

Chapter 7

Observations of the Possible Influence of Andragogy on the Economies of World Nations

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ABSTRACT

Andragogy has received mixed reviews in the past. Some have analyzed it from a positive perspective. Some have analyzed it from a negative perspective, and some have ignored it altogether. Very little if any effort has been devoted to researching the economic impact of andragogy, especially during this prolonged economic downturn in the USA, in addition to many other countries throughout the world. This chapter looks at the theories undergirding the author's practice of andragogy, eras of the scope of various writings in English concerning andragogy, economic implications of his application of andragogy, and his thoughts about future research trends in andragogy.

INTRODUCTION

To my knowledge, up to the present year 2013, no one has attempted to identify and/or clarify the economic influence and impact of practical application of andragogy in the global economy. In this chapter, it is my objective to make an early (if not first) attempt to address this issue.

and preparation of adult learners as they do their work in the field. These include: Knowles' seven editions of his book on the adult learner, with the last three being with associates; my work on the building blocks of adult learning foundations; the living lecture connected with the learning theory related to large group meetings; and, trust as it is exemplified by teacher trust of learners along with reciprocal trust of teachers on the part of learners.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There are four component parts that form the theoretical framework of this chapter, which contribute to the way in which I have conducted my practice in adult education/andragogy in support

Knowles' Seven Editions of the Adult Learner

Knowles (1973) focused a full application of his conception of andragogy toward the Human Resource Development (HRD) Movement. He

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worked vigorously in the corporate sector and thus saw the importance of testing and relating andragogy within it. He divided the listing of numerous learning theorists into the categories of mechanistic and organismic. His identifying andragogy as being in the organismic category helped cast, clarify and nudge the philosophy toward a more humane frame. This was the first edition of his book entitled *The adult learner: A neglected species*.

Knowles (1978a), in this second edition of *The Adult Learner*, updated and added to his application of andragogy in HRD. He continued to be involved very much with corporate adult education and added some information that helped to clarify what was then the current situation.

Despite the hesitancy that some had about Knowles involvement in andragogy, Knowles (1984) third edition of *The Adult Learner* relating to HRD appeared at this time. He was still actively engaged in the field, although he had retired from his professorship some years earlier in 1978. Knowles updated and added to his application of andragogy to HRD in this third edition. He continued to be involved very much with corporate adult education and added some more information.

Knowles (1990) came out with the fourth edition of *The Adult Learner* book. In it he added the sixth assumption that adults need to know a reason that makes sense to them as to why they should learn some particular thing. This edition was the strongest. In this volume he indicated the crucial importance of equalness, openness, democratic, realness, genuineness, prizing, acceptance, and empathic understanding on the part of the andragogue. The andragogical teacher/facilitator accepts each participant (student) as a person of worth, respects his feelings and ideas, and seeks to build relationships of mutual trust and exposes his own feelings regarding the relationship between the teacher and adult learner.

Knowles et al. (1998) published this fifth edition within a few months after Knowles' death.

His collaborators appeared to be more intent on putting forward their own point of view of andragogy than preserving the full scope of the comprehensive perspective for which Knowles was known.

Knowles et al. (2005) presented a sixth edition of this work on Knowles' andragogy, but it was mainly provided for an HRD audience that was interested in moving andragogy forward on a track that was somewhat at variance of Knowles' original work. This, of course, was published eight years after the death of Knowles.

Knowles et al. (2011) presented a seventh edition of this work on Knowles' andragogy, fourteen years after Knowles' passing from this earth. This volume had the six assumptions and eight process elements ultimately included in his andragogical perspective, which will be identified in the next section. A unique element of this edition among other things is the inclusion of chapters 19 and 20 on various aspects of andragogy, by John A. Henschke (and Mary Cooper [*deceased*]); and Jost Reischmann.

The materials in these seven books form a major part of the 'warp-and-woof' of my take on being the best adult educator I am able. Of course, my own interpretation and perspective become part of how I have operationalized my conduct and practice in the field of adult education.

Building Blocks for Adult Learning Foundations

The program that I designed and conducted with the folks in the USA and 18 foreign countries were without exception focused on my methods and techniques of teaching adults and facilitating their learning. More specifically, the content relates to the principles of adult education (andragogy – the art and science of helping adults learn as defined by Knowles himself). At this point, a capsule form of this content could be depicted in two ways which complement each other.

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