic learning in the college education is attached importance,

and it is considered as a prerequisite for loyalty to the King; In the arts and science supporting adult education, the training for university professors is organized and tell them how to teach adults and help adults learn.

U.S.A: modern adult education; International basic investment in adult education and human resource development for the arts and science supporting adult education; Feminist adult education; International center of adult long-distance education of university community; Knowledge-based adult education.

China: various adult education related with WTO accession; enterprises' adult education emergence/high-speed economic growth; International trade management and marketing; the training is mainly for the needs of the domestic automatic manufacturing city in Chongqing city.

New Zealand: Adult Education marginalization – related with social issues/social justice; Feminist; Postmodernism; Cultural changes.

India: Providing telephone counseling service for the enterprise's products; all the adult Education is related to it.

UNESCO: In 1997, the convening of the fifth International Conference on Adult Education (140 countries and 1,500 participants) and in 2003, the summarization of the work in the past six years; activities of Adult Learning Week in 50 countries.

South Pacific adult education institutions: the re-construction of adult education infrastructure which was destroyed by the tsunamis in 2004.

2 the new platform of the realization of lifelong learning --- online learning

Over the past 10 years, long-distance education is now rising and is expanding extremely fast. They are closely related to this, the "e-mail," "online training projects," "a central system which could transfer technology, voice and video at the same time," and "educational projects with different forms: for example, real-time online for all at the same time, and the asynchronous manner for the participants releasing information in the discussion boards at any time (24 hours a day, 7days a week)," "obtaining important information from various websites," "online changes with many people at the same time," and other ways.

Now no one knows what results the possibility might bring. However, we need grasp this innovation, and make the results consistent with their adult education principles. In other words, we can not be controlled by technology, on the contrary, we should have good, well-studied and positive adult education principles to guide the using of technology, and help the lifelong learners and all our clients use them and choose their own way to improve life quality. Of course there will be other educational technological innovation in the future. However, as adult education and human resource development workers, if we can have a full understanding of the outstanding education and skilful practice level, particularly know how to use these technologies; it will benefit ourselves and our clients.

3. Adult and Child Learning.

Malcolm S. Knowles, a pioneer in adult education, was a person that believed in and promoted the 'break-through' trend that there is a difference between how children learn and how adults learn. In 1968, he made popular the idea of how a teacher could help adults learn more effectively. Following is how he graphically explained it. And he continues to be a standard-bearer on trends in adult learning.

The Assumptions and Process Elements of the Pedagogical and Andragogical Models of Learning

ASSUMPTIONS				PROCESS ELEMENTS		
About	Pedagogical	Andragogical		Elements	Pedagogical	Andragogical
Need to know the reason for learning something	Do what the teacher asks	A reason that makes sense to the learner		Preparation	Wait to be told in class the purpose	Gain insight understanding of what is to come
Concept of learner	Dependent personality	Increasingly self-directing		Climate	Tense, low trust, formal, cold, aloof, authority-oriented, competitive, judgmental	Relaxed, trusting mutually respectful, informal, warm, collaborative, supportive
Role of learner	To be built on more than used as a resource	A rich resource for learning by self and others		Planning	Primarily by teacher	Mutually by learns and facilitators
Readiness to learn	Uniform by age-level and curriculum	Develops form life tasks and problems		Diagnosis of needs	Primarily by teacher	By mutual assessment
Orientation to learning	Subject-centered	Task- or problem-centered		Setting of objectives	Primarily by teacher	By mutual negotiation
Motivation	By external rewards and punishment	By internal incentives, curiosity		Designing learning plans	Teachers' content plans, Course syllabus, Logical sequence	Learning Contracts, Learning projects, Sequenced by readiness
				Learning activities	Transmittal techniques, Assigned readings	Inquiry projects, Independent study, Experiential techniques
				Evaluation	By teacher, Norm-referenced (on a curve), With grades	By learner-collected evidence validated by peers, facilitators, experts, criterion-referenced

The body of theory and practice on which teacher-directed learning is based is often given the label "pedagogy," from the Greek words paid (meaning child) and agogus (meaning guide or leader) - thus being defined as "the art and science of teaching children."

The body and theory and practice on which self-directed learning is based is coming to be labeled "andragogy," from the Greek word aner (meaning adult) - thus being defined as

"the art and science of helping adults (or, even better, maturing human beings) learn,"

These two models do not represent bad/good or child/adult dichotomies, but rather a continuum of assumptions to be checked out in terms of their rightness for particular learners in particular situations. If a pedagogical assumption is realistic for a particular situation, then pedagogical strategies are appropriate. For example, if a learner is entering into a totally strange content area, he or she will be dependent on a teacher UJ1til enough content has been acquired to enable self-directed inquiry to begun.

4. Self-Directed Learning.

One side of self-directed learning is a process in which learners (students) take responsibility for their own learning, including diagnosing needs, developing objectives, designing learning experiences, finding resources, and evaluating learning outcomes.

On the one band, characteristics of highly self-directed learners are:
- Self-Confident,
- Inner-Directed,
- Reflective,
- Achievement Motivated,
- Accommodating,
- Creative, Holistic Thinker, and,
- Not Dogmatic.

Which ones characterize you? Rate yourself on each on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

On the other band, skills of individuals with high levels of self-direction are:
- Strong Goal Setter,
- Good Decision Maker,
- Accurate Observer,
- Effective Listener, and
- High Reading Level.

How do your skills match these? Rate yourself on each on a scale of 1 (lowest) to 10 (highest).

The other side of self-directed learning is being a facilitator of learning - the kind of person who can help make self--directed learning happen in others. Facilitators of self-directed learning must know the following:
- How adults acquire and use skills, knowledge, and attitudes,
- How to apply different learning styles,
- How to help individuals, and groups with personal needs, ethical issues, and problems,
- How to help people establish personal and work-related goals,
- How to offer feedback on a timely basis,
- How to observe groups unobtrusively and gain information and insight,
- How to influence people to accomplish tasks and learn continuously,
- How to manage conflict in work settings at the individual, group, and organizational levels,
- How to negotiate so that all parties win,
- How social systems at work influence productivity and quality,
- How to communicate often and effectively in visual, oral, and written formats,
- How to gather information and stimulate insight in individuals, work teams, and groups through the use of interviews and other techniques,
- How to use quantitative and qualitative methods to analyze skill and leaning needs,
- How to establish positive, workable- relationships across a broad spectrum of people and groups,

— How to gain others' short- and long-term commitment to learning,
— How to build cohesive, viable work teams and self-directed groups,
— How to model self-esteem and foster self-esteem in others,
— How to apply workplace-learning and performance-improvement theories,
— How to develop and maintain learning environments that are conducive to creativity,
— How to accept uncertainty and get others to accept uncertainty,
— How to use positive interpersonal skills in various work settings,
— How to show concern and empathy for diverse learners and workers,
— How to use listening skills in different work settings,
— How to understand nonverbal communication among diverse individuals and groups,
— How to coach individuals and groups,
— How to give appropriate verbal and behavioral responses in stressful work situations, and,
— How to help reduce learners' stress in different work settings.

How do you score on these? Rate yourself on each on a scale of I (1owest) to 10 (highest).

5. Learning Styles.

Learning styles - what are they? People are unique and learn in four (4) different ways, contrary to the long standing idea that everyone learns the same way. A learning style is made up of two (2) major component parts: Perceiving how we take in information; and, Processing - how we make that information a part of ourselves.

First, Innovative Learners perceive information by sensing and feeling concrete reality; but, they process information by watching what is happening and reflecting on it. Second, Analytic Learners perceive information by abstract reasoning and thinking; but they process information by watching what is happening and reflecting on it. Third, Common Sense Learners perceive information by abstract reasoning and thinking; but they process information by actively experimenting with it through jumping in and trying it. And fourth, Dynamic Learners perceive information by sensing and feeling concrete reality; but, they process information by actively experimenting with it through jumping in and trying it.

Learning styles are somewhat similar to the trend in brain research and learning.

6. Brain Research and Learning.

One of the recent trends in brain research and learning takes us beyond the description of the left brain being cognitive, technical or linear, and the right brain being emotional, creative or global. The trend now is toward explaining how emotional intelligence outweighs cognitive ability and technical skills as a contributor to constructive success in the workplace or any other context.

On the emotional intelligence framework, Social Competence and Personal Competence are the two major components. Social Competence determines how we handle relationships, and is comprised of Empathy - awareness of others' feelings, needs, and concerns; and Social Skills - adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. Personal Competence -- determines how we manage ourselves, and is comprised of Self-Awareness - knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions; Self-Regulation - managing one's internal states, impulses, and resources; and Motivation - emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals_

7. Application of Learning.

If the trend of lifelong education is to succeed as the heartbeat of the twenty-first (2 I 51) century, it must be organized around four (4) types of learning and applied as the pillars of knowledge interacting together throughout a person's life: Learning to Know - acquiring the instruments of understanding; Learning to Do - ability to do a job of work and act creatively on one's environment; Learning to Live Together - to participate and co-operate with other people in all human activities; and Learning to Be - enabled to determine for themselves what they believe they should do in the different circumstances of life.

All of this application will reveal the treasure within the learner and grows from each person selecting out of their learning experience one or more Ideas they would like to try out in their back-home situations. Then they identify the steps they would take in applying the idea(s), and any obstacles or resistances they anticipate encountering m putting the idea(s) into effect. Lastly, strategies may be suggested which will help in dealing with and overcoming the obstacles and resistances for bringing about change. Application of learning ultimately culminates with learning and worthy performance going hand-in-hand as being two sides of the same coin_

8. Building Blocks of Adult Learning Experiences.

I have observed the trend that adult learning experiences need to have a structure - Building Blocks are what I call those elements of structure. In general, these elements may include our: Beliefs and Notions about Adults
as Learners; Perceptions Concerning the Qualities of Effective Teachers/Facilitators; Phases and Sequences of the Learning Process (theory of how adult learning takes place); Teaching Tips and Learning Techniques, and, Implementation of the Prepared Plan.

This process structure (or any other design one may develop according to adult learning principles) when used, will help move adult learning experiences from concept to reality. But to enhance the experience to a higher level, one last trend needs to be artiC1Jlated: modeling lifelong (adult) learning in our behavior and life.

9. Modeling Adult Learning.

As adult educators, we are models. Students learn more from our actions than our words. They want to see if our actions match our words. Congruence between theory and practice are important. With this in mind, if we believe that adults learn in a certain way, then it follows that we take it upon ourselves to model the conduct and attitude that demonstrate and support what we're trying to teach them. In other words, the personality of the adult educator is the teaching. For us, whose task is to help other adults learn, it means risking being ourselves, trusting our feelings and acting on them, thereby engaging a like commitment from our students. To be effective, an adult educator needs to have trust in the ability and potential of adult learners to understand the learning process and make the right choices. The adult educator must initiate trust with the adult learners. Those adult educators who care enough to exemplify trust in their adult learners are:

— Purposefully communicating to learners that they are each uniquely important; _
   Believing that learners know what their goals, dreams and realities are like;
— Expressing confidence that learners will develop the skills they need;
— Prizing the faith that the learners will learn what is needed:
— Feeling learners' need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and
   feelings;
— Enabling Tearners to evaluate their own progress in learning;
— Hearing learners indicate what their learning needs are;
— Engaging learners in clarifying their own aspirations;

— Developing a supportive relationship with learners;
— Experiencing unconditional positive regard for learners; and,
— Respecting the dignity and integrity of learners.

How much do you exemplify these trust factors? Rate yourself on each on a scale of I (lowest) to IO (highest). A lack of trust seriously hampers the learning process. However, if trusted, the adult learners may learn something, which otherwise, they would have learned less well, more slowly. or not at all. Trusting adult learners is a golden opportunity to help them fulfill their enormous potential.

Conclusion

It is a fact that we all know more about excellence than we put into practice. However, I wish to accept the challenge myself and invite others to join me in allowing these trends to transform us into more excellent adult educators. These trends – introduction of the current situation of adult education is some major nations, the new platform of the realization of lifelong learning through online learning, adult and child learning, self-directed learning, learning styles, brain research and learning, application of learning, building blocks of adult learning experiences, and modeling adult learning – may have a huge impact upon us. Then, we will not only be talking about adult education and learning [andragogy], but also we will be doing it and doing it better than we ever have before now. It will be like putting together the warp and the woof of an exquisitely beautiful cloth weaving. It will be paying tribute to those who have given so much of themselves in adult education to our benefit. We will also be refining costly and precious gems - adult learners. It will come together like the warp and the woof of an exquisitely beautiful cloth weaving. Thus, we will create a better climate with the adult learners for nurturing their seeds of adult learning into a glorious flower that flourishes and contributes to the communities, nations and world in which we live.