

Chapter 30

Nation Building through Andragogy and Lifelong Learning: On the Cutting Edge Educationally, Economically, and Governmentally

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses the author's international experience of and involvement in the very essence of exemplifying my conception of the following in various countries around the globe – nation building through andragogy and lifelong learning: on the cutting edge educationally, economically, and governmentally. Although I have been privileged to engage adult learners in research and learning experiences in a dozen countries through andragogical and lifelong learning processes, the chapter presents only a sketch of the author's personally unique approach of work and learning in what he calls nation building with people in five countries: Brazil, South Africa, Mali, Thailand, and Austria. The purpose is to clearly articulate some of the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the most successful facilitation activities of helping adults learn in such a way that any adult educator, who may be disposed and committed to do so, could learn these processes and replicate them with others.

INTRODUCTION

My international work in adult education began in 1984 and has continued to the present in 2013. During more than a quarter of a century nearing three decades since that beginning, in addition to my more than four decades of work in the USA,

I have been involved in doing adult education – learning and infrastructure – in a dozen countries around the globe, and in some special organizations. Most of what I present in this chapter, I have tested and carried out in my andragogy work in the USA. I will be outlining the work that I have done in five of the countries within four continents: Brazil in South America; South Africa

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-4666-2181-7.ch030

and Mali in Africa; Thailand in Asia; and, Austria in Europe. The main things I will be presenting are my concepts and research on ‘nation building through andragogy and lifelong learning and is on the cutting edge educationally, economically, and governmentally’.

I will be enumerating the various kinds of work through andragogy and lifelong learning that led me to believe that I really am in the process of nation building. This kind of work goes hand-in-hand with learning, building, actually getting people to ban together to accomplish what they have not previously thought of doing together. This also is influencing the developing and advancing of their economy, education and governmental processes.

My objectives for this chapter are to engage the reader in an overview of and taking part in ‘nation building’: (1) Becoming acquainted with a theory of selecting and using various adult education and lifelong learning techniques; (2) Understanding the concept of andragogy that guides my research and practice; (3) Knowing the building blocks I consider being needed for my engaging adults in a proactive learning process; (4) Valuing and using the measurable performance indicators for reorienting an educational institution [university, etc.] toward lifelong learning; (5) Developing competency with the living, dynamic lecture in actively involving large adult groups in learning; (6) Gaining a vision of infrastructure elements needed for the broad involvement of citizens for raising their standard of living – educationally, economically, and governmentally; and, (7) Challenging each one to commit her/himself to take action beyond their current level in adult education and lifelong learning.

BACKGROUND

A popular definition of andragogy comes from Knowles (1970, p. 38), “The art and science of helping adults learn.” My own attempt at a definition goes something like the following, “A

scientific discipline for the study of the theory, processes, technology, and anything else of value and benefit including learning, teaching, instructing, guiding, leading, and modeling/exemplifying a way of life, which would bring adults to their full degree of humaneness.” And if we add lifelong learning to this, we could add the words ‘throughout life’ at the end of these definitions.

Others may bring forward their definitions, so in my estimation varied definitions are acceptable for a field of study as diverse as adult education and lifelong learning. Other words we use have numerous definitions and we still use them while they are included in our dictionaries. Consequently, for this discussion, the above will suffice for broad definitions.

Perhaps Knowles (1970) articulated one of the most popular expressions of the concept of andragogy – which is about six assumptions and eight process elements. The assumptions are: Adults need to know why they should learn something; adults have a deep need to be self-directing; adults have a greater volume and a different quality of learning experience than youth; adults readiness to learn is tied closely with their needing to know or do something new in their life situation; adults enter into a learning experience with a task-centered orientation to learning; and, adults are motivated more by internal than external motivation. The process elements adults need are: Preparation for the learning; a climate conducive to learning; a structure for mutual planning; engagement actively in determining their learning needs; translating their learning needs into objectives; designing a pattern of learning experiences; conducting the learning experiences; and, evaluating the extent to which their objectives have been met (Knowles, 1990; Henschke, 2009b).

Early Critiques of Andragogy

Some lack of enthusiasm about Knowles’ andragogy concept was reflected by Hartree’s (1984) feeling that Knowles’ andragogy did not live up to

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