

MOVING FROM PEDAGOGY TO ANDRAGOGY

Misyana Susanti Husin¹ and Jahjaiton Arsad²

¹Academy of Language Studies and ²Faculty of Technology and Office Management
Universiti Teknologi MARA Pahang
misyana@pahang.uitm.edu.my

ABSTRACT

Learners of higher learning institutions are young adults who are uniquely different in characteristics, expectations and motivational factors in learning. In many ways, the pedagogical model, “the art and science of teaching children”, used in the higher learning context, make learners become passive and dependent aside from lacking skills necessary for higher education studies. This paper aims at discussing the rationale, constraints, potentials and constructive key implications of incorporating andragogical model, “the art and science of teaching adults”, in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Pedagogy is derived from the Greek word “paid”, meaning child plus “agogos”, meaning leading. Hence, pedagogy has been defined as “the art and science of teaching children”. In the pedagogical model, the student is placed in a submissive role requiring obedience to the teacher’s instructions. The teacher plays the central role determining what will be learned, how it will be learned and materials to be used. The model is based on the assumption that learners need to know only what the teacher teaches them. The result is a teaching and learning environment that is teacher-centred and actively promotes dependency on the instructor (Knowles 1984).

Since the existence of formal education, the entire educational system is based on pedagogical model applied to teach both children and adults (Lawson 1998). Knowles observes, “as people grow, their self-concept moves from being dependent personality to a self-directing one” (1990: 236). The pedagogical model does not take into account developmental changes on the part of adults or even young adults, and, thus, produces tension, resentment and resistance in individuals (Knowles 1984). Young adult learners entering higher education at the age of eighteen are at the transitional stage of learning to be independent from their parents as they move away from home to campus life. Living on their own requires them to seek solutions to the problems they encounter in their roles as students and life. Thus, some educators believe that andragogical model of education in higher learning institutions is more in tune with the young adults’ natural process of psychological development and a panacea to their teaching and learning development (Lindeman 1926; Knowles 1990; Cranton 1992; Gill 2001).

This paper looks into the rationale, constraints, potentials and key implications of incorporating andragogical model in local higher education.

ANDRAGOGICAL MODEL OF EDUCATION

Building on the earlier work of Lindeman (1926) and other earlier writers in adult education, Knowles introduced the term andragogy into American educational literature in 1968 as “the art and science of teaching adults”. The andragogical model is based on four underlying assumptions of adult learners: the self-concept of the learners includes self-directedness; the learners’ experience should be used; readiness to learn depends on need; and orientation to learn is life or problem-centered (Knowles 1980). It is important to consider the implications of these assumptions for educational practice.

Identification of the assumption that adults prefer to be self-directing rather than totally dependent on a teacher has important implications in higher education. Knowles (1984) observed that the essential aspect of maturation is the development of ability to manage learning and take increasing responsibility for life. He also noted that self-directed learning is more in tune with adults’ psychological development. The implication of this assumption is adult learning climate should be focusing more on the process rather than subject content. Unlike didactic teaching in pedagogical model where teacher transmits a predetermined body of knowledge to learners who simply absorb everything by memorising, teacher in adult education

becomes a resource person and catalyst. Knowles' (1990) contention is that andragogy as an alternative model of instruction encourages a proactive approach to learning in which self-directedness and autonomy are predominant features. He further stated that andragogy as an approach to education aims at developing in each learner a sense of responsibility for his own learning and managing all related processes as early as possible. Take, for example, evolving non-traditional programmes like open-university, cyber-university and long distance study programmes worldwide require learners assume a heavy responsibility and initiative in their own learning. Learners are actively involved in the process of planning their own learning, with the teacher serving as a procedural guide and content resource. Such programmes allow learners to take control over learning and empower them to be autonomous. Brookfield (1995), however, challenged Knowles' assumption, suggesting it is hindered by persistent myth which suggests that adults' learning is innately self-directing. Despite such criticism there is continuing support for the assertion that adults learn in a different way from children and self-direction is a feature of adult learning (Cranton 1992; Gill, 2001). In addition, research suggests that self-directed learning can play important role in learning within educational institutions (Brockett & Hiemstra 1991). The preoccupation of employers and educational institutions in term of the professional development, pursuit of life-long learning, and the necessity for learners to be able to adapt to changes have been influential in changing educational philosophies. Additionally, to stay competitive in the rapidly changing working world, learners need to learn how to learn without being taught, and it is probably the most important reason for andragogical model of education to be implemented in higher education (Knowles 1984).

With regard to experience, Knowles' (1990: 237) assumption is adult learners have rich and varied experiences than children "making them rich resource in the classroom". Mocker (1980: 35) supported this view that "...adults enter an educational activity with a greater amount of experience from which they can relate new experience." Thus, the implication is the learning climate should be one which causes adults to feel accepted, respected and supported in which there should exist a "spirit of mutuality between teachers and students as joint enquirers" (Knowles 1984: 47). In other words, adult education calls for mutual teaching and learning process for both teacher and learner with learner-oriented activities. Case study, conferences, group discussion, consultative supervision, presentation and seminar are among the activities that are claimed to best suit the adult learners. Through these activities, both teacher and learner can exchange and share relevant information, ideas and experiences. Rogers (2002) further adds that if an adult learner's experience is devalued or ignored, not only the experience, but also the person is rejected. So, facilitators practicing andragogical model should respect their learners' contribution of ideas and be open to suggestions. However, one drawback of this is that with their experience with pedagogical model, adult learners might face difficulties in coping with andragogical model. So used to the teacher-centred classes, these adult learners might have "biases, presuppositions that close" their minds "to new, fresh ideas" such as learner-centred classes (Knowles 1990: 59). Hanson (1996) argues, some adults who re-enter education after some time away from school may want to be treated as children. Thus, they feel that they are not capable of taking on the challenge of autonomy and their perception of teachers continues as source of knowledge and the ultimate decision makers about success or failure in examinations. In addition, learners who are dependent or low in self-directedness will become frustrated with the teacher's co-learner role and will often question the credibility of the teacher or in other words, this type of learners expect "teachers to teach" and to impart knowledge in as painless way as possible (Cranton 1992). On the other hand, adults with work experience in professional settings or also known as hybrids could give fresh valuable insights and approaches to problem solving in class. Thus, this opportunity of sharing knowledge and experience should not go to waste.

The third assumption refers to adult learners' readiness to learn increases with the developmental tasks of social roles. Mocker (1980: 35) mentioned that "...adults enter (an educational activity) with more specific and immediate plans for applying newly acquired knowledge." This implies that adult learners are driven more by practical and realistic needs rather than theoretical and conceptual needs. As Knowles further elaborates, adult learners are "motivated to learn because they are seeking solutions to the problems they encounter in their roles as parents, workers and so on" (1990: 237). Gill (2001: 1) supported this with her claim that "...The needs of adult learners are very simple. They do not need the basics; they need answers to particular questions... The adult learners want information that is useful immediately." Nevertheless, there are arguments that adult learners are not necessarily driven by these intrinsic factors; referring to adult learners who are put back in education by their employers (Brookfield 1986; Rogers 2002). Consequently, going back to educational institutions is seen as a plan to please their employers or be promoted. Instead of taking learning experience as something that could be self-satisfying and meaningful, these learners tend to make learning more like a stepping-stone. Yet, another contention is, in the real world, things are different and constantly changing. So this means as important as it is to learn the basics, it is also important to apply

the basics to real life situations. Higher education in particular should prepare learners with necessary skills for the real life situations and andragogical model of education enables learners to learn and acquire these skills.

Finally, another characteristic of adult learners is associated with “time perspective” (Knowles 1990). This is related to their time and curricular perspectives changed from postponed immediacy of application and from subject-centredness to performance centredness (Knowles 1980: 44-45). Knowles (1990) further clarifies this notion by stating that adults are more interested to learn subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life. Thus, it can be safely deduced that teachers of adult learners should be “people-centred than subject-centred” (Knowles 1990: 238) where the needs for learners’ to solve problems in their life are met. Additionally, there is a rising societal concern about the quality of local graduates. Some of the perturbing issues widely discussed are graduates lack critical, analytical, creative thinking skills for international competitiveness and unable to apply theoretical knowledge learned to the real life situations. Brown (1985) suggests that lateral thinking can be incorporated into the andragogical model as a mechanism to promote problem-solving abilities through instructional strategies like task based activities, case study, simulation, group discussion, seminar and presentation. Furthermore, researches prove that a more appropriate approach to learning and teaching is deep meaning orientation, problem solving, experiential and discovery learning. This can also be achieved through teaching techniques that tap on learners’ experience and knowledge such as simulation, role-play, case study and other learner-centred activities. Through these active and creative learning situations learners could see the immediate relevance of theoretical knowledge to real life situations. So, the contention is andragogical model offers deep learning as opposed to surface learning, which stimulates critical and analytical thinking in the learners whilst its ultimate aim is to encourage learners to be responsible for and in control of their own learning.

To summarise, Table 1 below shows the differences between pedagogical and andragogical model.

Table 1: Summary of Movement

ITEMS	PEDAGOGY	ANDRAGOGY
Definition	The art and science of teaching children	The art of and science of teaching adults
Class Orientation	Teacher-centred Teacher dictates learning process: What to learn How to learn When to learn Lecture	Learner-centred Mutual teaching and learning process: Negotiation on what, how, when to learn Simulation Role play Case study Seminar Presentation Group discussion
Implications	Authoritative Content-centred Passive participation Dependent learners	Collaborative Problem-centred Active participation Independent learners

In conclusion, andragogical model of education has evolved as a contemporary counter to the pedagogical model of education which has been authoritative in nature. The educational paradigm shift reflects a desire to explore ways of empowering learners to be self-directed and autonomous. The andragogical model is not necessarily intended to replace the existing methodologies but provide a framework for a variety of teaching methods geared to enhance learning. Instructional techniques used should serve as platforms for learners to put into practice a greater degree of responsibility for their own learning and greater independence in the process.

CONSTRAINTS AND POTENTIALS

Indeed, in incorporating the andragogical model in local higher education system creates challenges to the conventional higher education institutions, educators and learners. However, a more concerted effort from various parties is needed to address the challenges of moving from pedagogical to andragogical model of education

Higher Education Institutions

Despite recognition of the effectiveness of self-directed learning as an approach that enhances lifelong learning, there is a continuing lack of coordination, cohesion and application in higher education institutions. Higher education institutions are influenced by a number of internal and external factors that affect the learning experiences and opportunities they can provide. Externally, governments, statutory regulating bodies and professional developments are highly influential in the design of curriculum; while internally the organisational culture, instructors, learners and resources available further constrain the learning environment. The external regulation currently imposed by local higher education institutions is considered to leave the learner little independence, hardly any responsibility for the learning process and in addition, hinders the development of self-directing skills. Curriculum designed by statutory regulating bodies emphasises on product (exam-oriented) rather than process (developing self-directing skills). Adult educators repeatedly stated that (young) adult learners are self-directed, prefer to be self-directed, or at least, have the potential to be self-directed (Knowles 1990; Cranton 1992). Critical theorists see empowerment as a the goal of education and being a self-directed learner is a freeing experience when one feels confident and knows on how to manage one's learning. Thus, to do young adult learners justice, self-directed approaches should be introduced gradually in the higher education. In order to do so, we need to know the different support mechanisms like what type of library resources, equipment, counseling, administrative services and relationships are in place or are needed to ensure learner success and what constraints are operating in between. In addition, physical environment such as room size, furniture, lighting, room temperature and availability of facilities can hamper the attempt to create a comfortable learning atmosphere. Another institutional constraint is the requirement for examinations. The most common way of thinking about evaluation is to make comparisons among individuals, rank them according to the best and the worst, or above average and below average from any group population. There are legitimate reasons for using this norm-referenced model of evaluation such as prospective employers might want to hire the best graduates. However, essential purpose of evaluation of learning in most adult education settings is to determine the extent to which learners have achieved objectives (criterion-referenced) rather than to compare or select individuals (Cranton 1992). When the teaching and learning process has been effective, the educator and learners expect that this will be reflected in high grades. Thus, on a practical level, a balance needs to be established between norm-referenced and criterion-referenced evaluations.

Educators

Moving towards andragogical model of education brings challenge for educators as well. Learners do not achieve self-directedness and autonomy by being told to, nor by being denied conventional class teaching. In these ways they are likely only to achieve failure. There are different means of teaching young adult learners in higher education institutions. Some adult educators might have experienced situations where learners behave like children in the classroom. Perhaps they acted in such way because they felt bored, left out, unacknowledged and were not asked for input; hence, learning took a backseat. In andragogical model of education, educators' roles are different from the traditionally-accorded teacher-centred teaching. According to Cranton (1992), the roles of educators in andragogical model of education are redefined as a facilitator or resource person rather than one of lecturer or evaluator. She further suggested that adult educators have to move their roles from other-directed (expert role) through self-directed (manager) to mutually-directed (researcher). Many people have attempted to describe the attributes of a successful adult education facilitator. Here are some attributes on which most seem to agree : 1) view themselves as participating in a dialogue between equals, 2) are open to change and new experiences/seek to learn from helping activities; 3) are genuine in entering into personal relationships with the learners rather than consistent adherence to the prescribed role of the teacher; 4) acceptance and trust the learner as a person of worth (unconditional positive regard); and 5) have empathy (nonjudgemental understanding, both intellectual and emotional) for the learner's perspective (Knowles 1990; Cranton 1992 Rogers 2002).

Additionally, one of the fundamental principles in the theory of andragogy is power sharing and negotiating issues. Such idea is a challenge to educators as they need to relinquish some extent of power and negotiate mandated curriculum. Common reaction would be fear of inability to cover syllabus, losing control of the learners and uncertainty of knowledge and skills required. To be successful in implementing self-directed learning the educator should learn to truly believe in learners' abilities to direct their own learning; be able to give up responsibility and decision making to learners when it is appropriate; make clear his role as facilitator; have an awareness of content resources and materials; and accept that he remains important to learners even though responsibility has been shared or given to learners. A negotiation of power and mutual agreement between the learner and the educator about the goals, content and methodology adopted for learning would lead to more self-directed learning and learner autonomy (Knowles 1986).

Learners

A wide variety of factors are identified as being influential on both learner ability and willingness and ability to engage in self-directed learning. These factors are characterised as being either external or internal to the actual process of self-directed learning. The influence of educational institutions is perceived as external to the self-directedness of the learners, but fundamental in the process of self-directed learning, through the provision of appropriately structured learning environments, the implementation of relevant teaching and learning strategies and access to suitable resources. Despite acknowledgement of the effectiveness of certain strategies in the facilitation of self-directed learning, higher education institutions often fail to identify the structure of the learning environment, strategies that will be used, or the resources available to support the process. The approaches recommended to facilitate self-directed learning generally reflect the learner-centred nature of the process, such as the utilisation of self-paced modules, independent study, experiential or discovery study, problem-solving tasks, case study and so on that promote greater autonomy and self-directedness. Additionally, specific media and learning variables and strategies used within the instruction can be manipulated to facilitate and encourage learners toward greater independence. Accessibility of educators to technological resources also provides avenues for self-directed learning. However, despite these positive advances, higher education institutions have not adapted or implemented the new technology effectively. The internal factors in self-directed learning are reported to relate specifically to the learner in terms of their preferred learning style, personality traits, motivation and readiness to accept responsibility for their own learning (Cranton 1992; Rogers 2002). Generally, these variables emphasise the individuality of students in any learning environment, and acknowledgement of that feature within self-directed learning is equally important. If learning is perceived as a continuum, and self-directed learning is part of the continuum, each student will find himself at different points with different degree of readiness for self-direction, and requiring modified levels of facilitation. A number of models have been developed that not only reflect the individuality of the learners, but also seek to accommodate it within the learning process such as Personal Responsibility Orientation (PRO), Staged Self-directed Learning Model (SSDL) and Partnership Model.

Key Implications

Self-directedness implies that learners have or develop the capacity to learn independently (Cranton 1992) and that the institutional context in which they are learning allows them to do so. Allowing learners' greater freedom in learning and helping them to become aware of their capacities for self-directedness may, therefore, enhance motivation and quality of learning. Inline with the aspiration of the government to develop and sustain a learning society, young adults learning in higher education institutions need to be adaptive learners and focus their attention on independent thinking. While it cannot be denied that the implementation of andragogical model of education may not be as smooth as envisioned by its advocates, particularly those involving reaction, the authority needs to focus on the vital role that andragogical approach plays in both the country's development and society's progress. The education model is about cultivating critical and creative thinking, appreciation of the latest technologies, and most importantly, development of our young adults' self-directedness and autonomy to prepare them for the challenging real working world.

CONCLUSION

Applied correctly in the hands of skilled and dedicated facilitators, the andragogical model would expand the definitions of helping our young adults be responsible for their learning and sustain a learning society.

REFERENCES

- Brockett, R. G., & Hiemstra, R. (1991). *Self-direction in Adult Learning: Perspectives on Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York : Routledge.
- Brookfield, S. (1986). *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Brown, H. W. (1985). *Lateral Thinking and Andragogy: Improving Problem Solving in Adulthood*. *Lifelong Learning: An Omnibus of Practice and Research*, 8(7), 22-25.
- Cranton, P. (1992). *Working with Adult Learners*. Wall & Emerson, Inc.: Ohio.
- Gill, L. (2001). *Needs of Adult Learners*. Available online at UOPHX, EBSCO.
- Hanson, A. (1996). *The Search for a Separate Theory of Adult Learning: Does Anyone Really Need Andragogy?* In R. Edwards, A. Hanson, and P. Raggatt (eds.). *Boundaries of adult learning*. London: Routledge.
- Knowles, M. (1980). *The Modern Practice of Adult Education*. Association Press: New York.
- Knowles, M. (1984). *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. Houston: Gulf Publishing.
- Knowles, M. S. (1986). *Using Learning contracts*. San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Knowles, M. (1990). *Adult Learners: The Neglected Species*. Kogan Page.
- Lawson, K. (1998). *The Trainer's Handbook*. Jossey-Bass: San Fransisco.
- Lindeman, E.C. (1926). *The Meaning of Adult Education*. New Republic: New York.
- Mocker, D. W. (1980). *Cooperative Learning Process: Shared Learning Experience in Teaching Adults to Read*. In L.S Johnson (ed.) *Reading and the adult learner*. 35-40: International Reading Association.
- Rogers, A. (2002). *Teaching Adults*. London: OUP.