Chapter 8
Andragogical Curriculum for Equipping Successful Facilitators of Andragogy in Numerous Contexts

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses a curriculum definition, especially as it relates to preparing teachers to be successful in working with adult learners. The main thrust is to clearly articulate some of the major elements needed to help the art and science of helping adults learn the ideas and practices of that process and be as consistent/congruent as feasible. Reciprocity among empathy, trust, and sensitivity are considered to be crucial in the teaching and learning exchange. Competence and experience in andragogy is important even to the extent of selecting and using various techniques and methods in the learning experience, whether used with learners in higher-order thinking or used with lower-level learners. Techniques the author has found helpful are: mixing a lecture with discussion of questions raised by learners in response to content of the lecture; encouraging and giving learners opportunity to take more responsibility for their learning, thus becoming more self-directed; varying one's approach for accommodating different learning styles each learner possesses; looking at a perspective of learning in various areas/pillars of life – being, knowing, doing, living together, changing, and developing sustainability. A true story is provided illustrating a principle of andragogy – doing in practice the same thing one believes and says.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum is a broad and interesting topic in and of itself. Ask any group of people and it is quite certain that each would attach her/his own meaning to the word, without including a specific definition. However, to carry it beyond just the single word and connect it with other words and phrases, it takes on very different connotations. In this situation, curriculum is being connected with the andragogy (the art and science of facilitating or helping adults in accomplishing their learning) while focusing on helping equip the facilitator of andragogy to be successful in numerous contexts.

A Definition of Curriculum

Curriculum in general is considered to be (Devlin, 1939, p. 414) applied particularly to the course of study in a university, college, or school. Jarvis (1990, p. 89) in relating the curriculum to adult education finds denial of adult education having a curriculum as well as identification of curriculum with the term program. He does suggest that curriculum tends to mean the entire range of learning experiences provided by an educational institution, one of the numerous contexts where adult education may be conducted.

A much clearer articulation of the particulars which "learning experiences" encompass is given by Knoll (1989, as cited in Titmus, p. 29) using the German Education Council definition that curriculum means the organized arrangement of learning processes and content with regard to certain aims and objectives which include techniques, behavior or type and degree of certain skills and aptitudes, or of knowledge. This could imply and prompt such questions as: which knowledge, understanding, aptitudes, skills, interests, attitude, value and behavior pattern is this "learner – who is an educator of adults (or more accurately, andragogue) in preparation" to acquire? With which subject matter and content is this "learner" to be confronted? What is the "learner" to learn? When and where is this "learner" to learn? How are this "learner's needs" to be determined? By which learning steps and techniques, in which manner, with the aid of which materials is this "learner" to learn? How is the attainment of the aims and objectives by this "learner" to be determined? It could be assumed that to answer these questions will necessitate knowing various theories and schools of thought which will inform the selection of the very best practices or learning/teaching techniques which the andragogical educator of adults has at his/her command and level of competency.

Boone (1985) presents a definition of programming or curriculum in adult education as follows:

A comprehensive, systematic, and proactive process encompassing the total planned, collaborative efforts of the adult education organization, the adult educator in the roles of change agent and programmer, representative of the learners, and the learners themselves in a purposive manner and designed to facilitate desirable changes in the behavior of learners and the environment or system in which they live. (p. 41)

Boone also gives an instructional design conceptual program/curriculum model which includes three major parts: Planning, Design & Implementation, Evaluation & Accountability. Planning encompasses the organization and its renewal process, and linking the organization to its publics. Design & Implementation takes in the instructional design of the planned program, and implementing the planned program. Evaluation and Accountability helps determine and measure program inputs and outputs as well as renewal processes.

Although these above expressions and the questions relating to the scope of curriculum are clear, they are somewhat general. Furthermore, for the focus to be on andragogy and not education or adult education in general, there are some specific things that need to be considered to make a curriculum consistent with andragogy, so that the preparing/equipping of the andragogue will be congruent with the principles, theories, practices and underlying foundation of andragogy; thus, approximating as nearly as possible, the preparation of person(s) who will enact and fulfill the role of an andragogical facilitator successfully. Knowles (1970, 1980), however, provides six assumptions and eight process elements of andragogy that help articulate curriculum, or program planning, or steps for instructional design. This will be addressed in the next section.

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