LIFELONG EDUCATION FOR ADULTS

AN INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK

Edited by

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Andragogy

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Andragogy has been defined as "... the art and science of helping adults to learn and the study of adult education theory, processes, and technology to that end" (Titmus et al. 1979). It is a neologism formed, by analogy with pedagogy, from the Greek words *andros* (man) and *agein* (to lead), and it means to lead or educate adults. The term was first used by E. Rosenstock in Berlin in 1924 and then in Switzerland in 1951, when it appeared as the title of a book (Hanselmann 1951).

Up to the late 1980s, the term has only achieved general acceptance in a few European countries—Poland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the German Democratic Republic, the Netherlands, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia. It also appears sometimes in other professional literature, for example in UNESCO documents. In English-speaking countries the adoption of the term has on the whole been resisted. Such penetration as it has achieved in the United States has been greatly assisted by Malcolm Knowles's advocacy (Knowles 1980).

The need for a separate term to denote the practice and study of helping adults to learn became apparent when it was widely perceived that the principles and practices of pedagogy, belonging as they did to child and youth education, were not entirely appropriate to the education of adults. Although some knowledge derived from the education of children was equally applicable to adults, there was much that was not. Having passed through childhood development, people followed a further series of physical and psychological developments in adult life. They had status, responsibilities to others, and functions different from those of children; a larger and usually richer body of experience, different motives and learning needs, and a time scale different from that of childhood. It was necessary for the organization of learning experiences to be adapted to adult life, since adult learning was different in degree and, many held, sometimes in kind from the learning of children. Study was required to build up theories and practices adapted to the adult situation. In fact, a new discipline was required, hence the concept of andragogy. If English-speaking countries have resisted the term, it is not that they reject the specificity of adult education, but that they doubt whether education, or any part of its study, such as pedagogy or andragogy, qualifies as a distinct science or discipline.

1. Andragogical Subdisciplines

In those countries where usage of the term andragogy is accepted, the diversity of adult education has led to the development of a number of subdisciplines. Basic andragogy, for example, treats the structure of fundamental concepts, principles, and definitions concerning adult education. It usually forms a part of introductory training courses for adult educators. Comparative andragogy, or comparative adult education, is the study of macrosocial variables, across and between countries, which contribute to regional and national differences in adult education processes.

The concept of lifelong learning has given to adult education new perspectives on the methods and means by which people may achieve the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values necessary to total personal development. The integration of learning with other activities and obligations typical of adult life; the differences of the adult socioeconomic situation from that of children; adults' experience, self-image, readiness to learn, and their attitudes to learning require specific methods of teaching and learning which are the field of andragogical didactics.

In addition to these subdisciplines which cover adult education activity of any kind there are some which relate to specific situations, such as industrial andragogy, military andragogy, social andragogy, penological andragogy, family andragogy, and gerontological andragogy.

Andragogy has not yet evolved its own research methods. For the most part it uses the standard ones of the social sciences. The classical experimental method is, however, more rare than in school research, no doubt because adults, as free agents, are less easily manipulated and have less time to give to researchers than children at school. It is also true that whereas cognitive learning may be adequately measured, it has not been possible to observe and evaluate accurately the affective learning outcomes of adult education by methods now in use. Since adult education is largely directed at achieving changes in feelings, values, and attitudes, this is a serious weakness.

2. Andragogical Definition of an Adult

There is little agreement in adult education literature on what constitutes an adult. Some authors bring in other disciplines to help solve the problem. Some hold that one becomes an adult at a certain age, usually 18 or 21, according to country. Others use psychological criteria, defining an adult as one who is emotionally, socially, and intellectually mature. This approach is sometimes complicated by linking maturity to social and economic status, so that young people still pursuing their initial education, at whatever age, are not considered adults.

For andragogy all these approaches are inadequate. In some countries persons under 18 years of age enrol in adult education programmes because they have finished school. Personal maturity is not an absolute state, reached once and for all, but more a lifelong process conditioned by personal and social needs. In any case, an immature person may have more need of adult education than a mature one. It makes more sense, for the

purposes of andragogy, to define adulthood in terms of a person's relation to the educational process, since it also permits a clear definition in relation to pedagogy. Pedagogy is concerned with those for whom education is the primary or central activity or social role (children and adolescents); andragogy is concerned with the education of those who have completed or interrupted their initial education, in order to take part in other major activities or take on other social roles. These are then, by definition, adults (Ogrizović 1966).

3. The Andragogical Cycle

The rigid centralized planning of the formal educational system in some European countries, and the uniformity of timetables and curricula in schools have been much criticized, notably by John Holt and Ivan Illich. They have also been generally seen as quite inappropriate to adults. Indeed, in the early years of its evolution during the 1950s and 1960s, andragogy developed to some degree as a direct reaction against the then dominant practices in pedagogy. In those years, before the emergence of lifelong education to prominence, a basic scheme was devised for the adult educational process, which has been called the andragogical cycle.

It consists of five different stages: the identification and analysis of educational needs; the identification and selection of programme contents required to achieve the proposed educational goals; the planning of methods, rhythm, and pace; the implementation of the programme; and the evaluation of the programme process and outcomes.

A single adult educator, or andragogue, may carry out all the stages, fulfilling different functions. He or she may appear as the analyst of the educational needs and status of potential participants; as the programmer selecting content, hierarchy, and sequence of learning; as the course planner designing the whole series of educational experiences; as the teacher who realizes the programme; or as the evaluator of the educational outcomes (Pöggeler 1974).

In large educational institutions each function may be carried out by different specialists, but this is not possible in small ones, which have only two or three full-time staff. Most commonly the implementation and evaluation of the programme is undertaken by part-time educators (Titmus 1981)—needs analysis, programming, and planning being carried out by full-timers.

(a) *Identification of educational needs.* The andragogue has to discover the real educational needs of the learners. Even in formal, second chance education, where the standards and the course content are fixed to meet external requirements, there is a difference between the demands of the course and the learners' educational needs which ought to be resolved. The andragogical approach is both inductive and deductive. It analyses the situation of the learner both as an individual and as a member of society, with its own development goals and ideology at local and national levels. Goals and objectives are then set to meet individual and social needs.

(b) *Curriculum planning.* Education can only be effective if its starting point is related to the prior experience and education level of the learner. Therefore the curriculum should be prepared by an adult educator who has a good knowledge of the participants. Their formal education is only one indication of their actual knowledge, their informal education should also be taken into account. The curriculum should remain flexible and open to change throughout the cycle as continuing interaction between educator and participants reveals new educational needs.

(c) *Planning programme formats.* If the second stage of the andragogical cycle establishes the content of learning, the third serves to establish the forms the learning experiences are to take. These are determined by the aims and objectives of the programme, the situation of the participants, and the circumstances in which the programme will be carried out. The frequency of the learning experiences and whether they are to be continuous or discontinuous must be considered, as their distribution affects the intensity of the education that is planned (Turos 1980). The variety of social roles that participants play, in their families, their work place, and their public life, may complicate planning. Often a mixture of individual and group work formats is required. The methods and techniques to be employed should be appropriate to learning styles and habits of students.

(d) *Programme implementation.* If the first three stages, the preparatory phase, of the andragogical cycle are properly conducted, then the implementation of the programme will be greatly simplified. If adequate attention has been paid to the needs and situation of the participants, then there will be much independent learning, with the use of appropriate educational resources. The adult educator's responsibility will be mainly for group work; in independent study the individual should take major responsibility for his or her own learning.

In adult education practice the most typical forms of learning experience are single lectures, lecture series, sandwich courses, discussion groups, study circles, group and individual consultations, and tutorials. Some countries, such as Poland, the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, have adopted forms adapted to their individual circumstances. Besides face-to-face forms of education, distance learning modes are becoming more popular, although they remain largely based on correspondence education, because of the high cost of multimedia education (Titmus 1981).

(e) *Evaluation.* The last stage of the andragogical cycle is evaluation. This does not take place exclusively at the end of the cycle but in part it goes on simultaneously with the implementation of the programme. Adult education may be seen as a spiral of andragogical cycles proceeding to a final educational aim, which in reality is never achieved, and in this context evaluation serves

both adult educators and participants. It provides feedback to the educator which helps him or her to improve the organization, content, and conduct of future programmes. For the student, it not only allows decisions to be made on the award of certificates or diplomas, but also provides data on learning performance, which may assist him or her to determine further educational needs and approaches. The difficulties of assessing changes in personality, attitudes, and values brought about by education, which have already been noted, mean that present evaluation methods do not meet all the needs of andragogy.

4. *Andragogy in the United States*

The term *andragogy* has become quite widely used in the United States under the influence of Malcolm Knowles. He took the name, but little else, from Europe, applied it to ideas of the art and science of teaching adults which were already current in North America, and developed them. Knowles's concept of andragogy is based on four assumptions:

> "...as a person matures, (a) his self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directing human being; (b) he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning; (c) his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the development tasks of his social roles; and (d) his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centredness to one of problem-centredness." (Knowles 1980)

The consequences for the educator are numerous. It follows that adults should play a part, with the educator, in diagnosing their needs, and in planning, conducting, and evaluating the educational experience on which they embark. Since they have greater experience than do children, adults have more to contribute to the learning process, and they have a richer foundation to which to relate new experiences. They have, however, fixed habits and patterns of thought, which leave them less open-minded to new ideas than children. The educational process frequently needs to free them from these preconceptions.

It is argued that because adults go through a number of developmental stages, with which certain social roles are associated, and because they look for immediate rather than deferred applications of knowledge, the timing and content of educational experiences should be planned to fit in with these developmental and role needs, as the learner perceives them.

Andragogy, as proposed by Knowles, has taken on the tone of a doctrine rather than a field of study. It is based as much on ideological premises as on experience and research. In its ideas it differs from European, and particularly Eastern European, approaches principally in the overriding emphasis it attributes to the development of the adult as an individual. Self-direction and responsibility for one's own educational choices are perceived as essential to self-realization; learning for social roles is perceived as important for self-fulfilment. While not denying that these principles are important, European thinking on andragogy stresses the necessity of meeting society's needs rather more than American thinking does (see *Adult Education Research: General*). It takes adult education as having a function of socialization as well as one of self-satisfaction to fulfill.

5. *New Fields of Andragogy*

Andragogy has grown past the stage when its development was mainly determined by the search for its own specific characteristics and the need to emphasize its differences from pedagogy. The elaboration of the concept of lifelong education and its effect on theory and practice require that education be treated as a single, integrated process. Therefore andragogy must seek for its similarities and links with other parts of education.

The attention of researchers is increasingly devoted to adults' motivation for learning rather than their abilities. Social and personal value systems and attitudes are seen to play major roles in effective adult education (Krajnc 1973). In Europe, nonformal education is becoming a major field of andragogical development. Hitherto, it has been primarily occupied with formal and professional education; now the special problems of education for leisure are attracting more attention.

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