

# CAN SOUTH AFRICAN ANDRAGOGICS IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN ANGLO-AMERICAN AND CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN ADULT EDUCATIONISTS?

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Having been introduced to Continental European andragogy through study at the University of South Africa (UNISA)<sup>2</sup>, the author gained the impression that many of the difficulties associated with the andragogy debate<sup>3</sup> can be avoided by applying some of the available results of Continental European research on andragogy. It is understandable that many Anglo-American educationists<sup>4</sup> might not be able to use research findings on andragogy expressed in languages other than English. However, some European<sup>5</sup> educationists published their results on andragogy in English, in 1971 (47:37-56) and 1973 (45) (46), and as far as the author is aware no reference is made to these findings in the andragogy debate. Consequently, the impression was gained that many Anglo-American educationists regard their concept of adult education to be different from that of European educationists. The author also observed that a few South African educationists, while using a European approach to investigate andragogy, describe it in a way more likely to be understood by Anglo-American educationists.

The author wondered if the South African concept of andragogy could enable comparison of the Anglo-American and European concepts of andragogy and thereby facilitate greater understanding of what andragogy is. So far in this introduction there has been no mention of **andragogics**. Although everyday knowledge of English language indicates that andragogics is somehow related to andragogy, the precise nature of this relationship will be explained later in this paper. It cannot be denied that many Anglo-American educationists refer to adult education as "**andragogy**", this term being introduced in the United States of America by Lindeman (33:38) and then Knowles (26), and in the United Kingdom by Simpson (42:186 - 194) and then Aldred *et al* (1)<sup>6</sup>. Consequently, asking what Anglo-American andragogy is, is an appropriate point of departure.

## 2.0 ANGLO-AMERICAN ANDRAGOGY

As already stated, educationists have encountered difficulty in explaining just what andragogy is. The author finds two main reasons for this difficulty. Firstly, "andragogy" is not yet listed in the major English language dictionaries<sup>7</sup> and secondly, and more importantly, the term is used to name many different, but closely interrelated, concepts. For example, "andragogy" is used to name: the art and science of helping adults learn (27:38); an **approach** - the total embodiment and expression of a philosophy of education for adults (1:2); a **theoretical approach** (1:36); a **teaching methodology** (40:15); an **ideology** (10:143-155) and a **model**

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2 A Diploma in Tertiary Education and an MEd degree (41) both with an extensive andragogy component were gained in 1984 and 1988 respectively.

3 Other researchers (40:14), (23:182) (8:17-20), point out some of these difficulties and warn (40:14-15) (6:10-11) of the dangers of gogymania. Davenport and Davenport (9:153-159) provide a thorough chronology of the andragogy debate and Hiemstra (21) provides an extensive unpublished bibliography on andragogy.

4 Adult educationists are taken to be researchers whose topic of study is the education of adults. To keep this paper to its required length, "educationist(s)" replaces the ambiguous and lengthy "adult educationist(s)".

5 To keep this paper to its required length, "European" replaces "Continental European".

6 Lindeman published his paper on andragogik in 1926 and Knowles published "Andragogy not Pedagogy!" in 1968. According to Jarvis (23:175), Knowles accepts that "androgogy" is a misspelling. This chronology is corroborated by other researchers (21) (7:4-5) (23:169). Simpson published his paper in 1964 and Aldred *et al* published their booklet in 1983.

7 Gove (18), Sinclair (44), Simpson and Weiner (43) and Kirkpatrick (25) were consulted.

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of process design (28:14).

Despite using andragogy to name several different concepts, it is safe to state that for Anglo-American educationists "andragogy" is used most frequently to name, as does Knowles, **the art and science of educating adults**. It is understandable that many educationists use "andragogy" in this way because the traditional definition of "pedagogy" (from Greek *pais* meaning youth (38:23) boy or child (38:1) (12:19) (24:3) and *agogos* meaning leader (12:19) (51:219), **guide** (38:23) or **accompanist** (52:198), is the **art and science of teaching or educating children**. Following the etymological construction of "pedagogy", "andragogy" is derived from Greek *aner*, *andreaia* and *andra* meaning Man<sup>8</sup> (52:199) (38:1), grown up human being (45:4) or adult (38:23) (51:397) and *agogos*. However, using "andragogy" to name both **an art and a science** is likely to lead to misunderstanding because an art and a science are two different concepts. An understanding of European andragogy illustrates how misunderstanding in this regard can arise and, consequently, how it can, to some extent, be avoided.

### 3.0 CONTINENTAL EUROPEAN ANDRAGOGY

As Van Enckevort (47:37-56) finds, the term "andragogy" has a history going back to 1833 and is now used in France, the Netherlands, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland, Austria and Yugoslavia<sup>9</sup>. The scope of this study did not allow reflection on the findings on what andragogy is, in all the countries just mentioned, and since Dutch researchers such as Van Enckevort (47) and Ten Have (45) (46) have recorded some of their research results on andragogy in English, the Netherlands was taken as an example of European andragogy<sup>10</sup>. The very brief summary given in this paragraph is taken mainly from the results of Van Enckevort and Ten Have<sup>11</sup>.

From about 1950 adult education was regarded as one aspect of **social pedagogy**<sup>12</sup>, but in 1954, Ten Have who since 1950 held a chair in Foundations of social pedagogy, began using "andragogy" in his lectures. He also began the groundwork for a discipline in which andragogy would be the phenomenon investigated. Consequently, a distinction between **andragogy** - the **practice of educating adults** - and **andragology** - the discipline or the **practice of science in an andragogy perspective** - came about. A facilitator involved in **educating adults** is referred to as an **andragogue** and the person who **studies** the education of adults is an **andragologist**. This straightforward distinction avoids misunderstanding resulting from using one term, "andragogy", to refer to both the practice of education (art) and the practise of science (science), as in Anglo-American andragogy.

The distinction, "andragogy and andragology" just mentioned, together with the two additional reasons to follow, may lead some Anglo-American educationists to consider their concept of andragogy to be different to that of European andragologists. Firstly, many Dutch andragologists recognise that there are many theories, ideologies and philosophies influencing andragogy. Any one philosophy (system of beliefs/theories) whether it be personal, cultural or a particular school of thought is called an **andragogic** and, as the reader might expect, there is a multitude of **andragogics**<sup>13</sup>. Many Anglo-American educationists would not be familiar with the term

8 No gender bias is intended: "Man" with a capital "M" indicates anthropos (the species) and not andros (male) and unnecessary use of "he/she" and "his/her" has been avoided in this paper.

9 Van Enckevort (47:37-41) provides a thorough description of the origins of the term "andragogy" in Europe.

10 This selectivity is simplistic but necessary for this short paper.

11 Hake (20:285-294) and Van Gent (48:383-395) (49:310-314) (50:19-26), for example, have provided more recent information in English.

12 Ten Have (45:3) defines **social pedagogy** as: "... a kind of training for all kinds of social and cultural work: for social work in the narrower sense of the word, for child guidance, probation work, settlement work, work in the neighbourhood centers and educational or cultural work with children, youngsters and adults". (Underlining in the original).

13 This definition is that of Van Enckevort (47:42). Although Ten Have (45:5) defines andragogics as the study of philosophies/theories he later (45:6) provides evidence to show that Van Enckevort's definition is more frequently

"andragogics" because various andragogics, such as Plato's andragogic, would be studied in the philosophy of education.

Secondly, **andragology is regarded as a science** - a purely scientific approach to the study of andragogy and andragogics. It is likely that many Anglo-American educationists do not regard themselves as being involved in science. For example, Moore (36:7) finds that "Educational theory doesn't operate like scientific theory and isn't altogether amenable to the tests of scientific method.", Lehtonen (32:18-19) finds that "... adult education as a scientific discipline seldom has an established position ...", and Apps (2:60) finds that scientific method can deal with only one of three types of research question in adult education. Having investigated, albeit superficially, some perceived differences in Anglo-American and European andragogy, the author then examined the possibility of the **South African concept of andragogics** as a means of showing why the perceived differences are there and whether or not they are real differences.

#### 4.0 SOUTH AFRICAN ANDRAGOGY AND ANDRAGOGICS

Like Lindeman and Knowles in the United States and Simpson and Aldred *et al* in the United Kingdom, C K Oberholzer (37), C K Oberholzer and Greyling (38) and Viljoen and Pienaar (52:199-202) in South Africa found that the term "andragogy" better describes the reality of the education of adults than does the term "pedagogy". Andragogical research is a relatively new occurrence in South Africa and consequently, the literature in this field is, as yet, very limited. Oberholzer C K and Oberholzer C K and Greyling, are pioneers in this field and the author has relied extensively on their work for this paragraph, together with the results of some postgraduate students<sup>14</sup> working in UNISA. Using "South African andragogy" is not an implication that all educationists in South Africa use "andragogy" to refer to adult education. Indeed, many of them (34:183-214) (16:215-224) (3:225-244) would consider terms such as "andragogy" and "andragogics" to be an unnecessary mystification and complication of education. Four main ways were found in which the South African concept of **andragogics** can improve understanding between Anglo-American and European educationists.

#### 4.1 Using "andragogics" rather than "andragology" to name the discipline

Unlike their European colleagues, South African educationists refer to the discipline of adult education as **andragogics** and the researcher who studies andragogy (who practises andragogics) as an **andragogician** and **not andragology** and **andragologist** respectively. There is a well-grounded, but very subtle, reason for this choice of terminology. Since authentic educationists are involved in research to obtain **reliable and trustworthy results** they are not permitted to promote or defend any view, opinion, philosophy, theory, ideology or belief about andragogy. The educationists' task is to describe what andragogy is, as adequately as is humanly possible. **Theories and philosophies** (for short) are regarded as data to be tested for their ability to **adequately describe the reality** of the education of adults and thereby used to assist with more adequate description of that reality. Consequently, there is no need for a grouping of these potentially thousands of theories or philosophies under a separate heading, nor for a separate study of them. In other words, there is no need for that distinction made by Dutch educationists between andragogics and andragology. The use of only **andragogy** and **andragogics** simplifies matters because it parallels the Anglo-American "theory" (discipline) and "practice"<sup>15</sup>. South African educationists have a well-grounded reason for

used. The author has, so far, encountered only two references to **andragogics** in the Anglo-American adult education literature: those of Mather (35:29) and Yonge (55:160-167).

14 See for example, Chesler (4), Finn (14), Flynn (15), Higgs (22), and Robb (10).

15 The difficulty for Anglo-American educationists is that many lexicographers (11:369) (43:Vol XI:417-418) (44:1058) regard **pedagogics** and **pedagogy** as one and the same. This indicates that they have not made the distinction between an art (practice of education) and a science (the practice of science).

using "**andragogics**" instead of "andragology" to name the discipline/theory. This reason offers a second opportunity for improved understanding between Anglo-American and European educationists.

**4.2 Andragogy as one manifestation of the agogic mode of being**  
South African educationists, like their Dutch colleagues, have found andragogy to be the **unique human activity** of guidance, accompaniment or support of one adult by another adult. It has also been found that this accompaniment or support can extend to child and adult (**pedagogy**), and older adult and adult (**gerontagogy**). However, South African educationists have identified, and explicate in extensive detail, an **agogic mode of being** or, for short, **the agogic** (38:5). The agogic, from Greek *agogike* meaning that which is concerned with accompaniment, *agogos* meaning to lead, guide or accompany and *agein* meaning the act of leading, accompaniment and supporting (51:218-219) for example, is a **unique human relationship** involving two people in a supportive, accompanying **activity**. Three manifestations of the agogic are usually identified namely, the **pedagogic, the andragogic and the gerontagogic**<sup>16</sup>. It is mainly for this reason<sup>17</sup> that the discipline is called "andragogics" and not "andragology": **andragogics involves research into the nature of the andragogic mode of being.**

Highlighting the **agogic** assists understanding between Anglo-American and European educationists in six main ways. First, it illustrates that the introduction of terms such as "**andragogy**", "**andragogue**", "**andragogics**" and "**andragogician**" is not the result of mere whims of some researchers but an attempt to describe the need for accompaniment of adults on their way to more fulfilled adulthood<sup>18</sup> - a reality of human existence which gives rise to the education of adults. Further explication of the complexities of the andragogic is beyond the scope of this paper but, as far as the author is aware, Yonge (55:160-167) is the only Anglo-American educationist who has studied andragogy in terms of the andragogic.

Second, the **agogic** implies that the **andragogic** is interrelated with other modes of the agogic, that is the **pedagogic** and **gerontagogic** (38:5) (52:202). Consequently, andragogy (education of adults) is not separated by "water tight" barriers (38:23) from pedagogy (education of children) and gerontagogy (education of older adults) but is only one manifestation of accompaniment in an interrelated continuity and progression in human existence. Third, since the **agogic** is essential throughout life for more fulfilled adulthood, it explains both Anglo-American and European educationists' findings that involvement in **education must be lifelong**. Fourth, since the andragogic can manifest in any situation where two adults, one being more experienced than the other, meet, andragogy can take place in many settings and, consequently, grounds Anglo-American and European educationists' findings that education of adults can take place **outside formal educational institutions**. Fifth, since the agogic is a unique human relationship, applicable to all people irrespective of race, religion and gender, some recently coined terminology in the andragogy debate can be shown to be inappropriate. For example, the term "**humanagogy**" (29: 261-264) is tautologous; "**eldergogy**" (54) and "**gerogogy**" (31) ignore the prior and grounded use of "gerontagogy"; "**synergogy**" (56:18) is merely the name for a teaching method using team work, and "**gynandragogy**" (5:113-115) is tautologous because andragogy (Greek *aner* meaning adult) includes both male and female.

16 For reasons that cannot be explicated in this short paper **gerontagogics** and **gerontology** are related but not the same disciplines.

17 There are two other, but simplistic reasons: firstly, it is permissible in English to identify a discipline with the suffix "-ics", such as in ballistics and linguistics. Secondly, **andragology** may be confused with **andrology** which according to Kirkpatrick (25:43) is the branch of medicine which deals with the functions and diseases peculiar to men.

18 Towards what is the adult accompanied? "**More fulfilled adulthood**" is a complex category: Anglo-American educationists might be more familiar with "continued self-realisation and self-actualisation", but further

Sixth, the use of "**andragogical**" is clarified: it refers to the research activity. To refer to the educating (andragogy) activity one should use "the/an **andragogic** situation", not "the/an **andragogical** situation".

#### 4.3 Andragogical publications in the English language

Those South African educationists with their cultural roots in Europe (mainly the Netherlands, Germany and, to some extent, France), have made available in English many of the results of European educationists. For example, in 1975 Oberholzer C K (37), through UNISA, offered the first opportunity in South Africa to undertake studies in andragogics and Greyling has continued this programme. English-speaking, South African postgraduate research in andragogics or, more generally, **agogics**, has already been referred to and in addition, current advanced research underway on agogics is making considerable progress in describing what andragogy is<sup>19</sup>. Since **agogics** is the common denominator in **pedagogics**, **andragogics** and **gerontagogics**, the results of **pedagogicians** published in English are also helpful. Although **pedagogicians** study child education, their results are helpful because they outline in extensive detail the systematic and methodical way of studying the **agogic** learned from European educationists who undertook pioneering work in agogics<sup>20</sup>. The reader is probably aware that "a **systematic and methodical way of studying**" is another way of saying "scientific investigation" and this leads to the fourth way of assisting understanding.

#### 4.4 Andragogics as scientific investigation of andragogy

Just as their Dutch colleagues regard andragology as scientific study, so South African educationists regard andragogics as scientific research. However, South African educationists can assist understanding in this regard because they give extensive description in English of their scientific methodology and a detailed explanation as to why their research into andragogy is, and must be, scientific. For example, it is explained that:

a) the term "scientific" does not refer only to **natural or physical science** but includes **social or human science**; b) if a methodical and systematic approach is not taken in research the findings are no better than opinions or beliefs<sup>21</sup>, and, consequently, cannot add reliable facts to the knowledge of andragogy; and c) since agogy (the need for accompaniment) is both a **phenomenon** and an aspect of human existence, the **existential phenomenological approach** is the most likely to give adequate answers to what andragogy is. In addition, South African agogicians such, as those already mentioned and others (13:36-70) (12:211-136) (19:1-10) (52:27-41), for example, explain in extensive detail how they apply the existential phenomenological approach and its interrelationship with disciplines such as **philosophical anthropology, ontology, axiology** and **ethics**. A detailed explanation of why andragogics (the systematic and methodical study of andragogy) is scientific study and just how it is scientific illustrates that both Anglo-American and European educationists are striving for the same goal - the truth/facts (the most adequate description possible) about andragogy.

### 5.0 CONCLUSIONS

The author finds that a study of South African andragogics can enable improved understanding between Anglo-American and Continental European adult educationists. However, there are two main reasons why some educationists may not choose to study andragogics and consequently,

<sup>19</sup> Some of the topics being studied at the doctoral level include: *A fundamental perspective on patriotism and ethnicity in education* (Chesler, L); *Agogic moments in the anthropology of Reinholdt Niebuhr* (Higgs, P); *Educating educators in preventative education* (Finn, P A) and *Adulthood as an existential-ethical continuum in fundamental andragogic perspective: can it ground definitions in adult education?* (Robb W M). Levitz, E is conducting work at the MEd level on: *The early adult and vocational maturity: a fundamental andragogic perspective on work as an anthropological category*.

<sup>20</sup> Such as Langeveld (30), Perquin (39), Waterink (53) and Gielen and Strasser (17).

<sup>21</sup> This does not deny that all adult educators, whether they are aware of it or not, educate from a philosophy of life.

these two reasons are more fundamental inhibitors to understanding. Firstly, even though it is understood why "andragogics" is used to name the discipline of adult education, some educationists may reject out of hand what they regard as **complicating and mystifying terminology**. Secondly, despite explaining that science is not limited to physical or natural science, many educationists might consider science to involve only scientific or mechanistic research methodologies inappropriate for researching the education of adults, and may not consider their role as that of scientist.

Consequently, to further improve the understanding between Anglo-American and Continental European adult educationists three further studies must be conducted: the first testing **whether or not agogical terminology is really necessary** and the second, **whether or not adult educationists are scientists**. These two future studies are likely to contribute to overcoming the problem identified by Jarvis (23:178), that andragogy has never been sufficiently elaborated in philosophical terms. The third study, however, would be longer-term and arises from European and South African **andragogy as the supportive accompaniment of one adult by another adult**, not only in education but in **management, medicine and social work**, for example. Attempts to identify the implications of the andragogic mode of being in many different settings for Anglo-American andragogy would highlight just where Anglo-American and Continental European adult educationists differ and consequently, provide opportunities for arriving at a more adequate description of what andragogy is.

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