THE DEVELOPMENT OF ANDRAGOGICAL TECHNIQUES OF INSTRUCTION FOR ADULT EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

As the Twentieth Century began, there was a traditional posture evident in higher education in the United States. For those males whose families could afford it, beginning college immediately following high school provided a liberal arts education. For select 21 year old college graduates, specialization in a professional field was available in graduate school. For the remainder of America’s youth, and nearly all of its women, high school graduation was the highest academic pinnacle they might obtain for the remainder of their life.

PEDAGOGY DEFINED

Coupled within this traditional academic posture was another factor which is the subject of this paper: at the turn of the Twentieth Century, nearly everyone in America was taught by a conservative lecture style which will be referred to in this paper as the pedagogical method. The literal meaning of pedagogy is the art and science of teaching children. Various dictionary definitions of pedagogy indicate that it is (1) the profession or function of a teacher; teaching, or (2) the art or science of teaching; especially, instruction in teaching methods. It is important to note here that the use of the term pedagogy in this paper will be to depict a teaching style which is primarily lecture and faculty-bound, with most, if not all, responsibility for the educational process vested in the teacher.

EDUCATIONAL SHIFTS

Much has happened in higher education since the turn of the previous century. Most notably, for purposes of this paper, two striking changes stand out. First, there has been a break in the tradition of who goes to college and graduate school, and when. Second, there has been a breakthrough in adult teaching methodology wherein pedagogy has begun to be augmented and even replaced by a new instructional paradigm called andragogy.

Most notably propelled by two world wars and resultant world leadership, American youth have set their sights on the attainment of a college education of varying lengths. The achievement of this goal has taken many forms, and is being accomplished in a very extended time frame. It is possible to find adults from their twenties through their sixties, and beyond, in American colleges and universities. Most working adults receive their college education at night, and on weekends. America is witnessing an adult educational upheaval and exodus into classrooms of massive portions, with no signs of slowing on the horizon. Gone forever is the selective education of the rich and favored in America, for the newly educated have powerfully become the rich and favored.

Fueled by this "get educated to be successful" message, the American adult is back on campus in record numbers, highly motivated and ready to learn. Coincidentally, or because of this phenomenon, pedagogy has faded out of the spotlight and into the background, augmented
and replaced by a new champion of educational paradigms, andragogy.

**ANDRAGOGY DEFINED**

Andragogy, while not an entirely new concept, is currently undergoing a revival of sorts in American education; sort of a rediscovery. By definition, andragogy is nonexistent. No current American standard or unabridged dictionary or encyclopedia contains a definition of andragogy. Brookfield (1986) mentions that andragogy is viewed variously as a descriptor of adult learning styles, a rockbed from which adult teaching behaviors can be carved, and a rallying cry. He affirms that andragogy is the most popular concept of the 1980's in the teaching of adults.

According to Knowles (1980), the concept and derivative of the word andragogy traces back in origin to Germanic, French-Canadian, and Yugoslavian beginnings. In their writings describing the folk high school in Germany, Anderson and Lindeman (1927) mentioned that andragogy was the "true method of adult learning" (p.3).

**FOUR ASSUMPTIONS OF ANDRAGOGY**

In his writings concerning andragogy, Knowles (1980, pp. 43-44) has postulated what he calls "The four assumptions of andragogy":

1. Adults both desire and enact a tendency towards self-directedness as they mature, though they may be dependent in certain situations.

2. Adults’ experiences are a rich resource for learning. Adults learn more effectively through experiential techniques of education such as discussion or problem-solving.

3. Adults are aware of specific learning needs generated by real life tasks or problems. Adult education programs, therefore, should be organized around ‘life application’ categories and sequenced according to learners’ readiness to learn.

4. Adults are competency based learners in that they wish to apply newly acquired skills or knowledge to their immediate circumstances. Adults are, therefore, "performance-centered" in their orientation to learning.

**SEVEN COMPONENTS OF ANDRAGOGICAL PRACTICE**

Along with these four assumptions, Knowles (1984) has identified seven components of
andragogical practice which he feels are replicable in a variety of programs in almost every kind of institution throughout the world:

1. Facilitators must establish a physical and psychological climate conducive to learning. This is achieved physically by circular seating arrangements and psychologically by creating a climate of mutual respect among all participants. By emphasizing collaborative modes of learning, by establishing an atmosphere of mutual trust, by offering to be supportive, and by emphasizing that learning is pleasant. Such a caring, respectful, helping, and accepting climate is said to be a climate of humanness.

2. Facilitators must involve learners in mutual planning of methods and curricular directions. People will make firm commitments to activities in which they feel they have played a participatory, contributory role.

3. Facilitators must involve participants in diagnosing their own learning needs.

4. Facilitators must encourage learners to formulate their own learning objectives.

5. Facilitators must encourage learners to identify resources and to devise strategies for using such resources to accomplish their objectives.

6. Facilitators must help learners to carry out their learning plans.

7. Facilitators must involve learners in evaluating their learning, principally through the use of qualitative evaluation modes.

THE QUALITY SCHOOL

Noted psychiatrist William Glasser (1990) has teamed up in an unlikely alliance with noted business consultant of Total Quality Management fame W. Edwards Deming in a thrust for quality schools in America. In their work, oral and written communication skill development are mentioned as necessary in every class irrespective of the class main subject. They believe that this development should begin in the first years of school and continue for a lifetime. In this paper, their oral and written communication skill development are included in the author's proposal of an andragogical model of instruction. To the work of Glasser and Deming, the author adds the requirement of enhancing computer fluency skills in every class from cradle to grave.
PEDAGOGY TO ANDRAGOGY SHIFT

Concerning the blending of the "best" carry-over qualities of the existing pedagogical model and the new age andragogical model described above, the most useful construct proposed by the writer is to view both not as a dichotomy, but as bookends, with each facilitators' position somewhere in between. The task of every would-be facilitator of adult education is to:

1. Understand the elements of pedagogy and andragogy as described above in this paper,

2. Determine where he or she is on the continuum from pedagogy to andragogy,

3. Determine if and where he or she wants to move on the pedagogy-andragogy continuum, and

4. Implement those procedures and instructional style changes necessary to move to that new position.

CAUTION

A word of caution suggested by the author is equally applicable for this paper (Clark, 1992). It would be just as dangerous to implement a radical shift from pedagogy to andragogy overnight, especially during the course of teaching a single class during an ERAU 10 week term, as it would be to determine a needed shift in the direction of andragogy, and do nothing. What is recommended is a very careful and selected "Pedagogy to Andragogy Shift", with evaluation and student feedback along the way. In a system in which most or all instructors of adults are largely pedagogical in nature, an andragogical instructor will be very successful eventually, but will also evidence some resistance from the students, who are quite used to being told what to do, and when to do it. Proceed with caution here, and map out a plan to get from "mostly P" to mostly A" in a series of successive approximations. Once you and your colleagues have begun your P to A move, quick and eager acceptance by the majority of the students is forecast.

ANDRAGOGY ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Some may feel that andragogical facilitation principles are especially applicable to certain curricula such as liberal arts, but inapplicable when instructing math and the physical sciences. The writer would indicate that in the "drier" disciplines, there is an even greater need for andragogy. As all who have viewed the recent movie "Stand and Deliver" have witnessed, even math can come alive in the minds of motivated, information-hungry teenagers. It is simply a
question of empowerment. The writer is reminded of a recent story of an adjunct professor who complained that andragogy would "further empower the students." IT IS HOPED THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN, and that this result would be greeted by an accepting facilitator, not an "easily bruised ego" lecturer.

Expanding on the concept of andragogy by suggesting that, as Glasser (1990) and Deming are saying, responsibility for learning must be instilled at a very early age, the writer suggests that the concept of andragogy as described in this paper is applicable to students of all ages. As the writer has shifted from a mostly pedagogical "standup lecture" style of instruction to a largely andragogical style of facilitation, it has been apparent that these "truths" apply to all ages. In fact, a readiness for andragogy must be instilled as soon as possible, similar to the "writing across the curriculum" idea recently popular in many circles.

It is fitting to close by suggesting that a movement to ensure "andragogy across the curriculum" is long past due in America. Such a movement may prove to be the "bailout" of our education system so sorely needed, and will, in large measure, return to both facilitator and student a more complete feeling of accomplishment, and the quality attitude needed to compete successfully in the increasingly technological world of the Twenty First Century.

AMERICA 2000: AN EDUCATION STRATEGY

How does andragogy fit in with other education goals? The andragogical facilitation method, viewed as an "across the curriculum" construct, is especially applicable to the U. S. Department of Education’s America 2000: An Education Strategy (1991). Goals 3 and 5 of this strategy indicate applicability in their intent (pp. 38-39):

Goal 3: By the year 2000, American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.

Goal 5: By the year 2000, every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
REFERENCES


