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*A New Age for Distance Learning*



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Program: **Doctorate (Ph.D.)**

Major: **Educational Science**

Course: **Principles of Andragogy**

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Due date: **December 24th, 2021**

University year: **2021-2022**



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## INTRODUCTION

Man is born with the desire to learn. However, no one is born learned and educated. However, learning is such an important thing among humans that they have invented institutions dedicated to its development: schools, if we want to take the term in its broadest sense (Pastré, Mayen & Vergnaud, 2006, p.156).

People learn at any age. Children, young people as well as adults learn on a daily basis. We recall that the method for teaching children is called "pedagogy", and the one for adult learning is called "andragogy". For Ph. Carré (1992) andragogy is the science and art of helping adults learn. Thus, Knowles, quoted by Hachicha (2006), maintains that the mission of andragogy is to help adult learners reach maturity by developing their full potential. It is the result of a trainer's effort to define what is specific to adult continuing education. It is a guide that provides a large number of learning options from which the learner chooses. He facilitates the learning process through his role as a supporter, helper, and partner, and he creates the favorable conditions that surround learning. It is up to him to nurture an interest in human well-being, independence, cooperation, and courage among adult learners.

That being said, the adult is a separate student. Indeed, andragogy is opposed to pedagogy, which is about teaching children. In the context of children's education, we talk much more about "knowledge" and "skills" in the context of adult education. Hence, andragogy has its own principles. In the following pages, we will elaborate on these principles.



## I

### FROM CONTINUING EDUCATION TO LIFELONG LEARNING

Understanding new societies and adapting to their complexity and transformations requires a cultural development that school time alone cannot provide. Today, when we speak of **adult education**, we are talking about professional training, continuing education.

#### A.- Lifelong learning

If we are to believe what Georgette and Jean Pastiaux (1997, p. 118) tell us, the term "continuing education" is reserved for adult education, and the two systems (initial and continuing education) have remained compartmentalized. However, under the pressure of economic developments, the school has lost its character as a closed system delivering once and for all the necessary baggage for entry into working life: "learning to learn" is one of the proclaimed objectives of the school, which recognizes the importance of methodological learning and wants to prepare for *continuing education*.

Lifelong education, following Rousseau or Kant as well as the pedagogues of the active methods, affirms that to educate is to consider every human being as a subject and actor of his own formation. Rather than transmission or acquisition of knowledge, we speak of appropriation by the subject, throughout his life, of the contents and experiences that make him what he is.

For a long time, continuing education has been associated with *compagnonnage*, the time by which a worker, having left an apprenticeship as a companion, must work for a master before becoming



a master himself. With its rituals and rules, companionship was an exercise in professional instruction and morality that had its own working-class symbolism.

Then the concept of formation has had a strange journey according to thinkers and geography. Sometimes it is associated with values of humanistic culture and gratuity as seen in the six principles of andragogy defined by Brookfield (1986): 1) Participation is voluntary, 2) Respect for the adult's own values underlies the educator's efforts, 3) Adult education is marked by reciprocity, 4) Praxis, the interface between action and reflection, is at the heart of adult education, 5) The development of critical thinking skills to encourage the learner to engage in paths other than the ones he or she usually takes, and 6) Adult education tends to make the adult capable of self-direction and empowerment over his or her life.

Roger Mucchielli 1991) states several reasons why the school or university system is ineffective for adult learning. Among these reasons are: 1) Adults are concerned that they no longer know how to learn, they need to be reassured and offered the opportunity to learn differently, to acquire knowledge from their work experience; 2) Adults want to learn without constraints while these systems remind adults of the attitudes and blockages of yesteryear as these systems carry with them the threat of evaluation and punishment ; 3) Adults' fear of being judged can inhibit learning, rather training should be a place of reflection and experimentation; 4) Adults find that school or university type knowledge, theories are of little use in working life. They expect to encounter problems and situations directly related to their professional activity. The link between theory and practice must therefore be constantly emphasized; 5) The introduction of concrete situations and



applications responds to a double need of adults: to have a proof of usefulness and to be able to experiment without risk in a protected and reassuring place; 6) Adults generally have an immediate or a medium-term objective when they follow a training course. However, the training, far from being only personal, is a function of the orientation of the training policy of the company of which the adult is a member. The training of the adult in his or her professional environment is therefore related to this environment, which can prevent, neutralize or, on the contrary, promote this training.

### **B.- Three types of training**

According to Jean-Marie Barbier, in the *Dictionnaire encyclopédique de l'éducation et de la formation* (Retz), there are three types of adult training in the professional context:

- Integration (or adaptation) training courses are aimed at job seekers, young people and "priority groups" and focus on the acquisition of life skills (self-confidence, autonomy) or immediate know-how;
- training *leading to certification or qualification, which* implies social recognition of prior learning and allows for social and/or professional advancement. They are often of long duration and focus on the acquisition of theoretical knowledge;
- developmental training aims at greater mastery or greater efficiency in a professional situation that remains unchanged. These are often the most innovative trainings.



## II

### MOTIVATION AND ANDRAGODICAL MODEL

#### **A.- Motivation**

As a French proverb points out, "It is difficult to make a donkey drink when it is not thirsty." That said, the learner must be motivated in order to learn.

It is difficult for an adult to be motivated if he or she does not feel that the work he or she has to do is important to him or her. If they feel personally concerned, if the activities proposed to them have a meaning for them, if they feel that their work is the result of a decision they have taken to accomplish it and, consequently, is an exercise of their freedom, then they will be willing to learn, especially if the trainer presents the difficulties they feel they can overcome. The trainer's role is therefore to create situations where the learner can exercise his initiative and make decisions about what he is going to learn and how he is going to learn it, in short, so that he can make a personal learning plan. The trainer must therefore help the adult learner to acquire the means he or she needs to succeed, and guide him or her in the learning process necessary to achieve his or her project.



## **B.- Some principles of a pedagogy adapted to adults**

The following principles are taken verbatim from PEDAGOGY, written by G. and J. Pastiaux (1997, p. 121).

- 1) They need to know why they need to learn. They need to know why they need to learn, so they need to measure the gap between who they are at a certain point in their lives and who they want to be.
- 2) They are aware that they are responsible for their life decisions and need to be treated as such. They must therefore be encouraged to manage their own training.
- 3 - The experience of the adult is what he is: to neglect his experience would be to deny his person. It is therefore necessary to use this experience of each person, and this is the purpose of case studies, simulation exercises, problem-solving activities, etc., but with analytical tools to thwart sclerotic reactions, prejudices, and routines which are all obstacles to learning.
- 4 - It is the will to learn that enables them to face the demands of training. To stimulate this will, their learning must be oriented around the tasks and problems they encounter in their lives. The knowledge, attitudes and even values to be transformed or acquired are all the better assimilated when they are presented in the context of real situations.
- 5 - They must be able to imagine the personal satisfaction in the exercise of their profession, the quality of life that training can bring them, in order to develop their self-esteem, even more than being motivated by more external satisfactions such as promotions or salary increases.



### C. - Traditional and adult education models

The table is proposed by Lindeman (1997), a researcher who believes that adult education should be viewed from the perspective of situations, not programs.

Traditional pedagogical model	Andragogical model
Learners only need to know that they must learn what the teacher teaches if they are to succeed and progress: they do not need to know how they will use what they learn in life.	Learners need to know why they need to learn something before they undertake training. The role of the teacher is to help the learner become aware of his or her need to learn and to explain to learners that training is intended to improve their efficiency and quality of life.
The teacher's concept of the learner is that of a dependent.	Adults are aware of their own decisions and lives. They need to be seen and treated by others as individuals capable of self-governance.
The experience of the learner is of little value to learning. What matters is the experience of the teacher, the author of the textbook and the producer of the audiovisual materials.	Adults come to training with experience; to ignore it is to reject them as people.

<p>Learners' willingness to learn only exists if they want to succeed and progress.</p>	<p>Adults are willing to learn if the new knowledge and skills allow them to better cope with real-life situations.</p>
<p>Training is a means of acquiring knowledge on a given subject. Therefore, learning is organized according to the logic of the content of that subject.</p>	<p>Adults orient their learning around life, a task or a problem. They are willing to invest energy in learning only if they feel it will help them cope with the situation.</p>
<p>Learners' motivation is stimulated by external signs such as grades, teacher approval or disapproval, or parental pressure.</p>	<p>While adults are sensitive to external motivators (better job, salary, promotion, etc.), it is internal pressures that are the greatest motivator (desire to increase one's satisfaction, self-esteem, etc.).</p>



## CONCLUSION

According to Maurice Joseph Gabriel, quoted by Pierre (2018, p. 89), "Education begins with life and ends with the grave. Happy is the man who can say before he closes his eyelids, I have had for my rule work, for my motto goodness, and for my aim the tendency to perfection."

From the 1960s onwards, Georgette and Jean Pastiaux (op. cit., p. 120) remind us, the rapid evolution of technologies and of the economic organization of society in general began to require everyone to update their knowledge, which had to be constantly updated. The idea of lifelong learning is gaining ground. In France, the law of July 16, 1971, which recognizes the right of adults to training financed by both the company and the State, is entitled: "Continuing professional training within the framework of permanent education".

To implement this "right to training" recognized for all workers, we prefer to use the term "andragogy" since we are addressing adults. However, it is important to remember that the vocational training of adults, especially low-skilled adults, is done in a different way.

However, certain obstacles can be encountered in the training of adults, such as resistance to returning to school and the impossibility of compartmentalizing and dissociating knowledge. To facilitate their training, we believe with Knowles (1970) that a climate must be created in which learners feel that they are respected and trusted. It is also important to give them a share of the responsibility in the choice of methods, sources of information, and pace of work, and to share with them the responsibility for evaluating their learning. In this way, conditions are created that allow adults in training to accept the difficulties of the company.



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