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Professional Teaching Experience Portfolio

An academic critique of current thinking in relation to the concept of adult learning and the adult learner in the context of today's PCET

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Introduction

This report will critically analyse the current thinking of academics on the topic of andragogy in relation to today's society and the post compulsory education and training (PCET) degrees.

The author outlines the opinions within the literature and more importantly predicts trends for the potential future trajectory for adult learning.

Furthermore, the author also applies personal views and opinions as the author has undertaken a PCET this year, making it a current experience.

Academic critique of andragogy

Pedagogy is the method and practice of teaching (Scott, 2014) and subsequently andragogy relates specifically to adult learning and adult education (Loeng, 2018). Within adult learning, Malcolm Knowles stands out as the most influential theorist. Knowles (1980) claimed that pedagogy as a concept needed changes, as during the 1920's adult education struggled to conform to the pedagogical model.

Therefore, Knowles vision of andragogy is a conceptualisation of how and why adults learn (Harper and Ross, 2011) and Knowles (1990) established some assumptions and design elements for both andragogy and pedagogy, outlined in table 1 below:

Assumptions			Design Elements		
	Pedagogy	Andragogy		Pedagogy	Andragogy
Self-concept	Dependency	Increasing self-directiveness	Climate	Authority-oriented Formal Competitive	Mutuality Respectful Collaborative Informal
Experience	Of little worth	Learners are a rich resource for learning	Planning	By teacher	Mechanism for mutual planning
Readiness	Biological development social pressure	Developmental tasks of social roles	Diagnosis of needs	By teacher	Mutual negotiation
Orientation to learning	Subject centered	Problem centered	Design	Logic of the subject matter Content units	Sequences in terms of readiness Problem units
			Activities	Transmittal techniques	Experiential techniques (injury)
			Evaluation	By teacher	Mutual re-diagnosis of needs Mutual measurement of program.

Table 1 "A comparison of the assumptions and designs of pedagogy and andragogy" extracted from Knowles (1990) p.119.



This particular table outlines various facts and differences between the two models, some of which currently are used as for example, within the author PCET placement, the University of Wales Trinity Saint David, they use some of Knowles design elements specifically within the evaluation section. Appendix 1 outlines an example of this through the form of a module evaluation questionnaire used within the university post every module. Not only does the authors university abide by these questionnaires but many other universities use the data obtained to firstly, allow mutual measurement of programme and secondly, to provide information on the positives and areas for improvement within modules (Willmot and Perkin, 2015).

Another important assumption to consider is within the planning section of andragogy, how Knowles (1990) claimed that it should be a mutual decision between the lecturer and teacher. Currently, other academics agree with Knowles point of view in relation to planning, as it should be a more coordinated process in terms of choosing content and delivery style (Bates, 2016).

Andragogy faces criticism, as the concept does not classify as a theory as it lacks empirical academic scholarship and therefore decreasing the concepts integrity resulting, at best, in andragogy categorising itself as an ideology on adults teaching and learning (Curzon and Tummons, 2013). Conversely, while andragogy is scrutinised by the legal terms of theory or ideology, it undoubtedly remains a keystone in relation to adult learning theory (Armitage, et al, 2012).

Another empirical critique of andragogy relies on the motivation to learn, as Knowles claimed that adults motivation was intrinsic as they were personally responsible for undertaking education, however many adult learners are encouraged to undertake training and qualifications by their employers without necessarily wanting to do so (Aubrey and Riley, 2016). This leads to questioning the necessity of labelling adult learning as it merely relies on common sense and matching the teaching style to the adequate learner (Aubrey and Riley, 2016).

Adult learning relies heavily on literacy, numeracy and digital skills as these factors are the foundations that enable adults to contribute fully to society and therefore aid economic growth (Furlong, 2015). However, the statistics are alarming as 12% of the welsh population still, according to the 2010 results, not reached Level 1 of basic literacy skills (Furlong, 2015), which is a key competence required by most employers



(Mallows and Lister, 2016). Scattergood (2019) suggests that in order to decrease these concerning numbers reading for pleasure should be encouraged, especially now with this digital era, where books are less common (Williams, 2019), it is vital that as a society we remain cultural and improve our literacy skills. Potential in the future we could see a growth of reading programmes in order to increase the amount of people passing the Level 1 literacy skills.

Literacy skills are not the only emphasis currently in relation to adult learning, as digital skills play a vital part in educating the current adult generation. In 2018 the English government announced that they would provide free digital skills training and learning for those who need it, however funding is scarce therefore the programme has not yet been as successful as firstly predicted (Evans, 2019). Alongside the government, universities are also pushing for digital skills in relation to adults' education as for example the University of Wales Trinity Saint David enforces emergent technologies as one of their core modules within their PCET (UWTSD, 2019) and similarly Cardiff University core module for PCET is also on digital technologies (Cardiff University, 2019). Highlighting that, digital skills plays a key part in universities degrees on adult teaching.

Overall, adult learning is crucial in any subject or degree, it is important that adults can learn in their own terms in order to make a better future for them and for society (Tuckett, 2019), it is vital to also continue to expand the PCET programmes and adapting it to the current society.

Conclusion

The labelling of andragogy remains a mystery, as some refer to it as what adult learning translates to and other criticise its value as a theory. Nonetheless, despite its critics the overall census is that adult learning and teaching can, and mostly is, referred to as andragogy. Within this written assignment the author has outlined some examples of how Knowles vision remains present in today's PCET, adult teaching and learning, especially within evaluation and design aspects of the delivery of lessons.

The core focus of adult learning tends to be around digital and literacy skills which the stats are still concerning in relation to Wales, however those results are outdated and hopefully the new results will show great progress in relation to the adult population.



It is vital to mention the emphasis of emergent technologies within the PCET degrees, and more importantly the constant updating and changing of the PCET curriculum to match the individuals and the current society. The author would like to acknowledge the lack of literature on the effects of the PCET on society and its value for the individual, creating a gap in the research pool that could, and needs to, be addressed.

Conclusively, adult education was and remains to be a national necessity and must be a lifelong opportunity, but above all adult learning needs to be accessible for all instead of it being currently regarded or seen as a luxury for some (Tuckett, 2019). Therefore it is crucial to invest in PCET degrees and adult education centres to really impact on the adult community and society.



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Appendix

Appendix 1: Module evaluation questionnaire

2018-19 MODULE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

As part of our commitment to putting students at the heart of their experience we'd like you to fill in this short questionnaire about your module.

You can find out more about how you feedback on your experience at UWTSD by visiting www.uwtسد.ac.uk/feedback and by contacting your Students' Union via www.tsdsu.co.uk

This questionnaire has been designed to allow anonymity. Should you choose to include your name, any feedback obtained will be held and processed confidentially in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Programme of Study	SPORTS MANAGEMENT						
Module Code	M6X02097						
Module Name	GLOBAL SPORTS EVENTS MANAGEMENT						
Campus name or Distance Learner (please check box)	Cardiff	Carmarthen	Lampeter	London	Swansea	Distance Learner	Other (specify below)
	☐	☐	☐	☐	☒	☐	☐

Please check the box below that best matches your level of attendance on the module:

Full attendance	Missed some of the teaching sessions	Missed half of the teaching sessions	Missed most of the teaching sessions	Did not attend at all
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Please check ONE box to indicate your opinion about each statement with regard to this module.

	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Definitely disagree	N/A
Your contribution						
1. You were sufficiently prepared for the module's sessions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. You made appropriate contributions to the module's sessions	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The teaching on my module						
3. Lecturers are good at explaining things.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. Lecturers have made the subject interesting.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. The module has challenged me to achieve my best work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. The module is intellectually stimulating.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Module content and structure						
7. The content of the module enabled me to meet the Learning Outcomes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. The module has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. The module has provided me with opportunities to bring together information from different topics.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. The overall structure of the module was clear and coherent.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Module delivery and organisation						
11. The aims and learning outcomes of the module were clearly stated.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐



	Definitely agree	Mostly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Mostly disagree	Definitely disagree	N/A
12. Teaching methods were appropriate to the subject matter of the module.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of this module.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. The module has been well organised.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Any changes in the teaching or timetable for the module have been communicated effectively	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Assessment and feedback						
16. Marking and assessment have been fair (if you've only recently submitted or are about to submit, please check the N/A box).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
17. The criteria used in assessment/marking have been specified clearly in advance of submission.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. Feedback on my work has been timely (i.e. within 20 term-time days of submission) (if you are not yet due to receive feedback then please check the N/A box).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. Where I have received feedback on my work, comments have been helpful (if you are not yet due to receive feedback then please check the N/A box).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Your voice						
20. My feedback on the module is listened to and valued	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. It is clear to me how my feedback on this module will be acted upon	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. The Students' Union (faculty reps, course reps, elected officers) effectively represent my academic interests (i.e. listening to my ideas and concerns and working to improve my university experience)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Academic support						
23. I have received sufficient advice and guidance from staff in relation to the module.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. Support materials on Moodle (handouts, assessment briefs, etc.) were accessible and relevant.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Resources						
26. I have been able to access specialised equipment, facilities, or rooms when I needed to for this module (if applicable).	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well on this module.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well on this module.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Were there any parts of the module that were especially good?						
Are there any things you think we could do to improve and enhance the module?						