

ANDRAGOGICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL METHODS OF TEACHING: ADULT EDUCATORS' PREFERENCE FOR ANDRAGOGY

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Abstract

Adult learners have some unique characteristics that distinguish them from children. These characteristics influence their learning to a large extent. Adults by virtue of their age have accumulated knowledge through their various life experiences and this knowledge can be used as a learning resource. Therefore, their learning is more self-directed. It is on this premise that the concept of “andragogy” was popularized by Malcolm Knowles. He distinguishes this from the concept of pedagogy which is more concerned with the teaching of children. Children unlike adults come into the class or learning environment as blank slates depending on the teacher to bank knowledge in them and basically control all aspects of the teaching and learning situation. Learners contribute only when the teacher wants them to. Adult education practitioners have argued that such method if applied in adult learning will not produce the desired result. This paper, therefore, examined in details the difference between andragogy and pedagogy.

Keywords: Andragogy, Pedagogy, Methods of Teaching, Adult Educators

Introduction

There is a consensus among authors and practitioners of Adult Education on the fact that adult learning is quite different from the way children learn. This is mainly because adult learners have some unique characteristics that differentiate them from children. These characteristics influence their learning to a large extent. The adult by virtue of his age has gathered experiences in life and has learnt some important life's lessons. This reservoir of experiences serves as a rich resource for learning. It is on this premise that Malcolm Knowles popularized the idea that you don't teach the adult, you help him to learn i.e you facilitate his learning. He referred to this as “Andragogy” which he defined as the art and science of helping adults to learn. This is in contrasting to “Pedagogy” which he also defines as the art and science of teaching children.

Pedagogy adopts the traditional one way communication method where the teacher is seen as an encyclopedia of knowledge or as someone who knows it all and has the duty to bank this knowledge on learners who are seen as Tabula rasa (Blank Slate). It is assumed that the learner knows nothing and the

teacher knows everything so he transfers such knowledge or banks it in the learner who takes it hook, line and sinker and regurgitates everything he has been taught verbatim when necessary.

Knowles argued that the adults unlike children are not blank slates, they already have experiences and these experiences have taught them lessons. So, they come into the class with a reservoir of knowledge. The Adult educator therefore, should relate the learning content to learners' experiences and create a democratic learning atmosphere where the adult will be allowed to use these experiences in enhancing their learning. This paper examines the concept of andragogy and pedagogy with a view to establishing their disparity.

Conceptual Clarification

Andragogy

Malcolm Knowles is regarded as the father of andragogy, although he did not actually invent the term, he popularized it. (Ezimah, 2004). Usman (2015) noted that although the word andragogy was in use as early as 1833, Malcolm Knowles is generally credited with popularizing the concept in the United States in the 1970s. The term was derived from the Greek word *aner*, meaning man and came into the lexicon of education in Europe in the nineteenth century. (Jarvis, 1995). Andragogy is described as the art, science and psychology of helping adults learn. This term was coined to bring out the difference between the teaching of adults and the teaching of children as well as the difference in their learning styles. Supporting this, Brookfield in Ezimah (2004:321) noted that andragogy is:

The single most popular idea in the education and training of adults, in part because and for the way in which it grants to educators of adults a sense of their distinct professional identity.

Andragogy is the adult learner as major actor in their learning process, presumably the initiator, but certainly the chief executor of learning. The role and importance of the teacher are played down. The teacher is no longer the authoritarian "Mr Know All" who towers above all others within the four walls of the classroom. He is no longer the dispenser of punishment for poor learning in the classroom. The teacher is no longer the adult among children but an adult among adults.

Even though a lot of criticisms have been levelled against the concept, the four main assumptions which differentiate andragogy from pedagogy account for the reason why it still maintains its credibility, genuineness and popularity in adult learning. Tight in Ezimah (2004:322), identified these underlying assumptions that as a person matures:

- Their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being.
- They accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
- Their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the development tasks of their social roles; and
- Their time perspective changes from one of postponed application, and accordingly their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centeredness.
- They are motivated by internal factors rather than external factors.

The practice of andragogy places emphasis on learning contracts which recognize the need for self-direction and the developmental stages of the self (Knowles in Jarvis, 1995). This according to Ezimah (2014) presupposes an agreed arrangement between the facilitator and the learner to undertake specific task by a given date which might include how the learning task by a given date which might include how

the learning task is to be undertaken, the experts to be consulted, mode of presentation and quality of task to be achieved. This teaching and learning method has gained wide popularity in adult education mainly because it encourages individual autonomy and its emphasis on correct performance rather than correct academic knowledge and the learning tasks, which are directed towards practical skills.

Pedagogy

The term pedagogy like andragogy has Greek origin. It is also associated with the verbs *agogos*, which means 'guide' or "leading" and *paid*, which means 'child'. Thus, pedagogy means the art and science of teaching children. It is a child-based teaching approach. Pedagogy is considered as the discipline that deals with the theory and practice of child-centered education.

Knowles (1996) noted that the "children" part of the definition of pedagogy got lost somewhere in history. In many people's mind, and even in the dictionary, 'pedagogy' is defined as the art and science of teaching children, even in books on adult education references are made to 'the pedagogy of adult education' without qualms about the contradiction in terms. Ezimah (2014) noted that the reason why adult education has not made the desired impact on human civilization which it is capable of is attributed to the fact that most adult teachers approach the learning-teaching transaction as if they were teaching children.

Pedagogy is associated with formal school education. It is a highly structured with rigidly defined roles and statutes. Oyebamiji (2015) asserted that even in the so called child centered pedagogy, the protagonist in the process is the teacher. He is at the center of the teaching-learning activity. The teacher is an embodiment of knowledge and the custodian of academic discipline. He knows best what is good for the learners to know, select curricular content, creates the learning environment, decides how best to inculcate the knowledge, sets the standard of performance, dictates pace of learning, test the extent of learning and reward successes or punishes failure. The teacher under pedagogy does almost everything that is, he is the most active element. The learners on the other hand, being students know practically nothing but rather depend on the teacher for knowledge, sit passively to assimilate what they are taught, a times memorize, only to give back in the examinations what they are taught.

In the same vein, Diffen (2014) argued that in the traditional sense of the word, pedagogy is authority-focused, "top-down," in that a teacher has complete or nearly complete control over a child's learning experience. The teaching methods employed in pedagogy are very much about transferring foundational knowledge, not about critical discourse. It is a formal process, and usually grades are involved as a means of documenting children's progress.

Difference between Andragogy and Pedagogy

The terms Andragogy and Pedagogy have been examined in the preceding subtitle of conceptual clarification. The characteristics which differentiates andragogy from pedagogy is clearly seen in the assumptions of andragogy and these are:

Self-Concept:

Knowles in Ezimah (2014:323) characterizes children and adults in the following way:

Children enter this world in a condition of complete dependency. Their need, except for purely biological functions, must be taken care of by someone else. The first image a child gets of himself as a separate entity is that of a dependent personality whose life is managed for him by the adult world. This self-concept of dependency is encouraged and reinforced by the adult world...society defines the normal role of a child as that of a passive one of receiving and storing up the information adults have decided children should have. As the child's self-identity begins to take shape, he begins to see himself as having the capacity to start making decisions for himself, at first experimentally and in small matters that don't impinge on the adult world.

But increasingly as he matures, the child's self-concept moves in the direction of greater self-direction, and during adolescence his need to take significant responsibility for managing his own life becomes so strong that it often puts him in open rebellion against control by the adult world.

All of these changes in the adult. Knowles in Ezimah (2014:324) analyzed it thus:

He begins to see his normal role in society no longer as being a full-time learner. He sees himself increasingly as a producer or doer. His chief sources of self-fulfillment are now his performance as a worker, a spouse, a parent, a citizen. The adult acquires a new status, in his own eyes and in the eyes of others, from these non-educational responsibilities. His self-concept becomes that of a self-directing personality. He sees himself as being able to make his own decisions and their consequences, to manage his own life...the point at which he perceives himself to be wholly self-directing. And at that point he also experiences a deep need to be perceived by others as being self-directing. For this reason, adults have a need to be treated with respect, be seen as unique human beings. They tend to avoid, resist, and resent situations in which they feel they are treated like children- being told what to do, being talked down to, embarrassed, punished, and judged. Adults tend to resist learning under conditions that are incongruent with their self-concept as autonomous individuals.

From the foregoing, there is a clear difference in the self-concept of children and adults and this implies that their education or learning needs to take cognizance of this characteristics.

In the same vein, Usman (2015) posits that andragogy assumes that, as people mature their self-concept moves from dependence to self-direction; their growing reservoir of experience begins to serve as a resource for learning; their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly toward the developmental tasks of their social roles, and they begin to want to apply what they have learned right away to life's real challenges. Accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject centered to one of problem centered. Many educationists especially those mainly concerned with the teaching of children and youth placed greater emphasis on knowledge of subject matter and learning environment. Their assumption is that once teachers know the subject matter very well and the learning environment is conducive, academic work can take place effectively. To these educationists therefore, method of teaching is a secondary issue, as far as learning is concerned. Learners can be taught using any type of teaching method the teachers so wish to adopt.

Usman further noted that choice of the method of teaching is the discretion of teachers, they choose whatever methods of teaching they so desire, provided it is one of the standardized methods that could be possible with youth and even adolescent learners, but it is possible with adult learners. Adult learners are fundamentally different from youth learners and as such require different methods and approach. In contrast therefore, the choice of methodology in teaching adults is such an important affair that it was not left to the discretion of the facilitators.

From the very beginning, facilitators should be made to understand that they should not contemplate the use of pedagogical methods such as play way method, or else whom will they ask to play or sing? They should not dare attempt that. They should teach adult learners using methods and techniques that will confer on them their earned and valuable dignities. They should treat their adult participants with every respect and honour.

Techniques such as seminar, workshop, symposium, group discussions, forum demonstration etc. can enable adults learn effectively without any attack or damage on their personality. For the sake of clarity it is pertinent to discuss the two different methods of teaching separately, that is, pedagogy and andragogy.

Experience:

As noted earlier, adults by virtue of the number of years spent on earth have gathered experiences in life which has been a source of knowledge for them. This is in line with the saying that “Experience is the best teacher”. Ezimah (2004) noted that an adult enters into any undertaking with a different background of experience from that of his youth. Having lived longer, he has accumulated a greater volume of experience and has had different kind of experience.

Another subtle difference between children and adults as regards their experience is that to a child, an experience is something that happens to him. It is an external event that affects him, not an integral part of him. If a child is asked who he is, he is likely to identify himself in terms of who his parents are, who his older brothers and sisters are, what street he lives on and what school he attends. His self-identity is largely derived from external sources.

Ezimah noted that to the adult, his experience is him. He defines who he is, establishes his self-identity in terms of his accumulation of a unique set of experiences. If an adult is asked who he is, he is likely to identify himself in terms of what his occupation is, where he has worked, where he has traveled, what his training and experience have equipped him to do, and what his training achievements have been. An adult is what he has done. Usman (2015) noted, therefore, that the sole difference between adults and children is that children have fewer experiences and pre-established beliefs than adults and thus have less to relate.

These differences in experience between children and adults have the following consequences for learning:

- i. Adults have more to contribute to the learning of others; for most kinds of learning, they are themselves a rich resource for learning;
- ii. Adults have a richer foundation of experience to which to relate new experiences (and new learnings tend to take on meaning as we are able to relate them to our past experience);
- iii. Adults have acquired a larger number of fixed habits and patterns of thought, and therefore tend to be less open-minded.

To further understand the differences between andragogy and pedagogy, Usman (2015) noted the following points:

a. Learner Teacher Relation

In a class of youths, the teacher is usually older than his students. He is more experienced and holds a place of respect in the society. In an adult class, the learners may also hold position of responsibility as great as that of some of the facilitators.

The position of the facilitator in an adult class differs from that of his counterpart in the youth class. While the youth teacher carries final authority in his class, in terms of knowledge, the adult facilitator is only a member of the learning group. He learns and teaches. His relationship with his clients is only that of mutual respect, instead of being respected by the clients.

- b. Application of Learning:** The youth may not insist to get immediate results from learning; the case is different with adults, Oduaran (1996). The adults want to see some immediate results from what they learn. For example, you teach a farmer how to apply some modern techniques of farming he will want to try them almost immediately. On the other hand, the youth learners feel that most of the subjects they learn are to be applied sometime in the future may be after the end of the programme.

- c. Programme Development:** In education for youth, the syllabus is usually set by government and the teacher is expected to follow it with little or no modification. The final assessment is mostly based

on the syllabus. And learning is generally directed at passing examinations. The case is different in an adult class. Although the facilitator may have his own syllabus it must be in line with what learners want to learn and learning is not directed towards passing examinations, (Oduaran, 1996).

Conclusion

What is paramount in teaching is not only knowledge of the subject matter and the learning environment, but also the methodology used in teaching the subject matter; this is particularly true with adult education. If adult facilitators do not use suitable methods for teaching their clients, all efforts and resources invested in adult education programmes may be a waste.

Without the use of proper method of teaching adult learners may be reluctant to keep on with adult education programmes. Any attempt to teach them through the use of pedagogy creates resentment and may cause mass withdrawal from learning centers. That is why adult facilitators are advised to make use of andragogy while working with adult learners. The advice based on the fact that adult learners are characteristically different from youth learners.

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