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The Management Learning Tool: Andragogy

Introduction

The name andragogy was first used by a German grammar school teacher named Alexander Kapp in 1833 to portray the educational theory of the Greek philosopher Plato. He used it to refer to the normal process by which adults engage in continuing education. Pedagogy is derived from the Greek word "paid," meaning child plus "agogos," meaning leading. Thus, pedagogy has been defined as the art and science of teaching children. In the pedagogical model, the teacher has full responsibility for making decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned, when it will be learned, and if the material has been learned. Pedagogy, or teacher-directed instruction as it is commonly known, places the student in a submissive role requiring obedience to the teacher's instructions. It is based on the assumption that learners need to know only what the teacher teaches them. The result is a teaching and learning situation that actively promotes dependency on the instructor (Knowles, 1984).

The first use of the term "andragogy" to catch the extensive attention of adult educators was in 1968, when Knowles, then a professor of adult education at Boston University, introduced the term (then spelled "androgogy") through a journal article. In a 1970 book (a second edition was published in 1980) he defined the term as the art and science of helping adults learn.

Definitions:

- The science of adult learning, that is of teaching adults in an adult way, as opposed to teaching them as if they were children.
- **Andragogy** consists of learning strategies focused on adults. It is often interpreted as the process of engaging adult learners with the structure of learning experience.
- Andragogy is the art and science of helping adults learn.

A comparison of the assumptions of pedagogy and Andragogy:

	Pedagogy	Andragogy
The learner	Dependent. Teacher directs what, when, how a subject is learned and tests that it has been learned	Moves towards independence. Self-directing. Teacher encourages and nurtures this movement
The learner's experience	Of little worth. Hence teaching methods are didactic	A rich resource for learning. Hence teaching methods include discussion, problem-solving etc.
Readiness to learn	People learn what society expects them to. So that the curriculum is standardized.	People learn what they need to know, so that learning programmes organised around life application.

Orientation to learning	Acquisition of subject matter. Curriculum organized by subjects.	Learning experiences should be based around experiences, since people are performance centered in their learning
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Management education may have started a shift to a more learner-centered approach, but using “pedagogy” shows that the field’s mind-set still views students as dependent children rather than independent adults. In the current situation, the term Pedagogy acts like a shackle holding management education to past notions of learning.

Learning through Experience

Andragogy is an educational theory that utilizes the adult’s life experiences to teach and aid in learning rather than using someone else’s experience in an attempt to teach. Since this is a way of teaching and learning, the principles lend andragogy to be accepted as a theory. “A theory is a comprehensive, coherent, and internally consistent system of ideas about a set of phenomena.” (Knowles, Holton, Swanson, 2005).

It is important to understand how an adult learns. A Chief Learning Officer (CKO) must understand how to motivate employees within an organization. The CKO must also know how to get the information across in a manner that is relative to "real life". An adult learner who chooses to return to college will find their enthusiasm is strong. As each lesson is learned they will look for ways to utilize the new knowledge.

Knowles' Andragogy assumptions:

- The need to know — adult learners need to know why they need to learn something before undertaking to learn it.
- Learner self-concept —adults need to be responsible for their own decisions and to be treated as capable of self-direction
- Role of learners' experience —adult learners have a variety of experiences of life which represent the richest resource for learning. These experiences are however imbued with bias and presupposition.
- Readiness to learn —adults are ready to learn those things they need to know in order to cope effectively with life situations.
- Orientation to learning —adults are motivated to learn to the extent that they perceive that it will help them perform tasks they confront in their life situations.

Scope/Application:

Andragogy applies to any form of adult learning and has been used extensively in the design of organizational training programs (especially for "soft skill" domains such as management development).

Principles of Andragogy:

1. Adults need to be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.
2. Experience (including mistakes) provides the basis for learning activities.

3. Adults are most interested in learning subjects that have immediate relevance to their job or personal life.
4. Adult learning is problem-centered rather than content-oriented.

The mechanism of Andragogy:

1. Self-concept: As a person matures his self concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directed human being
2. Experience: As a person matures he accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning.
3. Readiness to learn. As a person matures his readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of his social roles.
4. Orientation to learning. As a person matures his time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly his orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem centeredness.
5. Motivation to learn: As a person matures the motivation to learn is internal.

Malcolm Knowles' five step model:

1. Diagnosing learning needs.
2. Formulating learning needs.
3. Identifying human material resources for learning.
4. Choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies.
5. Evaluating learning outcomes.

The Social Implications of Andragogy

The major problems of our age deal with human relations; the solutions can be found only in education. Skill in human relations is a skill that must be learned; it is learned in the home, in the school, in the temple, on the job, and wherever people gather together in small groups.

The outcomes' of Adult learning:

Adults should acquire a mature understanding of themselves. They should understand their needs, motivations, interests, capacities, and goals. They should be able to look at themselves objectively and maturely. They should accept themselves and respect themselves for what they are, while striving earnestly to become better.

Adults should develop an attitude of acceptance, love, and respect toward others. This is the attitude on which all human relations depend. Adults must learn to distinguish between people and ideas, and to challenge ideas without threatening people. Ideally, this attitude will go beyond acceptance, love, and respect, to empathy and the sincere desire to help others.

Adults should develop a dynamic attitude toward life. They should accept the fact of change and should think of themselves as always changing. They should acquire the habit of looking at every experience as an opportunity to learn and should become skillful in learning from it.

Adults should learn to react to the causes, not the symptoms, of behavior. Solutions to problems lie in their causes, not in their symptoms. We have learned to apply this lesson in the physical world, but have yet to learn to apply it in human relations.

Adults should acquire the skills necessary to achieve the potentials of their personalities. Every person has capacities that, if realized, will contribute to the well-being of himself and of society. To achieve these potentials requires skills of many kinds—vocational, social, recreational, civic, artistic, and the like. It should be a goal of education to give each individual those skills necessary for him to make full use of his capacities.

Adults should understand the essential values in the capital of human experience. They should be familiar with the heritage of knowledge, the great ideas, the great traditions, of the world in which they live. They should understand and respect the values that bind men together.

Adults should understand their society and should be skillful in directing social change. In a democracy the people participate in making decisions that affect the entire social order. It is imperative, therefore, that every factory worker, every salesman, every politician, every housewife, know enough about government, economics, international affairs, and other aspects of the social order to be able to take part in them intelligently.

Functions of Training:

The Training function encompasses all activities aimed at improving the performance with the help of training interventions which includes:-

- i. advising management in formulation of training and development policy;
- ii. preparing training plans and deciding training priorities;
- iii. identification of training needs;
- iv. providing learning opportunities to the employees.

Role of the learners

- Learners should know why they are studying something.
- Instruction should be task-oriented, and it should take into account the wide range of different backgrounds of learners.
- Learners should be able to relate what is being studied to their personal/professional experiences.
- Learners should be motivated and ready to learn.
- Learners should be involved in the planning and evaluation of their instruction. Instruction should be problem-centered rather than content-oriented.

When To Use Andragogy

Andragogical methods are best when they can be applied are in community situation and industry/corporate situations that are supportive of a self-directed learner. Human Resource departments should also consider andragogical principals when designing their employee development programs, providing the organization whose management style is one that is represented by McGregor's Theory Y. By placing a value on training and development, employees will be motivated to learn new skills to help them in their career development.

Conclusion:

The society of our age, cannot wait for the next generation to solve problems. Time is running out too fast. Our fate rests with the intelligence, skill, and good will of those who are now the citizen-rulers. The instrument by which their abilities as citizen-rulers can be improved is adult education. This is our problem and challenge.

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