

The Principles and Applications of Andragogy Vs. Pedagogy

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CCHE 670: Adult Learners

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Due March 7,2023

Abstract

Andragogy versus Pedagogy.

It is common knowledge that pedagogy is the practice of teaching children and andragogy is the practice of teaching adults; however, there are specific principles attached to these teaching and learning practices that highlight why and how and why one learning style is more beneficial to adults than the other. In this essay, I will explore the characteristics, principles, differences, benefits and shortcomings of andragogy and pedagogy.

Adults are self-driven and have a wealth of past experiences to solve complex problems. The characteristics of andragogy experience, self-concept, readiness, problem solving/orientation, intrinsic motivation and perhaps the most important principle, readiness. Alternatively, pedagogy refers primarily to developing habits of thinking and acting. This is traditionally utilized with teaching children. Within pedagogy, a teacher's main role is to provide opportunities for students to learn through experiences, which most children have not gained in their lives just yet.

Educators use many styles of pedagogy to assist their classroom management and instruction. The four main styles that are typically used in pedagogy are Behaviorism which is the belief that a student's behavior is affected and reinforced by external forces rather than internal forces; Constructivism, which is the idea that students create their own learning based on previous knowledge and experience, Social Constructivism, which is a blend of two methods that incorporates teacher-guided and student-centered instruction. Liberationism, which is the practice where the classroom is managed democratically by setting the students' opinions at the center of developing the learning environment.

Though there are many differences in methods and motivations between andragogy and pedagogy, the audience adults vs. children are the most important components to consider.

Traits and Applications of Pedagogy

Pedagogy the role of pedagogy is subject matter acquisition. (Nebel, 2022) It embodies teacher-focused education, including fact-laden lectures, assigned readings, quizzes, rote memorizing, and examinations and it is mostly teacher focused. In the pedagogic model, teachers assume responsibility for making decisions about what will be learned, how it will be learned, and when it will be learned. Teachers direct learning. (Andragogy, 2007). Typically, learners who are engaged in a pedagogically structured learning setting only need to learn what is required to pass the class. This is typically not knowledge that is to be applied throughout their lives. The learner is strictly dependent on the teacher's direction and the learner's source of motivation is typically to impress the teacher and successfully pass the class. Knowles once stated that This seems like a pretty pessimistic way of looking at education and a negative way of looking at our students! (Nebel, 2022).

Sometime in the 1920s, educational psychologists began to note a negative trend with this style of teaching. Dropout rates were high, and learners were not motivated to learn. This phenomenon was occurring among adolescents and adult learners.

There are four main styles that are applied within pedagogical style of learning and teaching. The first style is referred to as behaviorism. Behaviorism is the belief that a student's behavior is affected and reinforced by external forces rather than internal forces. An example of this is punishment and reward.

The next style is referred to as constructivism, which is the idea that students create their own learning based on previous knowledge and experience. This somewhat feels like it is a trait or application of andragogy however, it is indeed a style of pedagogy. When this style is applied, the teachers encourage the learners to construct their own knowledge through their experiences and activities versus being lectured on a certain subject matter. Teachers who apply this promote skills and subject mastery through hands-on lessons and self-directed learning.

The next style is social constructivism. This style is a blend of two methods that incorporates teacher-guided and student-centered instruction. Pairing students up or assigning student groups in an art class to create art projects may be a good example of how to incorporate this style into pedagogy.

There is also the style of liberationism, which is the practice where the classroom is managed democratically by setting the students' opinions at the center of developing the learning environment.

Another problem the teachers of adults experienced with the pedagogical model was not in sync with the characteristics of their adult students. (Knowles) For example, one of the characteristics of an adult learner is life experiences. The pedagogical model of learning does not consider the experience of the learner. Once this was discovered, educators began experimenting with new ideas of how to implement learning that would be more engaging for adults. This new development occurred through the mid to late 1920s through the 1950s.

After exploring pedagogy in depth, it feels like there are more disadvantages to this teaching and learning practice than there are advantages. That is mostly true when it comes to adult learners. Sometimes, it is beneficial to practice pedagogy amongst learners who are

children. Children need to develop skills such as habits, routine, time management, etc. Thus, pedagogy and child development accompany each other almost perfectly at times. It invokes complex processes of learning among the students such as analyzing, creative thinking, and evaluation. Furthermore, it makes students more receptive to what the teacher is teaching. This is essential at the early stages of child development and education. (Shirke, 2021).

Traits and Applications of Andragogy

There are some important factors that must be considered when teaching adult learners. Since adult learners are results driven, self-directed and have more life experience, it is critical that their education should be facilitated to reflect those characteristics. (Lootah, 2023) It is important to engage with adult learners by allowing them to assist with planning their own learning process. It is also important for educators of adult learners to provide straight forward educational material. (Lootah, 2023) Educators must focus on producing educational material that is in alignment with concepts that they can directly apply to their professional or educational goals. It is also important to apply various learning styles because adult learners because there are a variety of learning styles withing this demographic. (Lootah, 2023)

Matthew Knowles' theory of andragogy resonates with me the most. Knowles theory of andragogy is comprised of six principals: Adults are self-directed learners, Adults accumulate experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning, Readiness to learn is related to social roles, adults want immediate application of knowledge (problem-centered orientation), adults tend to be internally motivated, and adults need to know the reason for learning something. I strongly relate to these principals, and I strongly believe that these principles apply to the majority of adult learners who are currently pursuing their educational goals. (Lootah, 2023)

Andragogy assumes that adults are self-directed learners who are motivated to learn by solving problems and meeting challenges. Andragogy is an important theory for educators to understand because it can help them create more effective teaching methods and materials for adult learners. Alternatively, there is pedagogy which literally means the science of teaching children. (Conner, 1997-2004) It embodies teacher focused teaching unlike the self-directed, learner focused model of andragogy. The most distinguishing factor between andragogy and pedagogy for me is the fact that pedagogy does not address prior experiences in regard to learning as andragogy does. (Grace, 2023) This is an indication that andragogy can actually be applied to children and adults.

Conclusion

In conclusion there are characteristics of andragogy and pedagogy that are beneficial to learning. As for adults there are a few instances where the pedagogy model of teaching may be useful; however it is mostly the andragogy model of teaching that is the most beneficial when it comes to adult learners.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Andragogy, M. L. (2007, March 1). Andragogy and Pedagogy as Foundational Theory.

<http://marciaconner.com/resources/andragogy-pedagogy/>

The author explains the different philosophies of andragogy and pedagogy. It emphasizes that major differences exist between what we know of the effective teachers' styles, however they all believed learning was a process of active inquiry, not passive reception.

Knowles, M. S. (n.d.). THE MODERN PRACTICE OF ADULT EDUCATION From Pedagogy to Andragogy. Englewood Cliffs, NJ. <https://colllearning.info/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/The-Modern-Practice-of-Adult-Education.pdf>

This reference examines the history of teaching and the dominance of pedagogical practice in teaching. It also explains the history of how Andragogy emerged in the academic world and how beneficial it has become for educators to adopt this style of teaching.

Lootah, H. (2023) Adult Learners Essay

This essay examines the traits of adult learners and the different methods that can be applied to teach them. In the essay the benefits and challenges are explored as it relates to applying said teaching methods.

Mcgrath, V. (n.d.). Reviewing the Evidence on How Adult Students Learn: An Examination of Knowles' Model of Andragogy.

The author of this reference closely examines the adult student experience. She mentions that most adults are used to learning in a pedagogical manner from primary school and how it can be an adjustment for adult learners to adjust to the andragogy model of learning. The author's main point is the benefit of knowing the past educational experience of the adult learner to reach academic success.

Nebel, C. (2022). Pedagogy vs. Andragogy: What's the Difference. Retrieved from THE LEARNING SCIENTISTS: <https://www.learningscientists.org/blog/2022/3/17-1>

This article examines the science behind the differences between Andragogy and pedagogy. The author makes a great case for why pedagogy in some cases is necessary for child learners yet how andragogy should be implemented with child learners as well. The article outlines several reasons why adults respond best to andragogy style of learning. The author makes a strong point that educators should know their learners, make content relevant to those individuals, give them choice in the learning process, and build on their prior knowledge.

Vaughn, G. (n.d.). Adult Literacy Then and Now. *The Adult Learner, The Journal of Adult*, 78-84.

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