

ADULT LEARNING PROCESSES: PEDAGOGY AND ANDRAGOGY

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I

Let me start by putting our understanding of adult learning processes in a historical context. As I understand it, all of the early great teachers of history were teachers of adults. In ancient China, Confucius and Lao-Tze were teachers of adults. All of the Hebrew prophets and Jesus, all the great Greek teachers, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, were teachers of adults. The Romans, Quintillium, Cicero, were teachers of adults and Euclid, in founding the Institute at Alexandria, limited admissions to those 18 and over. Because all of the ancient great teachers were teachers of adults, they made a set of assumptions about learning processes, based upon their experience with adults, and these were a different set of assumptions from what was handed down to us later, in the middle ages, and has come to dominate our conventional education system. They saw learning as being a process of enquiry in which the learner had an active role, in fact the primary role, and the role of the teacher was that of a guide to the enquiry, a facilitator of the enquiry and, where appropriate, a resource to the enquiry. So Confucius and Lao-Tze taught as the Hebrew prophets incidentally taught, by the case method. Socrates developed the Socratic Dialogue Method that was used predominantly by the Greek educators — engaging the learner in a process of dialogue, an active process of enquiry.

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With the fall of Rome, the scrolls on which the writings of these ancient great teachers were inscribed were deposited in damp cellars in monasteries around Europe. Around the 7th century, the monks snooping around the cellars — I guess for wine but running in now and then to find a scroll — found out that they were decaying because they were on papyrus, on animal skin, and so there developed a need for copying these scrolls onto fresh papyrus. The only trouble was that very few monks were left who knew how to read and write sufficiently to copy the scrolls, and so there was a desperate need for training young boys in enough reading and writing skills to be able to copy the scrolls. Accordingly, they started to organize some monastic schools in Italy, France, Germany and Ireland. Ireland was one of the principal depositories of the ancient scrolls. When they organized these monastic schools, they started making a different set of assumptions about learning, because they were concerned with a different kind of learning. They were concerned with a narrowly defined set of psycho-motor skills, reading and writing. They did not have to understand what they were writing; they only had to reproduce it; so the monastic schools were following a narrow set of purposes.

About the 12th century occurred what I view to be one of the tragic events, one of the tragic choices, in our educational history, when some of the nobles of Europe decided that they would like to have their children educated without having to become monks, and so they started organizing secular schools. They had a choice at this point of organizing these secular schools on the assumptions that were described on the scrolls — that had been made by the ancient teachers — or organizing the secular schools on the model of the monastic schools, and the tragedy is they chose the latter. So the secular educational system that began evolving in the 12th century was indeed a pedagogical system. The set of assumptions that had been made by the monks had come to be described as pedagogy, and the secular schools were organized according to the pedagogical model rather than the ancient model which we have now come to call the andragogical model. From the 12th century on until our time, therefore, education has been based upon a set of pedagogical assumptions.

II

In the 19th Century in this country and in Europe, organized adult education started appearing, and in 1926, in this country, was organized the first national organization of adult educators, The American Association for Adult Education. There began appearing in the journal of the American Association, which started publication in 1928, an increasing number of articles by successful teachers of adults describing why they were successful, trying to explain how they were able to keep their students, because, in adult education, a "successful teacher" is defined as one who is able to keep his or her students. This is a critical difference between teachers of adults and teachers of children, because teachers of children *don't have* to keep their students, the students *have* to be there. So teachers can be poor in elementary and secondary school and for the most part in college, and not lose their students. But teachers of adults, in most situations, cannot be poor and continue to be a teachers of adults. The literature started carrying articles describing what successful teachers of adults were doing. I am in the process of collecting some of these, in order to make an anthology of them.

I remember one article by a teacher of adult basic education in New York City in the early 30's. The title was, "Why I Gave Up Quizzes." She explained that she was about to start giving her course for the third time and was reviewing her notes from the first two times and realized that in both of her previous courses her attendance at the sixth session had dropped roughly by half. She wondered why, and discovered on her outline a "Quiz" for the Fifth session. She said, "That must be it, adults don't like quizzes." So she thought "What can I do instead of giving a quiz?" What she did was to build in 15 minute interviews with every student, and incidentally found out that she learned more in a 15 minute interview that she had in all the quizzes put together about what they were learning and, in particular, how they were feeling about what they were learning.

In the 1950's, some of us thought that there were some principles emerging from this literature that if collected could give us a comprehensive approach for helping people work with adults educationally. My first book was a collection of principles and it was called *Informal Adult Education*. The

term "informal" was unsatisfactory because most education took place under very formal circumstances, in schools and colleges and churches and elsewhere. In the 60's, we started getting research on adult learning from several sources: from developmental psychology on developmental stages; from psychotherapy on, in a sense, reeducation: and from adult education, on normal adult learning processes.

I think a foundational book of this sort was Cyril Houle's *The Enquiring Mind*. This was an in depth study of 22 cases of men and women who had been identified as continuing learners; he had a series of in-depth interviews with them to find out what happens when you go about learning, how do you do it, what happens, what is the process. A student of his named Alan Tough, when he left the University of Chicago with his doctorate and went back to the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, got a sizeable grant from the Federal Government of Canada to mount a much more substantial study, and the grant provided for him to employ some research assistants. His study had as its research question, "How do adults learn naturally when they are not being taught?" Tough had developed the notion that a lot of mis-knowledge had been gained by studying teaching and now he wanted to know, "Is learning something different from being taught? Is there a natural process of learning?" He found out that there is in many respects. Incidentally, one of the significant things he found out is that in his initial population of over 200 adults (and these were cross-sectional, socially, economically, previous education, age, etc.,) there was not an adult who had not engaged in at least one major learning project which he defined as 7 hours of purposeful enquiry, or more: that each adult had engaged in at least one, the average was between 7 and 8, and many of them had engaged in as many as 70 major learning projects in a year. This confirmed what we who have been working with adults long had known or had suspected, namely, that learning is indeed a natural, normal, organic part of living, as functional a part of living as breathing. Adults do indeed want to and do indeed pursue learning.

III

In Europe, in the early sixties, adult educators began to feel a need for subsuming this growing body of theory and knowl-

edge about adult learning under a label that would differentiate it from the conventional body of theory called pedagogy, and so they discovered that in 1833 a German adult educator had coined the word, "andragogy" derived from the Greek word "aner," which in ancient Greek meant "man not boy." They had another word for mankind which was anthropo but the only word they had for an adult person was "aner." In 1962 in Yugoslavia, the University of Belgrade established a faculty of andragogy that was separate from and in fact at the opposite end of the campus from the faculty of pedagogy. Then a year or two later the University of Zagreb established one, then a couple of years later the University of Amsterdam changed their faculty of pedagogy to the faculty of pedagogy and andragogy. Concordia University, which is a merger of Loyola of Montreal and Sir George Williams in Montreal, established an undergraduate degree program in andragogy and is now about to make it a Masters program. Andragogy is increasingly being accepted as a label for describing this emerging body of theory and derivative practice technology for theory about adult learning.

If you differentiate the assumptions of pedagogy and andragogy, be sure you read it this way: this is not saying, "Pedagogy is bad and andragogy is good," it is not saying, "Children ought to be taught according to pedagogy and adults according to andragogy." It is really saying, "If the assumptions are realistic, then that theoretical framework is appropriate for that situation." In other words, if you are indeed working with dependent personalities, then at least initially the assumption of dependency is realistic and therefore pedagogical theory and practice are appropriate.

The big difference between a pure andragogue and a pure pedagogue is this: the pedagogue not only is willing to accept dependency, but feels so much more comfortable teaching dependent personalities that the teacher will tend to do everything one can to maintain dependency on the part of the learner, whereas the andragogue, while able to accept dependency at a given time and moment, or time with a given person, has a built-in sense of obligation to do everything one can to help that person move from dependency toward increasing self-directiveness. In other words, the andragogue has a value system that places self-directiveness on a much

higher level than dependency and so will do everything one can to help a learner become increasingly self-directive in his or her learning. This is the most critical differentiating set of assumptions between pedagogy and andragogy and is the one that makes the most difference in what teachers of adults do.

The sad fact is, that adults will enter anything that we offer that is labelled "educational" in a state of dependency, even though they are completely self-directing in every other aspect of their lives. I have known corporate executives, who have been making their own decisions for years, heads of households, who held high public office and were self-directing in their work, their home, their civic, their leisure lives, who the minute they come into anything like an American Management Association Executive Seminar, say: "That is a seminar, that is education, teach me." Their conditioning has been so deep that, if it is educational, then the appropriate role of the learner is that of a dependence. This is a sad fact that I think will be with us for some time. We are in a transition period because the concepts of self-directiveness are now infiltrating down to the secondary and elementary level and before very many generations, the schools will be turning out people who are skillful in conducting self-directed enquiry.

In the meantime we, as adult educators, have a deep obligation to provide orientational, or "front-end" experiences, before they start engaging in the substantive learning on how to learn. I have developed a three hour module, for example, for all our entering Masters and Doctorate candidates in which in three hours they get (a) the idea, the concept of the difference between self-directiveness and passive learning, reactive learning and b) second, get some skilled practice on how to make use of a material resource like a book, proactively, how to take the initiative to extract from the book the information that is relative to the learner at that point and also to make proactive use of human resources, including the resources of peers.

This is another sort of tragedy I have learned about, i.e., that fellow learners are people to be competed with, not to be helped by and certainly not to help. Our grading system has built in a strong compulsion for students to see one another as competitors and rivals rather than as resources for mutual learning. Therefore, it seems to me that in designing

any educational program such as, for example, a particular course or series in a church or synagogue adult education program, we have an obligation to provide some entry experience into that program that will help the learner get (a) the idea and (b) some skilled practice in being a self-directed learner. (Incidentally, my most recent book is called *Self-Directed Learning: A Guide for Learners and Teachers*).

Let us look at the pedagogue. When he or she sits down to plan an educational experience, she or he puts on the hat of content planner. The job is to develop a content plan and one needs to answer only four questions:

1. What content needs to be covered not what content needs to be acquired — and one will draw up a long list of information items or skill items, items that need to be covered. There is a lot of pressure on many of our teachers to cover content because the students eventually are going to have to get admitted to college, or graduate school and the presumption is very widespread that a student will not be admitted if he or she has not covered a given amount of content.

2. The second question a content planner has to ask and answer is: how can that content be organized into manageable units?

3. The third question one has to answer is: how can these units be organized in a *logical* sequence? If you are teaching history, then obviously the sequence has to be chronological. You start with ancient history and move up to modern times, in spite of the fact that the perceptual psychologists have taught us that we develop perspective by experiencing some need to put a present situation in a context and then we learn what are the antecedents that produced the context, the phenomenon. In fact I had a teacher from a Junior College in Providence, Rhode Island, when I was at Boston University who had been teaching a course called the History of Civilization. He came to one of my courses and got this idea of teaching history backwards and went back the next semester and divided the students into small groups to identify the things we are worried about that are going on in the world today. They identified the Suez Canal thing and the Cyprus thing between Turkey and Greece and the Berlin Wall (this was in the '60's). He established a Cyprus team and a Suez team and sent them to the library and to people in the community to find out what immediately preceded the crises of

today. Then they found out what immediately preceded that and what preceded that and so on, as far in history as they could go.

4. The fourth question that the content planner has to answer is, how can these units be transmitted most efficiently in this sequence? And the verb and the modifier are exactly as one thinks them. *Efficiency* of transmission is the thing. So the teacher takes unit one and says: "That's heavily content-informational and that will be a lecture on assigned reading. Unit number two: there is some skill involved, so there will be a demonstration by me and then a drill by them, and so on." The andragogue, on the other hand, when one sits down to plan an educational activity, thinks of oneself as a process designer. What one is doing is designing a set of procedures for helping learners acquire content. It is not content versus no content, it is: Where is the focus, what is the role of the teacher here? Is it the role of the teacher to transmit, in which case a content plan makes good sense? Or is it the role of the teacher to facilitate learning, in which case the role of the teacher is to provide facilities, if not procedures and wherever one's own resources are relevant resources for helping the learners acquire content?

IV

My own process design has seven elements, of which the single most important one is establishing a climate that is conducive to learning, that is dominated or characterized by trust, by informality, by openness, by mutuality, by mutual respect, warmth, caring, etc. These are all characteristics that produce much more learning in an environment than the opposite characteristics of coldness, aloofness, sterility, discipline, lack of motion, etc. Other elements however, are important: the engaging of a learner in the process of diagnosing his own needs for learning. Here we get some help from the concept of a model of competencies. It is much easier for a learner to diagnose what he or she needs in terms of developing a competency than it is in terms of some body of content that one does not know anything about. A person who is seeking to become a better parent can think in terms of the competencies a good parent has to have and then it is a much easier jump from there to what I need to

know or what I need to be able to do in order to perform that competency. In our program at North Carolina State we are developing a model of competencies of the adult educator. I foresee the time when all of education will be organized around the notion of helping people develop competency rather than of helping people absorb content, irrespective of the competencies to which the content is related.

Let me close by sharing with you a device that I discovered about four or five years ago: the learning contract. A student drafts a learning contract, that has four columns in it. The first column is labelled, *Learning Objectives*, the objectives to accomplish in order to develop the competencies diagnosed as needs. The second column is headed, *Learning Resources and Strategies* and here one lists for each objective, what resources one is going to use, both material and human and then how one is going to make use of them, what strategies one is going to use. The third column is headed, *Evidence of Accomplishment of Objectives*. Here one identifies what evidence one is going to collect. Notice the verbal form there . . . what evidence the student is *going to collect*, that will indicate the degree to which one has accomplished each objective. The fourth column is headed, *Criteria and Means of Validating the Evidence*, of having the evidence validated. Here again the initiative is the student's to make proposals to me, the teacher, the facilitator, regarding what criteria the student is going to have the judges use and who is going to judge *how* one is going to get the evidence judged.

This is the way of developing a design for learning, of identifying the learning activities and of evaluating learning. I use it in all my courses, and we are going to start using it in our total degree program, so we will award degrees on the basis of evidence of accomplishment of competencies. I also use it in all of our internships, and our field experiences. Several professional associations are using it for the professional in-service continuing education and the Westinghouse Electric Corporation is using contract learning, although they call it "Manager's Self-Development Plan," for all of their general managers. So it is really more than a tool, it is a procedure, a strategy that is infinitely flexible.¹

¹ See references to Knowles on p. 201 this issue.

**A COMPARISON OF ASSUMPTIONS AND PROCESSES OF TEACHER-DIRECTED (PEDAGOGICAL) LEARNING
AND SELF-DIRECTED (ANDRAGOGICAL) LEARNING**

(Please read as poles on a spectrum, not as black-and-white differences) by Malcolm S. Knowles, Department of Adult and Community College Education, North Carolina State University, January, 1976.

ASSUMPTIONS			PROCESS ELEMENTS		
	PEDAGOGICAL Teacher-Directed Learning	ANDRAGOGICAL Self-Directed Learning	Elements	PEDAGOGICAL Teacher-Directed Learning	ANDRAGOGICAL Self-Directed Learning
About					
Concept of the Learner	Dependent Personality	Increasingly Self-Directed Organism	Climate	Formal Authority-Oriented Competative Judgemental	Informal, mutually respectful, consensual, collaborative, supportive
Role of Learners Experience	To be Built on more than used	A rich Resource for Learning	Planning	Primarily by Teacher	By participative Decision-Making
Readiness to Learn	Varies with levels of maturation	Develops from Life Tasks & Problems	Diagnosis of Needs	Primarily by Teacher	By Mutual Assessment
Orientation to Learning	Subject-Centered	Task or Problem Centered	Setting Goals	Primarily by Teacher	By Mutual Negotiation
Motivation	External Rewards and Punishments	Internal Incentives, Curiosity	Designing a Learning Plan	Content Units, Course Syllabus, Logical Sequence	Learning Projects Learning Content Sequenced in Terms of Readiness
The body of theory and practice on which teacher-directed learning is based is often given the label "pedagogy," from the Greek words <u>paid</u> (meaning child) and <u>agogus</u> (meaning guide) -- thus being defined as the art and science of teaching children. The body of theory and practice on which self-directed learning is based is coming to be labeled "Andragogy," from the Greek word <u>aner</u> (meaning adult) -- thus being defined as the art and science of helping adults (or even better, maturing human beings) learn.			Learning Activities	Transmittal Techniques, Assigned Readings	Inquiry Projects Independent Study Experimental Techniques
			Evaluation	Primarily by Teacher	By Mutual Assessment of Self-Collected Evidence