Chapter 49

Andragogy around the World in K–20 Education:
It is All about Trust

John A. Henschke
Lindenwood University, USA

ABSTRACT

The author's research in andragogy started in the late 1960s. More serious in-depth attempts were launched in 1997, just after Malcolm S. Knowles died—the author wanted to honor his legacy since he and his work in andragogy were influential in the author's life. The author's research yielded an instrument with the strongest factor being "teacher trust of learners"—a belief that applies all the way through K-20 Education. This is found to be so in doctoral dissertations, overarching trust behaviors, and threaded through the literature surrounding trust. Trust is found to be congruent between the author's scholarship and practice. The foundation of this trust is rooted and reflected in the wisdom literature (Proverbs) of the Biblical Scriptures.

INTRODUCTION

I have been researching deeply and specifically in andragogy for about 15 years, starting in 1998. However, prior to that time, I had been practicing, writing, and researching in the general field of adult education and andragogy. Moreover, my first foray into the practice, writing and early research in adult education as a field and andragogy stems back into the mid-1960s. My practice in adult education and andragogy has been honed and refined since that time. Nonetheless, the major part of my in-depth research in andragogy has been focused along the lines of moving the discussion, regarding andragogy within and relating to the adult education field, beyond starting and stopping with what

Malcolm S. Knowles did or did not do in his writing about andragogy while he was alive, until his death in 1997. Two of his books published shortly prior to his death, encapsulated and articulated the expanded versions of his six assumptions and eight process elements of andragogy, included the fourth edition of *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species* (1990, Gulf Publishing) and *Designs for Adult Learning: Practical Resources, Exercises, and Course Outlines from the Father of Adult Learning* (Knowles, 1995).

With Malcolm's passing, I asked myself how I may consider honoring his legacy, since he had been such a strong influence in my life and especially upon my perspective in andragogy, since my getting involved in the adult education field. My decision in answer to the question of my seeking to honor his legacy was and continues being to investigate the world-wide foundation of andragogy, in its history, philosophy and major themes. In this volume, how it relates to the K-20 context will be included. Thus far, its major underlying essence appears to be "trust" in the relationship between those facilitating learning and those engaged in learning – teachers and learners in educational/learning settings, and/or supervisors and supervisees in work settings which also includes learning. My objectives in this chapter will focus on how this emerged in my practice and research, how this concept of trust has become dominant, and the implications of this for the practice and research in adult education and andragogy.

BACKGROUND

Knowles (1970, 1995) provided the most articulate expression and most complete understanding of andragogy from the American perspective. The structure of the theory is comprised of two conceptual foundations: The learning theory and the design theory. The learning theory is based upon adult and their desire to become and/or to express themselves as capable human beings and has six components: (1) Adults need to know a reason that makes sense to them, for whatever they need to learn, (2) They have a deep need to be self-directing and take responsibility for themselves, (3) Adults enter a learning activity with a quality and volume of experience that is a resource for their own and others' learning, (4) They are ready to learn when they experience a need to know, or be able to do, something to perform more effectively in some aspect of their life, (5) Adults' orientation to learning is around life situations that are task, issue- or problem centered, for which they seek solutions, (6) Adults are motivated much more internally than externally.

Knowles' (1970, 1995) conceptual foundation of the design theory is based in a process, and is not dependent upon a body of content, but helps the learner acquire whatever content is needed. There are eight components of the design process: (1) Preparing the learners for the program; (2) setting a climate that is conducive to learning (physically comfortable and inviting; and psychologically – mutually respectful, collaborative, mutually trustful, supportive, open, authentic, pleasurable, fun and human); (3) involving learners in mutual planning; (4) involving learners in diagnosing their learning needs; (5) involving learners in forming their learning objectives; (6) involving learners in designing learning plans; (7) helping learners carry out their learning plans; and (8) involving learners in evaluating their learning outcomes. Active involvement seems to be the watchword of Knowles' (thus American) version of andragogy, and each step of the andragogical learning process.

Henschke (1987a) asserted that the adult continuing education literature and popular belief indicate that competence in subject matter has traditionally served as a sufficient qualification for individuals who teach adults, neither adult teaching experience nor formal preparation for teaching the adult learner is a requirement to obtaining a position. Many of the institutions conducting adult education programs have no requirement for teachers other than knowledge of the content

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