Chapter 1

Pedagogical Teaching and Learning

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ABSTRACT

From infancy to adolescence, the degree of dependency on the part of learners requires pedagogical teaching and learning. To teach pedagogically, teachers are required to employ the so termed Stimulus-Response theory and some other related theories. To learn pedagogically, learners are accustomed to the so called top down education. With the advent of information communication technologies, there has emerged teaching and learning styles online. This chapter discusses pedagogical teaching and learning in comparison with andragogical teaching and learning. It should be a highly relevant chapter for teachers from K-12, as well as for teachers from adult education settings.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning have paralleled humanity from the Stone Age to modern civilization. When human beings were hunters and gatherers, teaching and learning had their very beginning. To survive, older, more experienced human beings passed their knowledge and skills to the younger generations. Inexperienced human beings learned from those more experienced people by observation or by what we (teachers) call “job shadowing” in its modern terms. After centuries of teaching and learning or informal teaching and learning, societies made progress. As early as the seventh and twelfth centuries, organized teaching and learning began to occur in Europe where young boys were trained to be clergymen or a nation’s leaders. It was around the twelfth century that more people began to establish their own countries.

After countries were established, formal schools of all types were established to teach a nation’s young people. The world’s earliest universities were set up in Europe (e.g., Italy or France). The ideas of great philosophers or educators such as Socrates, Plato, and Confucius have shaped teaching and learning. Their influence is still be-
ing felt today. The teaching method by Socrates implies that teachers are to question learners, trying to formulate a definition of something and then attempting to test its accuracy by a careful analysis of its meaning. Via this type of questioning, the learners are expected to arrive at a better personal understanding, a closer examination to the truth. To Socrates, no one knows the truth before using his or her own kind of questioning (Brownhill, 2002).

Plato introduced the authoritarian approach to teaching. To Plato, there exist two worlds: a world of material things and a world of absolutes. While the world of material things is the source of belief and opinion, the world of absolutes is the source of knowledge. Definitions were accepted through the skills of the more persuasive debaters, whose main concern were to further their own or faction’s interests. Plato considered teachers as charlatans who offered the rhetorical skills to control versions of the truth for the payment of fees (Brownhill, 2002, p. 71).

Confucius’ main teaching method lies in his quest for self-realization or self-criticism, the rectification of the mind. He wants his learners to be authentic persons that are to be truthful to both their selfhood and their sociality (Wang & King, 2007). Confucius considers learning as emphasizing meditation to control oneself as well as an internal integration between self and nature. Through dialogue with others, the learning process facilitates the development of this meditative and integrated self. The dialogue approach is a mutual search among peers for answers and should not be considered an authoritarian approach to teaching and learning.

However, in Confucius-Heritage countries, teachers are invested with a great deal of authority as they are the ones who define the rules and requirements of courses offered. Teachers are considered judges and assessors of the learners participating in the dialogue. Learners consider teachers authority figures who set the agenda and the way of procedure, and decide the aim of the exercise and how it might be achieved. The Socrates method enabled the process of discussion to become a joint exploration of a given topic, as Socrates never claimed to be an authority figure. He respected the contribution of others, not only as human beings, but for their ideas. Therefore, his teaching method should be considered anti-authoritarianism. While we have inherited different approaches to teaching and learning, the question remains which teaching method has influenced modern teaching more, Plato’s authoritarian teaching, Confucius’ self-criticism, or Socrates’ anti-authoritarianism? Although K-12 schools do not offer the rhetorical skills to control versions of the truth for the payment of fees as Plato describes, what is their predominant teaching approach? As more modern scholars are trying to advance other teaching and learning approaches rather than Plato’s authoritarian approach, has the educational enterprise bought into these modern scholars’ notion concerning teaching and learning?

The reality is that the whole educational enterprise has been frozen into the very pedagogical teaching and learning (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Pedagogy can be defined as the art and science of teaching children. As the art and science, how has pedagogy prevailed in the educational enterprise? We have to say that the ideologies revolving around pedagogy do make sense to many teachers and learners. Another primary reason is that pedagogy as an educational model was the only model available to teachers even prior to World War II (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005). Basically, as more experienced human beings, teachers enjoy the full responsibility for making all decisions about what to learn, how to learn, when to learn and how learning can be assessed. This teacher-directed education has prevailed simply because the pedagogical model considers learners as submissive followers of instructors’ instruction.
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