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DIVISION OF EDUCATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

PROGRAM OF DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT OF POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

THE FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

Prospectus of a Dissertation

TOWARD A THEORY OF ADULT EDUCATION:

AN ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT CONSCIENTIZATION

AS EXPRESSED BY FREIRE WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECTED

IDEAS OF ILLICH, THEOBALD, BLAKEY, AND DRUCKER

by
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Introduction

Since Sir Richard Livington's essay entitled On Education appeared in 1945 (40), a vast quantity of information as accumulated pertinent to the education of the lesser educated (1) (4), the role of education in freeing individuals from whatever shackles bind them (9), the use of educational technologies to achieve social, economic, or political reform (27), and the role of education in the development of communities and societies (7) (19).

Except for certain notable landmarks and a few classical studies, it is neigh impossible for the adult educator or social practitioner to review or assimilate all that has been written about adult education and the development of the individual, the social order, community development, education as a process for self-help, or even adult basic education for the "disadvantaged."

To become familiar with this vast array of literature (scattered throughout the social sciences, found in certain areas of the humanities, and woven into the professional writing of education, management science, agriculture extension, communications, and change agentry, leaves us with the feeling of being adrift on a long voyage to nowhere--with only dim recollections of where we were when we began and a loss of memory as to where we were going.

The literature of adult education abounds with essays calling for a central purpose of mission (5) (14) (51) (37), with definitions of the field (49) (2) (42) (55), and with prescriptions of "How To Do It" (6) (29) (45) (52). It is also well supplied

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with articles and papers belaboring its lack of theoretical orientations (25) (23), its need for a unique body of knowledge (33), and its ambigious and marginal status in the social milieu (15) (16). As Liveright stated in 1966, adult education "is fragmented, lopsided and lacks a sense of direction" (37).

With these facts and opinions in mind, the central purpose of this study will be to analyze significant trends and ideas, as reported in the literature of the field to develop a theoretical framework which will provide direction for those who assess needs, define goals and design educational activities for adults.

In my opinion, the relatively large body of information about adult education contains episodes and sequences of developmental or evolutionary thought pertaining to the purpose, scope, methodology, and design of adult education, the essence of which has been crystalized in or captured by the concept of conscientization as recently expressed by Paulo Freire (18).

This concept, as described in the works of Freire, embodies and/or implies the application of central principles of adult education—principles which consistently recur throughout the literature of the field. Such principles relate to the concept of self-actualization as expressed by Maslow (44); social development as expressed by Lewin (43) and Havighurst (21); participant involvement in democratic decision-making as conceptualized and researched by Knowles (30), Kreitlow (33), Boo (11), and Snyder (50); self-fulfillment as expressed by Rogers (48); active participation by learners in the educational process as expressed by Kidd (28), Boyle (12), Lindeman (36); and similar ideas which have long pre-

occupied the literature of adult education.

As expressed by Freire, the concept of conscientization implies means (processes) as well as ends (goals). I believe that the analytical developments of Freire (pragmatically tested in the field of literacy education) and the existentialistic processes of learning which he has thus derived, illustrate the interface of two crucial developing areas of thought in adult education, i.e., ideas about the goals and purpose of adult education and ideas about the processes or methods which will most effectively facilitate adult learning.

In view of this belief, I feel that the concept of conscientization can be used as the center core or focuser upon which to build a theory of adult education. Such a theory should help unify, organize, interpret and expalin a number of concepts and ideas about adult education which presently appear in relatively isolated and unorganized fashion.

Consequently, as one personally and professionally committed to the field of adult education and the idea of lifelong learning and as one deeply committed to the discovery and expression of developmental and meaningful opportunities for the "lesser advantaged," I propose to describe, analyze, and clarify the concept of conscientization as it relates to a developmental theory for adult education.

In relating Freire's concepts to a developmental theory of adult education, I propose to establish a theoretical framework which is philosophically and logically consistent with the following ideas and assumptions elaborated by Illich (23),

Reimer (47), Theobald (53), Blakely (9), and Drucker (17):

1. Man has entered into a communication era--one in which development, transmission, and sharing of knowledge represent his major source of energy.

2. Man has entered into an era in which he can no longer rely upon the traditions, "knowledge" or institutions of the past as the primary means for charting the future. As Drucker suggests, present conditions and future states are discontinuous with the past and new paradigms are needed to accurately perceive the non-traditional conditions of man and his environment (non-traditional in relation to re-corded history).

3. The problems of man are now internal not external-- i.e., they are the creation of his thoughts and actions and can only be resolved through his own enlighten-ment and reaction.

4. There are no known limits to man's ability to develop or to change through conscious learning processes.

The above four assumptions about the nature of man, knowledge, and education will be clarified and analyzed so as to identify central concepts having implications for what man should or must learn and key principles having implications for the conditions most conducive to an effective learning environment.

Since the study is neither empirical nor experimental and will draw heavily upon my ability to organize and synthesize the

works of others, to make extensive use of both deductive and inductive reasoning processes, and to evaluate the presentation of "tentative" conclusions, I shall deviate slightly from ordinary research writing procedures and write in the first person. I believe this technique will provide an opportunity for me to more accurately portray my own processes of reflective thinking, facilitate the necessary internal dialog, and enhance my ability to evaluate the processes of logical inquiry. Use of the first person should also facilitate the reader's efforts to differentiate between my thoughts and those of others, as well as to appraise the usefulness of the logic employed in designing a theory for "developmental learning" in adult education.

Purpose (and Methodological Implications)

My overall purpose is to contribute to or build a theory for adult education. The degree of specificity of such theory cannot be known at the outset other than whatever implications might be implicit in the major focus of the study--i.e., an emphasis on education for those adults who are variously described as the poor, the oppressed, the disadvantaged, the alienated, etc. Additionally, an emphasis is placed on those who need to shift paradigms (perceptions of reality) to achieve higher order solutions to complex problems; and selected ideas and concepts of contemporary scholars alluded to in the introduction.

The central focus or concept upon which I plan to build my theoretical foundation is that of conscientization. To clarify

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and expand this concept, I shall (historically) trace the respective
ideational antecedents of the concept to validate their source,
acceptance or rejection by the field, and utilitarian value as
documented in the literature.

As previously mentioned, the purpose of developing such a
theoretical model is to enable us to: better understand the nature
of a phenomenon--in this case the developmental (conscientization)
learning of the lesser-advantaged; to more adequately explain the
relationship between existing facts and principles (knowledge
statements); to better interpret existing data and the findings of
research; to increase our predicability of control of the outcome
of program planning in adult education by designing activities
according to the postulates developed within the model; and to
generate useful questions and hypothesis for further research to
increase our knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon of adult
education.

In designing the proposed model for adult education, it will
be necessary to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Describe and define the boundaries, dimensions and
   characteristics of the field of adult education and de-
   duce a typology for the specific form, function, and pur-
   pose of adult education which the theory will encompass.

2. Identify, describe, and clarify the particular individual,
   social, community, and cultural needs, or problems or
   opportunities to which the model will apply.

   (There is an assumption in items 1 and 2 that there
   is more than one class or type of adult education and

and more than one set or type of learning need and that all kinds of education or learning may not appropriately be explained or designed within the theoretical context of conscientization).

3. Identify or develop a system or taxonomy for program development in adult education to incorporate all pertinent stages of educational planning which must be successfully accomplished in implementing a theory of education derived from Freire's concept of conscientization. (Preliminary study suggests that such a system can be adapted from the recent work of Jahns and Boyle (13) and Houle (23).

4. Identify, clarify, and justify x number of central concepts and principles found in the literature purporting to enhance or facilitate fundamental processes of adult learning and establish their relationship with the goals and process of conscientization and with the stages of the system for program planning described in item 3 above.

5. Formulate a series of postulates to be used as guides in designing and implementing adult education to achieve maximum conscientization on the part of adult learners.

Procedures

As an attempt in the development of theory, contrasted to the verification or testing of existing theory or knowledge, the primary method employed in this study will be that of bibliographic research. This method goes well beyond the discipline required for systematic literature reviews in that the techniques of conceptual

analysis and information synthesis will be heavily relied upon to reformulate existing knowledge and derive new ideas, as yet untested, but logically consistent with the fundamental assumptions and central concepts upon which the theory will be based (8) (22) (32) (56).

Although empirical data will not be collected, nor will hypothesis be tested, verified knowledge will be used to support statements of presumed fact, recommended principles, and suggested postulates.

Bibliographic essays as described by Houle (23) will be developed to identify, analyze, synthesize, and support (or refute) knowledge statements (factual relationships) postulates and principles (predictive variables) and key concepts as they are introduced and developed.

Main ideas and key terms--i.e., adult education, self-fulfillment, liberalizing, disadvantaged, oppressed, etc.--relating to the purpose, clientele, or processes of adult education will be clarified and operationally defined when they are introduced as key elements in the theory.

Entré into the literature to identify central ideas, key concepts and knowledge statements will be achieved through use of standard bibliographic reference materials such as The Encyclopedia of Education, The Review of Educational Research, Psychological Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, Dissertation Abstracts, etc.

In addition, the indices of the major Journals of Adult Education will be systematically screened for relevant materials.

Such Journals include: Adult Leadership; Adult Education; Adult Education (British); Convergence; and the Journal of Extension.

The indices of the Yearbooks of the National Society for the Study of Education and the Handbooks published by the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. will be screened for pertinent materials.

As central concepts and issues pertinent to the theoretical model are identified they will be further explained through the use of "less widely disseminated" literature of the field as has been identified by the Library for Continuing Education and the Adult Education Educational Research Information Clearing-house located at Syracuse University.

Published and non-published works of Paulo Freire will be obtained from the public and private collections identified by Grabowski (18).

According to Kerlinger, a theory is defined as:

> A set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that presents a systematic view of pheno-mena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena (28).

Since theory is neither good nor bad, right nor wrong but only useful (or not so useful) in predicting outcomes, in order-ing and describing phenomena, in hypothesizing relationships (if-then statements), and in exercising greater control over a defined span of one's environment than one has without it, my responsibility as a researcher in theory building is to abide by the criteria of factual accuracy, logical consistency, and intellectual honesty (54).

The errors of fallacy, common and/or reverse causality, and unwarranted assumptions are major pitfalls in theory development and will be guarded against on every occasion. Consequently, every attempt will be made to account for the influence of such factors when deducing (or inducing) assumptions pertinent to cause and effect relationships when such are not adequately grounded in research.

Significance of the Study

Traditionally, adult education has focused on individual enrichment. Adult educators are essentially humanists, who have been involved in a continuing search for means that contribute to the enhancement of the human condition (41). While these pursuits lend themselves readily to the middle-class, masses of lower-class individuals are eliminated.

Despite generally high participation in adult education; low socio-economic groups are underrepresented. Johnstone and Rivera state:

> Self fullfilment or personal growth through continuing education--the central organizing premises of many programs of adult learning--are concepts which have no meaning at all to most lower-class individuals. And, it is here, perhaps, that adult educators face their most critical challenge (26).

American adult educators have shown a desire to provide adult education to the "wayfarer," the disadvantaged, and the oppressed since before the American Revolution (19). Adult educators have sought to make education available to the disadvantaged and the oppressed through folk schools, adult education for immigrants,

and, more recently, manpower efforts, and literacy programs.

Despite these numerous efforts, according to Grattan and other adult education historians, adult education offerings have been more suited to and more frequently utilized by the upward mobile than the hardcore, disadvantaged (19). In other words, those with motivation have been able to use adult education far more readily than the less motivated.

As a marginal educational activity, maintaining average daily attendance has generally been necessary to keep adult education going (15) (46). Given this circumstance, it is not surprising that the theoretical and methodological undergirdings of adult education have developed primarily around identifying and meeting the needs of the motivated who can pay for these educational services.

Cotton raises the questions: "What happened to adult education?" "How did this noble vision become transformed into a system of adult education which is irrelevant to the fate of man in the modern world?" He speculates that these questions have much broader implications than adult education, i.e., it has to do with the conflict between our _ideals_ and our _practice_; the gap between what we _say_ and what we _do_; the confusion between _illusion_ and _reality_. Man must once again discover what it means to be human (16). Hence, the need for a developmental adult education that assists humans to (a) recognize their capacity to change and to free themselves from deterministic forms of existence; (b) use their critical intelligence to demythologize and decode the way in which they see themselves and the world about them; and (c)

assess their needs from _their_ role perspective rather than that
of others and, through reflection and action, change those insti-
tutions which contribute to their oppression. This study seeks to
contribute theoretically to such developmental adult education.

Knowles, in "Sequential Research Needs in Evolving Disciplines
of Social Practice" states that during the period of technological
refinement there is a need for "speculative theory-building which
opens up new vistas of technology (31). The theoretical impli-
cations of this study include: (1) initiating steps toward an ade-
quate theory of developmental adult education theory; and, (2) generation
of some hypotheses for researchers to test pertinent to the con-
cepts of motivation, self concept, and self-awareness.

A practical contribution which should result from this study
is the provision of a basis for reflection and action on innova-
tive program development practices in the field.

Contextual Organization

Tentative design for the contextual organization of the dis-
sertation is:

Chapter 11 - "Man, Society, and Culture: An Overview of Issues,
　　　　　　　Problems, Needs, and Opportunities"

Chapter 111- "The Purpose and Aim of Adult Education--Past,
　　　　　　　Present, and Future"

Chapter 1V - "Conscientization"
　　　　　　　Defined and clarified
　　　　　　　Relationship to need assessment
　　　　　　　Relationship to identifying educational objectives
　　　　　　　Relationship to selected principles in adult
　　　　　　　　education
　　　　　　　Relationship to Transisting
　　　　　　　As a process and goal in adult education
　　　　　　　Demythologization

Chapter V - "Program Development for Conscientization--
            A Model for the Design of Adult Education
            Activities"

Chapter Vl- "Planning Postulates"

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