Preface

In the 1970s, and even 1980s, scholars and practitioners in the United States debated on the divide between pedagogy (K-12 education) and andragogy (beyond K-12 education). Few would disagree with the distinction that Malcolm Knowles made between the education of children and the education of adults. However, after years of research and practice, scholars and researchers began to advocate the idea that it is acceptable to practice pedagogy in adult education and to practice andragogy in children’s education. After all, learners young or old acquire knowledge almost the same way via the same senses. Pedagogy was defined by Knowles as the art and science of teaching children, whereas he defined andragogy as the art and science of helping adults learn. After intensive and extensive analysis and critiques of the theory of pedagogy and the theory of andragogy, Knowles, hailed as the father of adult education, did make the concession by saying, “I don’t see andragogy as an ideology at all but as a system of assumptions about adult learners that needs to be tested out for different learners in different situations.” “Different learners” in Knowles’ terms should include pre-adults, or children. The general agreement in education is that the more senses we involve in learning, the better we learn. The question remains why we need the distinction between the education of children and the education of adults. The distinction is significant in the sense that, although children and adults learn the same way, the context in which adults learn is substantially different from the context in which children learn due to the varied characteristics that adult learners possess, especially their experience. To a certain extent, pedagogy and andragogy represent two different ways of learning. In addition, pedagogy and andragogy offer two distinctively different teaching methodologies just as Knowles emphasized; that is, the helping role of teachers in andragogy and the teaching role of instructors in pedagogy.

It is adult educators who argue that self-directed learning is one of the core characteristics of adult learning. Specifically, they posit that adults have a self-concept of being responsible for their own lives and their own learning. However, Knowles also noted that many adults expect to be taught using teacher-centered methods, and it is incumbent upon the adult educator to help adults transition from dependent to self-directed learners. It is typical for individuals to start out as dependent learners when newly introduced to a subject and move to being interested, involved, and finally self-directed learners as they gain experience and expertise. This calls into question the separation of K-12 education from adult education. Around the globe, we still have departments of K-12 education and departments of lifelong learning, but many universities have merged these two departments into one department of education that includes programs in K-12 education, higher education, and adult education. The rationale behind this merger is the idea that students in these programs will receive a “well rounded” education in what we call K-20 education. The education of children and adults is a continuum of lifelong education. One stops learning when one stops breathing. No wonder we see “lifelong education” or “lifelong learning”
in the mission statements of many grade schools and high schools. Teaching and learning are inseparable processes in K-20 education. To achieve effective teaching, teachers must be engaged in learning first. On the job training, workplace learning, and professional development provide learning opportunities for professional teachers in K-20 education. Likewise, it is K-20 education that molds our learners to become productive citizens of the world. After one successfully completes K-20 education by exploring a variety of diplomas or degrees or teaching credentials, one’s learning journey has just begun. The joys and challenges of learning lie just ahead for every learner.

The availability of information via the Internet and Web 2.0 technologies that connect users across thousands of miles is changing education at all levels. At the local, national, and international levels, more K-20 programs are being delivered electronically, providing needed convenience and flexibility for learners while saving money for schools at all levels. To accommodate the learning needs of children and non-traditional age students, universities must deliver these programs via cutting edge technologies. K-12 schools do not want to lag behind universities. Some are delivering their courses electronically.

While we have many books on adult education and books on the education of children, most of these books address the differences between pedagogy and andragogy. To date, there has never been a book on teaching and learning in K-20 education. Technology is discussed in books on andragogy or books on pedagogy. Few books deal with the integration of technology in K-20 education. Since the merger of these educational programs is the new trend in colleges of education in universities, both scholars and administrators at all levels need a comprehensive book on teaching and learning in K-20 education. This volume is intended to serve as a premier resource for teaching and learning at all levels (although separated in the past, it will not likely be separated in the coming decades). This book showcases the work of scholars and practitioners in K-12 education, higher education, and adult education, leading the way into the evolving field of education. No longer should educators depend on K-12 education theories to educate children or andragogy to educate adults. We are searching for teaching and learning theories that can be applied to both adults and children while acknowledging the distinctive differences and working along the continuum between pedagogy and andragogy. Such a book has provided a well-rounded education to students of all ages. This volume serves as an exhaustive compendium of this community’s expertise, research, skills, and experiences. Authors with a background K-12 education, higher education, and adult education have contributed to this cutting edge book.

OBJECTIVE OF THE HANDBOOK

The Handbook of Research on Teaching and Learning in K-20 Education features full length chapters (7,000-11,000 words) authored by leading experts offering an in-depth description of key terms and concepts related to different areas, issues, and trends in K-20 education worldwide. Additionally, this volume provides a compendium of terms, definitions, and explanations of concepts, processes, and acronyms.

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