


**EDUCATIONAL THEORY
AND PRACTICE
ACROSS DISCIPLINES**

(PROJECTING BEYOND THE 21ST CENTURY)



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Published by:

Faculty of Education,
University of Ibadan,
Ibadan.

ISBN: 978-978-946-490-6

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University of Ibadan,
Ibadan.

First Published 2015

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Printed by:

Ibadan University Printery

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From Andragogy to Social Pedagogy: Moral Imperative of Adult 34 Educational Practice

Omoregie, C.O.

Abstract

Teaching method in adult education has gone beyond the divide of pedagogy and andragogy with the proposition of constructivist epistemology for all categories of learners. Learning ought to meet the needs of individual learners and teaching should be learners-centred to ensure social efficiency. Social pedagogy and justifies its implication for the practice of adult education as against andragogy which was hitherto described as the art of teaching adults. Social pedagogy is explained in the contexts of emerging reality that have to guide principles of adult education beyond the 21st century. The author concluded that, social pedagogy is relevant to the practice of adult education in fostering creativity and innovation in learners. The moral imperative that social pedagogy imposes on the practice of adult education, especially in Nigeria is also shown.

Introduction

Pedagogy generally means the art and science of teaching. It is dated back to the Greek and Roman traditions of using slaves to teach their masters' children. For many years what educators were used to was pedagogy until Malcolm Knowles' book 'the adult learners: the neglected species' published in 1980 popularized the concept of Andragogy as a method of teaching. He claimed that, Psychology of learning had misunderstood the personality of an adult and therefore recommended the same principles of teaching for both children

and adults. That book claimed that, pedagogy is the teaching method for children while andragogy is the teaching method for adults. The four characteristics that distinguish adults stated by Knowles were namely: adults have self esteem, have experience, want immediate application of knowledge and are ready learners. These characteristics bring to question whether we should 'teach' adults and whether there are no other learners who possess these characteristics. Adults are not taught like children whom have been regarded as possessing 'tabular rasa' (clean slate). Instead of being taught, adults are rather helped to learn. However, attributes of readiness to learn and applicability of knowledge that have been identified by Knowles can be found in other learners who are not biologically adults.

Educational trend has shifted from the assumption of John Locke that the mind of the child is a tabular rasa (Clean slate) where the teacher writes what he/she likes. Instead of the assumption of the teacher that, the mind of the child is a clean slate whereby any information can be impressed attention currently is on learners' centredness. This shift promotes discussion, participation and learners' contribution as early as basic education. This trend has been promoted by UNICEF and UNESCO. It shows that, andragogical principles are no longer the exclusive method of Adult education. It is within these historical and conceptual contexts that social pedagogy of adult education is examined in this paper instead of andragogy.

Rather than teach adults, adults are helped to learn. With the use of the word help, andragogy relates to the method of facilitation. Facilitation has been promoted as a distinctive method of helping learners to learn. This redefines andragogy as a method of helping people to learn and also fuses its meaning with pedagogy. Adult education should be interested in other pedagogies as a way of maintaining its unique field of educational research. In this wise, we discuss social pedagogies as a distinctive method of adult education.

The concept of Social pedagogy was first used in 1844 by Karl Mager in an article titled *pedagogische revue* (Smith 2012). Afterwards, Friedrich Diestersweg used the idea to propose an educational system around working to support ones community. Social pedagogy is meant to overcome rigid curriculum and centre on learners development in their society. Social pedagogy has been used in countries such as Germany, Netherlands and Hungary to include community education activities of social workers with youths, offenders and workers in organisations. With the growth of in-service training, there has been interest in social pedagogy as a means of making sense of the professional development of staff in the public service (Aspin, 2007). Social pedagogy has become a method of educating people in a welfare state in order to increase personal responsibility in the handling of common circumstances of life. It is aimed at reducing discriminations and promoting social skills required for participating in the public sphere. More than the historical development, this paper is interested in the issues that inform the usage of social pedagogy. Social pedagogy provides more opportunity for everyone to participate in developmental process. It aims at helping the poor in the society to relate with the rich. As far as the poor is concerned, there is no distinction between children and adults.

The contention of Lorenz (2006) was that Friedrich Schleiermacher, a well known philosopher, went beyond the pedagogical principles of self development to embrace an education for community. Hence, the challenge that social pedagogy faces is that the need of the community should take precedence over that of an individual. Emphasis on individual development seems a safer option in contemporary society than group work. This challenge was reduced with a strong case for the use of small groups in the resolution of conflicts, promotion of democracy, evolution of social welfare system and prevention of social problems. Conceived in this way, social pedagogy includes a wide range of practices including youth projects,

crèche and nurseries, day care centres, parent education, work with offenders and people suffering from all forms of disabilities.

Social pedagogy as an inclusive concept has become a component of adult education where lifelong learning is seen as an intergenerational programme, a vehicle for purposeful and on-going exchange of resources and learning among older and younger generations for personal and social benefits. Intergenerational programme aims at improving the lives of people both young and old and impacting on all of the life facets of children, young and elderly in the family, the school, the out-of school learning activities, the world of work, leisure, and so on (Edwards & Hatch, 2003).

Is social pedagogy a domesticating or an emancipatory ideology? It could be domestication when it is restricted to institutions but emancipatory in application to informal learning settings. While pedagogy and andragogy strictly take care of institutional learning, social pedagogy focuses on ways pedagogues work towards cultivating personal creativity and towards enhancing the capacity for easy and strong relationships. The module in social pedagogy should consist of creative subjects like drama, music, gymnastics, arts, crafts, field studies and field work. This kind of module enables learners to share in many aspects of people's daily lives and develop the ability of seeing oneself as a person in relationship with other people. Social pedagogy aims at developing people skills in learners.

Eight essential people skills have been identified by Hopkins (2009) and they include: understanding people by communicating to them in their own individual preference style; expressing ones thought and feeling clearly; speaking out when needs are not being met; asking for feedback in return; influencing how others think and act; bringing conflicts to the surface and getting them resolved; collaborating with others instead of doing things alone and shifting gears when relationships are unproductive. From these skills, people skills can be described as finding how to bring about the best in any situation so as to increase the chances of achieving the best outcomes from

interactions and business endeavours. People skills cannot be acquired once and for all in any educational institutions; rather, they are skills that provide opportunities for lifelong learning at all life's stages. As a lifelong learning component, people skills are available to everyone in every form of interaction they have with others, in every condition people find themselves and for utmost outcome in all socially acceptable human endeavours. Any activity that brings people together enacts a moral implication on participants.

From the moral imperative of Immanuel Kant, a basis of moral action is the fulfillment of duty, irrespective of the consequences of the act. This position states that the moral rules such as the Ten Commandments, Hadith, Canon Law, and codes of professional ethics must always be kept, whatever the circumstances or the consequences. The weakness of this position is that rules have been decided by someone or some group and they will invariably reflect the interests of the person, group or organisation.

Habermas developed on Kant's moral norm by suggesting that, a cognitive argument is required to enable the norms of practice be evaluated as moral. He contends that ethical understanding should be undertaken through argumentation so that the consensus reached represents a universal agreement and conviction and that the moral norms can be regarded as good for everyone. He suggests that Kant's categorical imperative needs to be reformulated so that the principles of universality come into discourse (Jarvis, 1997). The question that comes to mind in order to apply this explanation to social pedagogy is: can learning be a non-moral act and devoid of any form of relationship? When attempted from the perspective of Non-consequentialist normative ethical theories, every learning as an act, process and item of behavior necessarily has a social dimension and a moral imperative.

Non-moral values are values which pertain to objects, actions or situations that cannot in themselves be described as moral or immoral; they are in themselves non-moral. Foulng

the air when I am the only one in my room is a non-moral act. When the same act occurs in the presence of a second person who detests the act it assumes a moral dimension. However, it is not all acts done when others are present that are moral. Acts of human beings can be distinguished from human acts: Acts of human beings are performed without intervention of intellect and freewill. They comprise all spontaneous, biological and sensual processes like breathing, sneezing, coughing, acts performed by those who do not have the use of reason like lunatics and sleepwalkers and those forced against their personal decision and will (Peschke, 1993).

On the other hand human acts are performed out of intellectual and volitive capacities. Human act is either good or bad only under those of its aspects which are known and those of its aspect where the person is free. If a person for some reasons is not free to choose what he would like according to his insight and will, but has to act against his will, his action ought to be free, if it is not consequently it will not be a human act. Hence for human acts freewill is an essential condition. Non- consequentialist ethical theories state that moral right and wrong are not determined solely by the relative balance of intrinsic good over intrinsic evil. For deontologists, actions are to be assessed purely in terms of the motives or intentions of the moral agent. An action, in the Kantian thinking, will be right if it is done in accordance with a moral rule or principle in which nobody is exempted.

Moral Imperative of Adult Education Practice

Going by Kant's interpretation, the moral basis of human action is purely out of reverence for the moral law, that is, we must act only for the sake of duty. Kant makes a difference between acting according to duty and acting for the sake of duty. In his own words, Kant says it is easily decided whether an action in accord with duty is performed from duty or for selfish purpose. It is far more difficult to note this difference when the action is in accordance with duty and, in addition, the subject has a direct

inclination to do it. It is in accordance with duty that a seller should not overcharge a customer but when the seller gives a lower price for different buyers for selfish interest so that buyers will not buy from another seller, then that action was done neither from duty nor from direct inclination but only for selfish purpose. It has no intrinsic worth or moral import. Sellers sell their goods according to duty, but not from duty.

On the other hand, it is a duty to preserve one's life and everyone has a direct inclination to do so. For the reason that humans have direct inclination to preserve life, that action has no intrinsic worth, and doing it has no moral import. Humans preserve their lives according to duty, but not from duty. It is only in sickness when one wishes for death and yet preserves life without loving it and from neither inclination nor fear, but from duty that it has moral import.

Thus the first proposition of morality is that to have moral worth an action must be performed from duty. The second proposition is: an action performed from duty does not have its moral worth in that which is to be achieved through it but in the maxim by which it is determined. Its moral value therefore does not depend on the realization of the object of the action but merely on the principle of volition by which the action is done, without any regard to the objects of the faculty of desire (Kant, 1989).

Any human action done with other motives beside duty has no moral worth and not morally praiseworthy. The term moral is involved whenever a significant choice has to be made between a better and a worse situation in adult education programmes. The moral factor appears whenever development agencies prefer certain programmes to others or against others. This moral element is preeminently involved in all selections and rejections that are inescapable in lifelong learning activities in schools, industries and communities. Judgment about life values undergird the whole process of adult education programmes.

There are schemes of values-structures of things considered significant, worthy, and right in our endless responses to the provision of development agencies. Childs (1967) captures the process of choice that is involved when he says:

In order to encourage, we must also discourage; in order to foster, we must also hinder; in order to emphasise the significant, we must identify the non-significant; and finally, in order to select and focus attention on certain subject matters of life, we have to reject and ignore other significant matters.

The process of selecting and rejecting, of fostering and hindering, of distinguishing the desirable from the undesirable is unending in life and learning. Values of lifelong learning include a number of different elements: the social, political, economic and technical inter-alia but above and beyond all these to be primarily moral in character (Aspin, 2007). Jarvis (1997) ascribes the word 'good' to moral and non-moral in his distinctions between the two terms. Moral goodness according to him relates to people's behaviour especially when that behaviour affects others positively. Moral good refers only to certain forms of human action that favours the other, while non-moral good refers to all forms of goodness ascribed to non-human phenomenon and to some non-behavioural assessments of people. Examples of non-moral good are eating balance diet and exercising to keep physically fit. Moral good consists of being concerned for the other and one of the characteristics of moral goodness is that its intention, process and consequences must all be in interest of the society, to promote peace and harmony which are essential for the development of the individuals in it (Akinpelu, 2005).

When the word "good" is used subjectively, indicating something of the perspective of the speaker, it can be said to be non-moral. For instance, when some students say that they had a good class, they invariably suggest that they enjoyed the class or that they understood what was taught. What they refer to as 'good' in this case reflect the biases of the speakers and not

whether the class conforms to the norm of teaching judged from the content and method of teaching.

Model for Social skills and Educational Practice

**The Seven
Essential Virtues
of Humanity that
Teach Students to
Do the Right
Thing**
Based on *Building
Moral Intelligence*
by Michele Borba

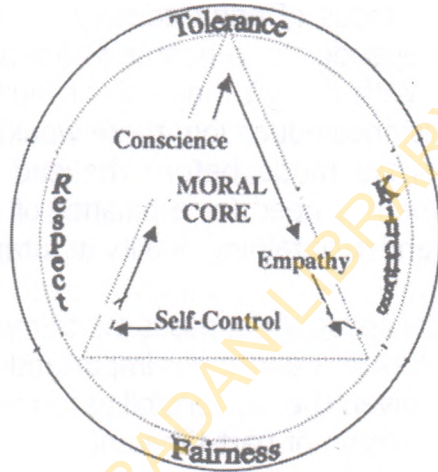


Fig. 1: Adapted from Borba M., 2001: *Building moral intelligence education theory*

The Borba model above shows the core values of respect, fairness, kindness and tolerance to be considered by facilitators in adult education programmes while participants should develop the right conscience, self control and empathy as attributes that would enable them to gain maximally from the programmes. The internal disposition of participants is also important in achieving goals of the programme. Adult education agencies need to create an atmosphere of tolerance and fairness as channels for stimulating respect and kindness among the participants. This study suggests that adult education activities should be guided by policies, administrative structures and operational activities of both government and civil society that promote aforementioned values.

Conclusion

This discussion proves that, adult education is a dynamic discipline which changes as human society changes. As it changes with times in terms of content, contexts and methods, its methods remain distinct. It is no longer the biological adults that are the focus of adult education but everyone that has enough independence to handle its learning at personal pace and place. With the growing use of multimedia technologies for open distance education, there would be more learners in the non-formal mode before the end of this millennium; however, there is need for a balance of expanding access to education and maintaining quality assurance in all educational activities.

Social pedagogy imposes moral imperative on organisers of adult education and most importantly on instructors who have been given the responsibility to make adults learn. The recent suspension of part-time and sandwich programmes by National Universities Commission in Nigerian universities sound the note for quality assurance loud and clear. If not all educated people that can teach, and not all teachers can help adults learn what is right, then those who have the duty of helping everyone learn outside the strict school system should not only be active learners themselves and become conversant with methods that are peculiar to adult education but also maintain the values that society expects from independent adult learners. Adult education advances equality of opportunity by creating chances for everyone to learn throughout a lifetime but should not sacrifice quality for access. In terms of quality assurance, adult education has a duty to be on the front lines.

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