

*” Andragogy and Its Future, Lifelong Learning, My Relationship with Malcolm S. Knowles, Connection between Learning and Performance, and My Commitment to Andragogy:” An Interview by Monica Fedeli from Italy with John A. Henschke. Fedeli, M. Ph.D, Interviewer and Translator. In Journal of the Italian Association for Adult Education; Universita di Padova, Italy; Being Translated into Italian by Monica Fedeli; In Press) 2011.

Andragogy and Its Future, Lifelong Learning, My Relationship with Malcolm S. Knowles, Connection Between Learning and Performance, and My Commitment to Andragogy: An Interview by Monica from Italy with John A. Henschke

- 1) Could you please introduce yourself and your relationship with Malcolm Knowles?

My name is John Henschke and I am currently at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri. I joined that faculty a year ago after a 39 year professional career with the University of Missouri Extension as a Continuing Education Specialist; and, as an Associate Professor of Adult Education with masters and doctoral students on the University of Missouri-St. Louis campus. I characterize what I do as "teaching teachers of adults how to teach adults." Since I've joined Lindenwood University in July, 2009, we have started a new doctoral emphasis speciality in andragogy; it's like a dream come true and offers all kinds of possibilities, since I have been researching in andragogy for more than a decade.

My relationship with Malcolm S. Knowles is that I took my doctoral degree at Boston University and studied with Malcolm S. Knowles. He was my major advisor and my relationship with Malcolm deepened when I decided during a Change Strategy Seminar in which I was involved at Boston University. (We were looking at and interviewing people who were especially in the change field. We had interviewed a number of the leaders and I decided that I would like to have Malcolm as a subject of my dissertation, if it would be approved. I would study him as a change leader, as a change strategist. So, I went and asked Malcolm about the possibility of doing a dissertation on his change strategies. He said, "I would be honored and I give you the permission to do that; and my first order business is to get off of your dissertation committee." Malcolm would have been my dissertation chair; but, being that I was studying him he chose to, and rightly so, to get off the committee and serve me as an informational resource. In fact, other people who became members of my dissertation committee were the ones who would decide what the shape of my dissertation needed to be in consultation with me. So I studied him and finished the dissertation in 1973. The study was entitled , 'Malcolm S. Knowles: His contributions to the theory and practice of adult education'. This was up through 1972 when it was finished. My relationship with him was maintained over a long period of time. In fact, it was when he died on Thanksgiving Day in 1997, I happened to be in Europe at the time. I was staying overnight in a little cocoon [a small sleeping room] in the Paris airport transferring between a flight from Germany to Paris, and on the way home to St. Louis, Missouri. So while I was in the cocoon that night, I called my wife, as I always do over the night when I am gone from home. She told me some things that Thanksgiving night [that's Thanksgiving Day in the United States, it's

not Thanksgiving Day all round the world]. Anyway, she told me that Malcolm had died, and that the family members had contacted her, [who were trying to contact me, but I was out of the country at the time], and said they would like for me to develop and deliver the professional eulogy of Malcolm at his memorial service, which I was honored to do. That Professional Eulogy is on my website [<http://www.umsl.edu/~henschke>] in the 1997/98 issue of Adult Learning.

So, my relationship continued over the years and just recently, a year or so ago in 2008, I did an article in Adult Learning Network Journal on my experience of learning with Malcolm S. Knowles over 4 decades. My relationship has continued with family members. I know Eric and Barbara [his son and daughter] real well; have contact with them. I have just contacted them asking permission, along with Marcie Boucouvalas and Leo Johnson, to reissue Malcolm's book 'Making of an Adult Educator. An autobiographical journey'. We asked permission to reissue that and they said it was fine. We will be updating the bibliography, which I recently ran onto a number of articles not included in the original book published in 1989, or published since then. We will maintain the original text of his autobiography just like it was in 1989. We will have some other things going into it. A lady did a doctoral dissertation on Malcolm at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, to update the context of his writing that autobiographical journey. The historical pieces that he didn't include and she researched and felt like – well, we'll give it more context. I did a short biographical sketch of him and we will put that in the update. I want to put in my learning with Malcolm for 40 years. Marcie Boucouvalas will be doing an analysis of the autobiographical journey, indicating the places where he focused on groups and organizations within the society at large, in contrast to the accusation that has been leveled against him, I think wrongly so, mistakenly so, that he exclusively talked about the individual learner. So, in other words, my relationship with Malcolm has gone on more than 4 decades.

2) Could you please tell us something more about the future direction and development / practical applications of Andragogy? And What are you doing in this direction?

I see the future direction of andragogy; is that what you're asking, and what I see as the practical applications of it? I can send to you a copy of the original work that we researched for a number of years, which developed a fixed theme on practical applications of andragogy. In one of the sections is practical applications of andragogy. My original version of the andragogy research brings together six themes of which practical applications is one theme. The history and philosophy doesn't outline it in that particular way, but this one with the themes does. [What I would like to do is send to you a copy of that paper so you can look at that section]. I think there are around 70 different documents in that section that talk about the practical applications of andragogy. But also let me now, just right off

the top of my head, give you some of the things I think are very important regarding that.

The future of andragogy, as I see it, is emerging in a very positive direction because having done the background and some of the foundational research on taking it past what Malcolm did on andragogy and realizing that there is a whole worldwide foundation [but I've been limited to the English language documents, there are now 330 documents that we've been identified in this paper]. Now that we have begun to lay the foundation of andragogy, we will begin to see other areas that we will push into, and other people are interested in being involved in the continuing research. For instance, one of the situations is that I have this doctoral assistant from Bangkok, Thailand and in our conversations and her becoming aware of my work in andragogy, she says that they have a whole lot of people who have written about andragogy in Thailand, so she is willing to undertake writing about those people who have written, but my limitation is that I don't read Thai; in this research, I've been limited to English language documents. So, there is an area that she's going to be helping to extend the research in that particular direction. I see other people becoming very interested in carrying this forward partly because now for the 11th /12th year I have been doing this seminar in andragogy, and I continue to do a dialogues in andragogy session at every AAACE Conference; and, now with the international commission of adult education in a most recent number of years, focusing on andragogy. Adding to the next year's document iteration of this research, we may have 30 or more documents that we have identified. So I see the research expanding and going further. The research also that I'm doing is published in some books, in some journal articles, not a lot in the United States from adult learning publications, but cordial invitations from various book editors. Nevertheless, I've just been asked this morning to do a 25 hundred word article on future directions of andragogy in our AAACE adult learning journal, the practice journal. I will be writing something regarding that there are those along the way and you will see in adult education circles that there is a section in there where people are very adamant about getting rid of the term and content of andragogy in the adult education lexicon. At least, they wish to tone it down from its prominent place in the field. So, that's what I see as some of its future.

Practical applications of andragogy I've seen that are used in a hospital settings to develop and deal with improving of the management and the economic situation in health care; to lower the cost. I have worked for a number of years for an electric company and the manager of the training development division said to me we'd like to have you come and do something internally with that organization. He said, "I'd like to be able to do what you do." So, he came and took a master degree in adult education with me. For his capstone experience and his internship at the end, he said, "I'd like to do an analysis of using andragogy and those principles in our training division of our cooperation." He did that and he had all

the facts and figures of what the costs were of training development in the corporation . He analysed that if they revamped their training operation along the lines of andragogy and self directed learning, over a 4/5 year period they would save 4 million dollars. So andragogy is economically beneficial as well as people improving what their lives are and those instances can be replicated. You will find benefits of andragogy in the other paper that I send to you that talks about that whole section on practical applications.

- 3) You affirmed, that Andragogy is becoming a way of being, an attitude of mind. Could you please explain better this point of view and how it is related to Andragogy?

Basically, andragogy as a way of being and an attitude of mind boils down to this. I have written about andragogy, but I have also adopted andragogy as my *modus operandi*; a practice and research in theorizing, so that I am not saying to people, here's what andragogy is about and some day you ought to do that in your life on down the road. I say, "Here is what andragogy is about. In the process of my teaching classes and writing on what andragogy is about, I am seeking to exemplify andragogy in actual operation through my own involvement, as well as my reaching out to others in terms of seeking to involve them actively in the process, so that they are actually experiencing andragogy . So, it boils down to this; I don't believe that I ought to say to you, 'do what I tell you, not what I do'. But I say, 'I want to be a model of what it is that I'm trying to tell you, because if we are not modelling what we are teaching we are teaching something else.

- 4) You explored the gap between *learning* and *performance* within Andragogy, this concept is related to the Human Resources Development, could you please explain us this point of view?

The context of this idea comes within the Academy of human resource development [HRD]. There has been an argument that was going on in the HRD field during the early to mid 1990s, about the gap between *learning* and *performance*, and which is primary and the most important. One side of the argument said 'learning is primary, that's what this is all about'. The other side of the argument said 'performance is primary and that is what it's all about'. The learning side said 'performance is something that follows on' and the performance side said 'learning's alright but performance is the bottom line for corporations'. So, what I did was took the '95, '96, '97 and '98 proceedings of the Academy of Human Resource Development and I traced all of the articles in those proceedings that had talked about learning and all of them that had talked about performance. Then I brought that literature together and I talked about and addressed that issue. Basically my conclusion was that learning and performance are two sides of the same coin. I really dug into one piece; I mean what I did, because I'm

theologically trained and have that education in my background, I looked into the Greek and Hebrew biblical languages. I looked at words such as learning and teaching, guiding, leading, way, which really is an example or a demonstration of a way of life, a way of being. I took those words and traced the Hebrew explanation of what those words meant, and the Greek explanation and then I took an English dictionary and I related that. The central one of these words was the word 'way' used in the Hebrew idiom or the language. It talked about that the things were mysterious and they talked about the way of a bird in the air, a way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the ocean, and the way of a man with a maid. I dug into that to look at what it means when those are enacted. The idea of the way, when each one of those are enacted, you cannot look at those things afterwards and say 'oh I see the trail of what is going on'. You know that when a bird flies through the air it leaves no mark that says a bird has flown through the air. When a ship goes through the ocean you know after the waves have gone away there's no trace left to say that a ship passed through here. When a serpent goes over a rock, that's the way they move; there's no trace that a serpent has been over this rock. When a man and a woman come together in a physical way there is no way to look at that afterwards from outside and say there's a trace that has gone on regarding the man and the woman coming together physically.

I said that in each one of those instances there is a process that has to take place for them to start trying to do what they do and then moving forward to being able to do it and do it well. There is a learning process, a ship can be guided by a captain but the captain has to learn how to work with a ship. A serpent, when the serpent is born doesn't automatically be able to do that, but has to learn how. You take a bird, the mother bird pushes them out of the nest and then she swoops down to catch the bird before the bird hits the ground and is hurt. so that the bird learns to fly over a period of them. The way of a man with a maid takes learning and practice over the years; it does not happen automatically. Of course, when I talked about all that at a conference, everybody laughed. But that's the manner in which the word 'way' was used. So there's learning and performance, That's how I basically tie all that together, so they're two sides and part of the same coin.

5) Could you please outline the benefits derived by professionals willing to intentionally use andragogy in lifelong learning?

I think probably the best explication of the benefits of andragogy is that I will give you 5 different demonstrations. I've already given you the one on the electric company that would be able to save money in their training project. I'll give you a second one of a woman that came to my program and she developed her doctoral dissertation at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, on applying andragogical principles in internet learning. She used that in a healthcare situation to reduce the costs and to improve the lives of the people that were there and to help them become promoted in terms of their own career. A third one that's out in the real

world if you want to put it that way, comes from the side of research and practice of adult education. Cyril Houle, a very prominent adult education researcher, made mention of the fact that Malcolm's process of andragogy is the most learner-centered of any of the processes and program planning processes and implementation in the adult education field that he has ever seen in all of his life. He was Malcolm's mentor and he also chided Malcolm by saying that how adults learn and how children learn, there is no difference, even though Malcolm said he thought that there was a difference. In the larger article I will send to you I will point out that probably in 1992 or 1996, Houle said that Malcolm's is the most learner centered of any of the program planning models. A fourth instance is William Maehl, who did a life-long learning book and studied 34 of higher education institutions who were trying to implement life-long learning, talked about how Malcolm really brought together the effectiveness of how institutions can move from a traditional mode into a life-long learning mode so it helps learners in a life-long basis. The fifth example is Dusan Savicevic from Yugoslavia, now Serbia, who is the best researcher I think of any andragogue in the world of andragogy, while he thought early that Malcolm did not get or understand andragogy, his more recent comment is that watching him over a long period of time, that Malcolm will have a high place in the influence on andragogy becoming a research discipline in a university setting. This comment is in terms of andragogy reaching a discipline status and research status of a scientific discipline and no one will be more influential.