

STUDIES  
IN PEDAGOGY,  
ANDRAGOGY,  
AND GERONTAGOGY

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Dušan M. Savićević

Adult Education:  
From Practice  
to Theory Building

37

PETER LANG

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Edited by Franz Pöggeler

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To my grandchildren: Marko, Marija,  
Jakša, Filip and Emilija in the hope  
that they will be lifelong learners.

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## Foreword

In this book professor Dusan M. Savicevic (for many years one of the leading experts of andragogy in South East Europe) summarizes his practical experiences and theoretical insights of the last thirty years. In the course of these decades he worked not only in his own country, but also in international and worldwide institutions for the development of a modern adult education enabling all groups of the adult population for bearing responsibility in profession and society.

I have known Dusan Savicevic many years, and our contact was not interrupted or ended by political events. I thought highly of his engagement for a liberal international exchange of andragogical ideas and experiences. Also during the former political epoch he informed himself and his students about the results of andragogy in other European countries and he compared correctly as well the differences as the similarities and common convictions in the adult education of contrasting political systems. We can note that he did not compare with a simple „black-and white-method“. It is a great advantage of a long comparative research to get a delicate feeling for a world-wide basic knowledge on educating adult citizens. Comparisons can show us the interdependence between the different national and continental systems of adult education. And Dusan Savicevic – as a master of comparing – knows that all systems can learn from each other.

A precondition for every correct comparison is to be well informed about the andragogical results of other countries – and to co-operate with the colleagues in the other countries. The curriculum vitae of Savicevic is enriched with numerous research visits in other cultures and continents, with honourable fellowships in foreign universities (especially in the USA and Canada). He read and quoted the foreign literature – more than was usual in territories with communist governments. Of course it shall not be denied that about a quarter of this book refers to adult education in the former Tito-Yugoslavia. But it would be unhistorical and naive to assume that a serious social research has been impossible in a political system like that of the Tito – epoch. Dusan Savicevic has no reason to „forget“ or to hide his publications of three decades with the change of the political and economic structure of South East Europe. The Yugoslavian communism was a rather liberal one, compared with that of (for example) in the DDR and in the Soviet Union, where scientific publications of the „capitalistic West“ were hard-

ly available for scientists. Savicevic and other Yugoslavian colleagues quoted western publications correctly – without a one-sided or polemic intention.

Undoubtedly, adult education in Yugoslavia had its political limitations and disadvantages, but did much for tasks which are sometimes neglected in capitalist or more liberal countries. We mention for instance the struggle against illiteracy, a skilful combination of general and professional education, and the education for the working classes. As Savicevic explains, functional illiteracy of young people (and that means: the assistance for more or less underprivileged citizens) must be overcome by adult education. An other task about which we can read interesting information in this book is the initiative of adult education for reducing long-time unemployment (in the most countries of Europe an ardent problem).

A large part of this book informs the reader about the development, the present engagement and the methods of andragogy in the universities of the old and the new state of Yugoslavia and in other countries. Andragogy is as much acknowledged and proved in the Yugoslavian universities as pedagogy, and both sciences are equipped with comparatively many professors and lecturers. Adult education is regarded as an essential continuation of compulsory-school-education and andragogy an integral discipline of the educational sciences, while in other European countries the pedagogists sometimes claim a priority. Andragogical research has reached a high standard in Belgrade and other universities of South East Europe, and we regret that the results of andragogical research here are not integrated enough in the research-work of Middle, West and North Europe.

Hitherto, important books of andragogists published in the language of Yugoslavia are not yet translated into English, German or other „great“ languages, and short abstracts in English cannot describe exactly enough the new theories of adult education coming from universities in South East Europe. Perhaps the edition of this book can give an impulse for translating important publications also of other andragogists of the European region. Many of them are well-trained in multilingual speaking and writing. Therefore they are „at home“ in foreign literature, while the majority of andragogists in northern and western countries are only trained in one foreign language.

The andragogists in the former and in the contemporary Yugoslavia have never lost their contacts with the recent andragogical research in western and northern countries, and their knowledge of new tendencies and methods of research has always been up to date. This can be proved by the publications of Dusan Savicevic.

Obviously, there are traditional reasons for the North- and West-moving interests of andragogy in South East Europe. Countries like the Federal-Republic

of Yugoslavia, Montenegro, Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia belonged to the old Habsburgian Monarchy, which was a multicultural and interethnic region. After the liberation from long Turkish occupation, the states of South East Europe stressed their co-operation with the western and northern cultures. We should keep in mind that the co-operation of researchers must be two-sided, and this means that the andragogists of western and northern countries of Europe should profit from getting acquainted with the great European tradition in the South East of our continent. Our European perspectives must be widened to the East. In this effort the book of Dusan Savicevic can inspire us. It is a result of a realized practice that has built its theory step by step. This theory has not been invented at the calm „green desk“ of non-political and sophisticated scholar but in epochs of tremendous political, cultural and economic changes – with wars, revolutions and collapses.

The author is now 70 years old. Many members of his generation did not survive until the end of the vivid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The message of this book is that the best way of survival is the attempt to practice political responsibility and maturity for a peaceful human life – with the assistance of lifelong learning.

*Franz Pöggeler*

## Preface

Educating and teaching adults has become not only an area significant for andragogic practice, but also for research and developing of theory. A sum of knowledge has been formed which afforded the universities to accept andragogy as a scientific discipline and study course. As we find ourselves at the threshold of the 21st century, educating and teaching adults will prove vital for man's survival, for improved and more human living. This will be an era of lifelong learning the focus of which will be educating and teaching adults. The social, scientific and cultural development so far vindicates this thesis. Learning will be at the core of overall human activity: working, social, political, family and personal in terms of self-development and self-realization. The knowledge gained about these problems and processes will be of consequence for a prudent advance toward the future. There is no need to move along this area by applying the trial-and-error method. Breakthroughs in education and teaching are needed by way of scientific and professional engagement of individuals and social groups.

The works included in this book came into being over the past thirty years and have appeared in publications in English. They appeared on the occasion of significant events (professional conferences, scientific symposia) in the international movement for the education of adults in which the author has actively participated from the 60s to the 90s of this century. In part, these events reflect the situation in andragogic theory and practice over the given period. The basis methodological approaches in the works are as follows: historical, comparative and theoretical. Nevertheless, the focus is on the comparative study of education and teaching adults. A mere one-fourth of the works pertains to the author's native country. The contributions in this book have retained their authenticity. Only minor technical interventions have been carried out. They relate to the countries which have since ceased to exist or today appear under a new name. I can only hope that this will not invite confusion among the readership.

The works, according to their content, are divided into six groups: Literacy as a factor of social and individual development and basic human rights; The relationship between work and adult education; University and adult education; Training and research in the field of adult education; Lifelong education as a humanistic philosophy of man; and Roots and roads of the evolution of andragogy. Thus, the book in terms of content has gained in coherence moving



from practice towards articulating theory. I hope that andragogues (practitioners and theoreticians) would find in it useful information for a fuller understanding of certain concepts and views of andragogic theory and practice.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Professor Dr. Dr. h.c. Franz Pöggeler for the initiative to have these works published in a separate book.

I would like to express my appreciation to Professor Budd Hall, Professor of adult education at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, for reading the manuscript.

January, 1997

Dusan M. Savićević

## Part one

# Literacy as a Factor of Social and Individual Development and Basic Human Right