Chapter 7

Andragogy or Pedagogy as a Means to Improve the Workforce?

Victor C. X. Wang
Florida Atlantic University, USA

Beth Kania-Gosche
Lindenwood University, USA

ABSTRACT

Workforce education is driven by learning theories. For centuries, andragogy and pedagogy have been treated as learning theories to guide workforce education. In the workplace in any society, employees are adult workers who need to be equipped with either andragogical theories or pedagogical theories. It is not uncommon to argue that andragogy works best with adult employees in most cases in the workplace. However, pedagogy does have its place to guide workforce education from time to time, due to the fact that adult employees have to go through different learning stages in the workplace. While the authors of this chapter advocate that andragogy promotes self-directed learning in the workplace, successful adult learning professionals should move in and out of those cells as illustrated in Wang's graph freely. The authors have made an attempt to show different views of andragogy versus pedagogy and how they can be utilized as a means to improve the workforce in a given society.

INTRODUCTION

A good question HRD and HRM practitioners ask is "why explore learning theories?" The simple answer is they want quality learning in their organizations. HRD, HRM interventions and management policies are congruent with the assumptions about human nature and organizational life. Naturally,

learning theories about human behavior carry with them assumptions about human nature, the purpose of education, and desirable values. A better understanding of the various learning theories and specific contexts such as online learning will result in better decisions regarding learning experiences and more desirable outcomes (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). Without a doubt,

learning theories will contribute to long-run gains in organizations' human capital (Torres-Coronas & Gasco-Hernandez, 2006). Above all, learning theories can be used to improve the workforce, guide the adult employees, and help boost long-run gains in human capital.

BACKGROUND

The concept of helping adults learn had been evolving in Europe for quite some time before it was introduced to North America by adult education leaders. It was a German grammar school teacher by the name of Alexander Kapp who coined the term "andragogy" in 1833 to differentiate it from the theory of youth learning, which is widely called pedagogy, the art and science of teaching children. Of course, andragogy is defined as the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998, 2005). Art here refers to "style," and science here refers to "method." HRD and HRM practitioners need to know both. They may find when examining their own style of training that they are actually following one or more learning theories such as andragogy. "Neither andragogy nor pedagogy is a teaching technique. Instead they are the philosophy that a teacher looks to for guidance" (Forrest & Peterson, 2006, p. 115).

A number of scholars in the field of adult education helped popularize the principles of andragogy in the field of adult education and training. The primary reason to advance and popularize such a learning theory was to boost long run gains in human capital. Throughout history, humans' actions can be explained by various learning theories. Changing from one orientation to another does not necessarily mean changing techniques or content. "Changing from a pedagogical lecture to an andragogical lecture does not require writing new speaking notes, but rather a new approach to when and how an instructor should use the lecture method" (Forrest & Peterson, 2006, p.

115). First, Lindeman (1926) identified several key assumptions about adult learners. Table 1 shows a summary of Lindeman's key assumptions about adult learners.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Knowles added one more assumption about motivation to learn. At present, the andragogical model has emerged as the theoretical framework to guide adult teaching and adult learning in many different contexts including HRD and HRM. Knowles popularized this model and devoted his whole life to adult education and training in North America (Bash, 2003). Table 2 provides a summary of the andragogical model.

The debate regarding andragogy versus pedagogy has been going on in the field of adult education, training, and learning organizations for years. Finally, in the 1960s and 1970s, Knowles and his associates made the distinction between pedagogy and andragogy (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998, 2005). What this meant was children should be taught pedagogically and adults should be taught andragogically (Jarvis, 2002). To be more specific, the pedagogical model assigns the trainer/teacher full responsibility for making all decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned, when it will be learned, and if it has been learned (Knowles, Holton III & Swanson, 1998, p. 62). This is what we call teacher-directed education.

Based on today's adult learners' needs in today's organizations, the pedagogical model does

Table 1. Lindeman's key assumptions about adult learners

Adult Learners	
1	Adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy.
2	Adults' orientation to learning is life-centered.
3	Experience is the richest source for adults' learning.
4	Adults have a deep need to be self-directing.
5	Individual differences among people increase with age.

Related Content

The Socratic Way and Adult Learning: Exploring a Nelsonian View of the Socratic Method in Self-Directed Learning Encounters.
Frank G. Giuseffi (2021). *Research Anthology on Adult Education and the Development of Lifelong Learners (pp. 303-312).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/the-socratic-way-and-adult-learning/279732

Deep Learning and Online Education as an Informal Learning Process: Is There a Relationship between Deep Learning and Online Education as an Informal Learning Process?
Theresa Neimannand Viktor Wang (2017). *Adult Education and Vocational Training in the Digital Age (pp. 37-57).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/deep-learning-and-online-education-as-an-informal-learning-process/171370

Autoethnography as a Methodological Approach in Adult Vocational Education and Technology
Robin S. Grenier (2016). *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology (pp. 42-50).*
www.irma-international.org/article/autoethnography-as-a-methodological-approach-in-adult-vocational-education-and-technology/167780

Guiding Framework and Principles for Technology Integration: What Are the Key Questions?
Minchi Kim (2012). *Developing Technology-Rich Teacher Education Programs: Key Issues (pp. 45-56).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/guiding-framework-principles-technology-integration/61916

Merging Education and Business Models to Create and Sustain Transformational Change
Susan Isenberg (2010). *International Journal of Adult Vocational Education and Technology (pp. 31-47).*
www.irma-international.org/article/merging-education-business-models-create/48499