THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON ADULT EDUCATION IN ONTARIO

By

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Abstract

This project consists of two parts. The first section is a literature review of the following topics: Adult education, Ontario’s approach to Adult education, four different pedagogical approaches to Adult education (andragogy, self-directed learning, informal and incidental learning, and emotions and imagination), education and globalization. These areas were reviewed to identify key elements around Adult education, as well as for how contemporary globalization shapes Adult education.

The second section is a research essay building off of the literature review. Andragogy, self-directed learning, informal and incidental learning and emotions and imagination were examined to determine if these adult education philosophies were being practiced in Ontario. Globalization’s impact is a force with widespread reach and implications. Education will be vital for survival in a global community. The effect of globalization on adult education in Ontario was investigated. The principles of andragogy, self-directed learning and informal and incidental learning are evident in Canadian and Ontario teaching practices; however, emotions and imagination are absent in this discourse.
PART I:

Literature Review: Adult Education and Globalization
Introduction

Although many of us may think our “school days” are behind us, learning is a continuous part of life. Adult education has been called by many names – training, lifelong learning, continuing education, workplace learning. I am focusing on the formal side of education – adult learning that occurs in institutions rather than for the purpose of work, personal interest or self-development.

The approach to teaching adult learners can be varied as there are several theories to how adults learn. For the purpose of this literature review, I will be examining the research on four adult education philosophies: andragogy, self-directed learning, informal or incidental learning and emotions and imagination. This information will be used as the foundation for my research project which will examine the use of these theories in the practice of adult education in Ontario.

Why examine the practice of adult education? It is foreseeable that as the world changes, reasons for learning will also be influenced. One of the most pervasive changes in our world today is globalization. Globalization has been defined in many ways, but in essence, it can be thought of as the erasing of borders between countries and nations. This porosity has meant that local issues, concerns and practices now have an impact across the globe. As the world continues to shrink and become more interconnected, education will continue to be a means to function in a global community. As such, globalization– its definition, and impact on adult education, will be reviewed.

Relevance of this study

Globalization is a reality that impacts how we live our lives. This reality made me wonder what the impact of globalization on adult education is. Will adult learning expectations change? Will the current philosophy evolve? Currently, these questions remain unasked.
Through my final project, I would like to address these questions. This information may assist learners and practitioners in clarifying the focus and direction of Adult education in the 21st century.

**Method**

The pioneers in adult education theory were chosen as a starting point and their books or peer-reviewed articles and journals were examined. Research on globalization as it related to adult education was primarily found in peer-reviewed articles and journals. A few books on this subject were also reviewed. Research studies reviewed mostly used a meta-analytical method.

*Adult education theories*

For this review, four adult education theories will be examined: andragogy, self-directed learning, incidental and informal learning and emotions and imagination.

*Andragogy*

How do adults learn? Merriam (2001) and Knowles (1980) defined andragogy as the “art and science of helping adults learn” (p. 5; p. 43). This adult education theory was revolutionary in proposing that adults could learn and that their learning style was different from that of children. Andragogy stated that adults expected to be actively involved in their learning, for the content to be problem-focused and to have current applicability. Knowles proposed that andragogy was based on four crucial assumptions seen as individuals mature: a self-directed self-concept; that personal experiences could be used for learning; learning readiness was related to social role; and adults’ learning requirements were performance-based with immediate application. Merriam’s chapter provided an updated fifth assumption: adult learning was motivated by internal factors.
Merriam structured her chapter by focusing on the components of andragogy. Merriam’s work cited literature that challenged andragogy, such as its failure to acknowledge that people were shaped by society and culture or that it did not build on or clarify our understanding of adult learning. Knowles identified implications for the exercise of adult education based on crucial assumptions such as the learning environment needed to put adults at ease and educators must balance the needs of the adults and the institutions they serve. Knowles book will be invaluable to study for it lays the foundation of the adult learning theory of andragogy and Merriam’s chapter provided a balanced understanding of how adults learn.

*Self-directed learning*

Brookfield (1993), Garrison (1997) and Merriam (2001) defined self-directed learning (“SDL”). SDL acknowledges that adults learn systematically as they go through their daily lives and that although learning may occur in a classroom, it may also occur without the guidance of an instructor. Garrison defined the self-directed learner as one who became skilled at to thinking critically and obtained meaning in complex situations while Merriam defined it as part of everyday life, as widespread and systematic, although it did not require formal setting or instructors.

Brookfield reviewed SDL, its proponents and detractors. He emphasized that SDL was not a laissez-faire exercise rather that its intent was empowerment and transformation, and identified how it could be a part of the critical practice of adult education. Brookfield also discussed the twin political influences of control and resources on SDL and repercussions such as who chose or controlled the direction of learning and whether the resources such as time, energy, access or money were available.
Garrison provided a comprehensive model of SDL which incorporated cognitive (e.g., self-management and monitoring) and motivational dimensions. He reported that SDL was more than task control, it included being responsible for making meaning and cognition monitoring in the learning contract.

Merriam referenced the pioneers of and outlined their elements. A review of the relevant literature was evident as it formed the foundation of Merriam’s chapter. Her chapter focused on the components of SDL theory such as developing self-directed learners and promoting transformational learning and social action. She provided some “current” requirements in evaluating the continued relevance of this theory in the 1990s, such as how adults continued to be self-directed learners over time, did power and control impact the use of SDL in formal settings and what the critical practice of SDL looked like. Merriam’s article would have benefited from providing a critique of self-directed learning would have been useful for critical analysis. These three authors’ work relate directly to my thesis for they defined and provided a richer context to SDL.

*Informal & Incidental Learning*

Marsick and Watkins (2001) defined informal and incidental learning as learning that was unstructured and intentional, and unconscious, respectively. Its relevance learning theory was it can occur anywhere and was not restricted to the classroom. They proposed an updated model (e.g., noted that learning began with a trigger, people interpreted new experiences and assessed outcomes) and suggested enhancements for practice (such as guidelines for self-analysis of learning style and teaching learners strategies to make SDL more apparent). A limitation in their study was that contrary positions were not provided. The relevance of Marsick and Watkins’
chapter relates directly to my thesis for it defines and explains informal and incidental learning theory.

**Emotions and Imagination**

The adult education philosophy of emotions and imagination acknowledges that our emotions and imagination affect our meaningful learning – learning is shaped and influenced by factors other than objectivity and rationality (Dirkx, 2001).

Dirkx (1998) discussed the role of emotions and the use of imagination in how adults learn or make meaning. In 2001, he reported that emotions could help or hinder adult learning. His focus was that meaningful adult learning was derived from the connection between their emotions and imagination and the world around them. The scope was broad – meaning making in daily life through the use of emotions and imagination. The significance was that learning and making meaning could occur anywhere and that education was not confined in a box. The individual was made a part of the learning process rather than just a repository of information. Dirkx (2001) argued that it was the connection between the emotional, imaginative self and society from which meaningful learning was derived. Imagination helped connect our inner feelings with external measurable learning experiences. A limitation in Dirkx’s work was that he seemed to rely on the reader’s understanding of emotions and imagination rather than defining these concepts and he failed to include contrary views. Dirkx’s discussion was useful for it examined the relationship between emotions and learning, one that is not traditionally pursued; thus it was useful in creating awareness of another adult learning theory. This article directly related to my analysis in its definition of the adult education theory of emotions and imagination.
Globalization

Globalization has been viewed as the inevitable direction for the 21st century. There are almost as many definition of globalization as there are international trade agreements or adult education philosophies. Unfortunately, many of them focus only on its economic aspects.

Definitions

Beveridge (1996), Gacel-Avila (2005), Hall (2001), Mulenga (2001), Urmetzer (2005) and Zambeta (2005) clearly defined globalization. Globalization has been defined as transforming international trade and eliminating barriers to the movement of capital between countries to the point where there was effectively a single global market (Beveridge, 1996), the connection between the economies and societies beyond national borders (Zambeta, 2005), or society without borders (Urmetzer, 2005). It was reported that globalization was commonly understood in economic terms (Hall, 2001) yet there were other forms which included the state, communication, movement of people, violence and crime (Hall, 2001, Mulenga, 2001). Mulenga also reported that globalization was an exercise in contrasts – it related to the self (impact on personal life) as well as global systems, that globalization caused power, wealth and isolation and inequality, poverty and unity.

Focus

Beveridge focused on three areas: economic globalization – its purpose and impact, with an educational emphasis; an alternate vision for a sustainable future, and the role of adult education in the transition to a post-modern world. Coulby (2005) discussed the issue of where knowledge was developed under the influence of globalization. He reported the significance of knowledge development in educational institutions and argued that the very nature of universities and the source of their staff and students influenced the type of knowledge generated. Coulby
questioned whether universities were being responsible enough in ensuring their curricula met the demands technology had placed on the private sector and also implied that government involvement was particularly important in universities such that the responsibility and influence in this arena was not being left solely to private institutions supported by business.

Gacel-Avila posed the question of what kind of education was required in the 21st century to face the challenges of globalization and internationalization. She defined globalization and its counterpart, internationalization (a process that recognized and respected traditions and differences between nation state). She outlined the challenges of education in our global society and identified that globalization placed consequent pressures on institutes of higher learning to be responsible such that they adequately prepared their graduates to live and participate as global citizens and professionals.

Korsgaard (1997) cited the importance of adult education and training and noted that they were the gateways to increasingly global markets. Education required lifelong learning, provided better employment opportunities, and was the key to business and national competitiveness in the global labour market. Mulenga formulated a problem with two facets: that globalization negatively impacted human rights and that adult educators had a duty to challenge the notion that globalization was an inevitable product of development. He discussed how globalization impacted human rights issues and concluded with the role adult educators could play in righting these injustices.

Urmetzer looked at the issue of globalization – its history, scope, and how Canada had been both affected and remained unchanged by economic globalization. His view contrasted with the predominant view that globalization was an unstoppable force and examined the literature and supported his position with several Statistics Canada reports on trade, foreign investments
and government expenditures. He described the importance of government involvement in education.

Zambeta identified that nationalism (which recognized unique differences and distinctiveness of nations or states) and globalization were impacting education via economic and labour markets, pressure for curricular changes, the impact of the English language on education and the consequence of eliminating national languages from educational discourse.

**Globalization and Education**

Several authors were successful in redirecting globalization towards an educational angle (Beveridge (1996), Coulby (2005), Gacel-Avila (2005), Hall (2001), Korsgaard (1997), Madhukar (2003), Robertson (2006), and Zambeta (1998)). Beveridge wrote that the impacts of globalization on education were a change in purpose from social to competing in a global economy and from community to market values; and that education became a trade commodity and was subject to goods and services trade agreements such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Beveridge also reported on education’s role in globalization and the sustainability crisis. He argued that educators needed to adopt green curriculum and operations to counteract the ecological damage caused to the earth by industrialization and consumerism. Beveridge also reported the need to incorporate critical and transformative education (including feminist, liberation, environmental and global education), ecological sustainability, human needs, community and equity into instruction.

Coulby identified the issue of technology on the knowledge economy. Specifically, university curricula had been influenced by technologies such as the internet, satellite broadcasts and telephony. Gacel-Avila identified the need for a standard of teaching to be competitive on an
international level. She referenced educational goals for global citizens – pragmatic, liberal, civic, historical, cultural consciousness and combating discrimination and suggested that universities could meet the challenges of a globalized society by using international principles (valuing differences, diversity and national traditions), and global affinities to build models for transnational cooperation.

Hall’s (2001) chapter spoke specifically to one practitioner’s actions in Toronto. His vision of adult education was a global movement that drew on visions and explanations from a variety of global racial and sectoral voices. Korsgaard reported that historically, the purpose of adult education or lifelong learning was connected with democracy and individual learning. A historical shift in education began with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in the 1960s when democracy was still linked to democracy and individual development. This tide changed with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in the 1980s when adult education began to focus on economic development.

Madhukar’s focused on three implications and challenges posed by globalization in the arena of education. The first implication was the need to rethink curricula, incorporating interdisciplinary teaching methods and new information sources into the content. Second, the need to develop skills along with knowledge, and third, the need to model curricula based on the sociocultural needs of participants. Robertson (2006) argued that the tools used to understand globalization must be challenged if critical research on education and globalization was desired. She cited three areas where current research on globalization and education was lacking. The first area was spatial absence, the concept of scale (local versus national) and that space was socially produced. The second area was knowledge, specifically, whose knowledge was being
globalized – usually Western, white and heterosexual. Lastly, research was lacking in representation – how globalizing education had altered political and democratic representation, such that, international finance agencies and organizations shaped educational agendas through funding, policy advice and determined national state regulations which influenced both developed and developing countries. She argued that globalization worked on and through educational systems via mechanisms such as borrowing, learning and imposition. Zambeta argued that globalization influenced education such that international organizations created and implemented educational policies that were imposed at the state level and that educational policy influenced what knowledge was considered socially valuable. In essence, education was a marketable commodity.

Limitations in the research reviewed

Coulby’s assertion of cell phones application to higher education because it is a strong part of youth culture was weakened without the demonstration of how cellular technology impacted knowledge formation at the university level. Although cell phones may influence the dissemination of information, it does not shape of influence the information being transmitted. A limitation in Madhukar’s writing was in its split between primary, secondary and post-secondary education so that little emphasis was put on the influence of globalization on education or how adult education was a factor in globalization. Zambeta’s work would have benefited from stronger examples of nationalism’s impact on education, for – such as religion, culture or race for instance, while Gacel-Avila and Robertson failed to provide contrary perspectives in their work.
Relevance

Beveridge’s article is relevant to my study for it poses two questions: is his work on track for the future of adult education, and are any of the components he discussed being seen in Ontario adult education? Coulby’s work identified specific technologies and their impact on educational institutions and knowledge, demonstrating that globalization has an impact of adult education and he also identified how the global knowledge economy was being practiced and was affecting the provision of adult education in universities. Gacel-Avila’s article showed the relevance and importance of a competing position to globalization – internationalization – and discussed how internationalization could be used in university education to create global citizens.

Hall’s work relates to my analysis of how globalization has caused specific changes in adult education in Ontario and his teaching practice could be used as a basis for researching the existing literature to further determine the direction of Ontario adult educators. Korsgaard referenced Michael Welton’s work – that the impact of globalization on adult education in Canada weakened the social action and public responsibility focus such that liberal democracy and adult education were jeopardized. Korsgaard’s article provided some Canadian perspective on globalization and adult education. It will be interesting to determine if there has been a further deterioration of social and public responsibility in adult education since his 1997 article. Madhukar’s book can be useful in my development of the definition of globalization and Mulenga’s expansion on the commonly accepted definition of globalization in my opinion increased the relevance of globalization for it is not only tied to market economy. They are both useful for practice in providing specific direction or tasks for adult educators. Adult educators must challenge the mindset that globalization is the inevitable product of development and must also create an awareness of alternatives to globalization – generate an arena for discussion via
networks, oppose discrimination, use an interdisciplinary approach and develop new tools taking history, class, power and the state into account.

Mulenga’s article suggests next steps or other areas of inquiry beyond how adult education is practiced in Ontario in the face of globalization, to how educators should teach and factors that need to be taken into consideration such as generating awareness, encouraging critique, creating alternatives, building solidarity and seeking interdisciplinary approaches. Robertson’s article contributed to the understanding of globalization and education by broadening our perspective. She noted that further study was required in the areas of topic (what knowledge was being taught), access (who the recipients were), providers (government versus for profit organizations), and source (where the information originated). This study can be used to shape the design of future studies and that researchers can have a more comprehensive view of the factors affecting their study. Robertson’s article relates directly to my research question of whether globalization is impacting education.

Urmetzer’s book will be used to define globalization and outline some of the challenges facing the delivery of adult education. Zambeta’s article identified that globalization was not the only factor impacting education. Although globalization has been characterized as pervading all elements of society – economic, government, labour market, politics, policy and education, it does not have a stranglehold – traditional forces such as the state or local government still have strong and vital roles in education.

Conclusions and recommendations

Several authors examined the adult education theories of andragogy, self-directed learning, incidental and informal learning and emotions and imagination. It can be said that andragogy is an accepted adult education theory, self-directed learning still has some controversy
over its acceptance as a philosophy, however, this model has been expanded and recommendations made for current practice. Incidental and informal learning expand the scope of adult education outside of institutions and classrooms. This model has been updated to enhance its practice. More research is required in emotions and imagination to determine its use and relevance for my study.

Globalization has been extensively examined in the literature, particularly from an economic perspective. Through the review of the literature, some consensus on the definition of globalization has been found. Research has begun to emerge linking globalization and education, however, the analysis tends to associate learning with being competitive and successful in a global market and oftentimes was based outside of Canada.

This literature review confirmed that my area of research, the impact of globalization on adult education in Ontario, has not been examined in the literature or that its influence on the philosophies of andragogy, self-directed learning, informal and incidental learning or emotions and imagination has yet to be studied.
References


PART II:

Research Project: The Impact of Globalization on Adult Education in Ontario
“[T]he first goal of adult education is to convince people of the possibility of change. All other goals can come if we can believe that change is possible”

(Nyerene in Hall, 2001).

Change is an inevitable fact of life. We change as we mature, education changes our outlook on the world, and other forces in the world – social, economic, cultural impact how we live. Globalization is a current phenomenon that has affected change in many arenas – social, cultural, economic as well as educational. Education does not occur in a vacuum and motivations for learning are impacted by pervasive changes in our world such as globalization. Education is essential to functioning in a global environment. It has always been a component of our lives – whether it involves learning to get a job, keep one or fulfil us outside of work. Business has continually influenced education – from the requirement to produce individuals trained to operate in the industrial revolution or the era of information technology.

Globalization makes specific educational demands – information based, technological savvy, and it requires the knowledge and skill to operate in a world without borders. However, one aspect of learning that has not been examined to date is the impact of globalization on adult education philosophy. I will argue that globalization has shaped the practice of specific adult education theories more than these theories have impacted globalization. This paper will examine four of the several adult education theories that exist – andragogy, self-directed learning, informal and incidental learning and emotions and imagination – to determine whether globalization has influenced their practice. The findings of this review may be helpful to both learners and practitioners in clarifying the focus and direction of adult education in Ontario the 21st century.
Introduction to globalization

Globalization has been viewed as a pervasive trend in the 21st century, making its presence felt in many countries. A six-country comparative study (Canada, the Netherlands, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland and the United States) found globalization to be an overarching trend in each of these countries (Belanger and Tuijnman, 1997); but, what exactly is globalization? Globalization has been widely defined in economic terms. Beveridge (1996) describes globalization as a single global market without barriers between countries that facilitates capital flow or international trade. Zambeta (2005) similarly describes it as the connection between the economies and societies beyond national borders. Globalization, however, can also be understood in non-economic terms such as the state, communication, movement of people, violence, and crime (Hall, 2001, Mulenga, 2001).

Education has a central role in globalization, for it has the potential to influence change and act as a compassionate force in shaping a global community (Coulby, 2005). To truly gauge the impact of globalization on contemporary adult education in Canada and Ontario, it is necessary to examine the historical context of the social and economic conditions that drove education and educational practices in Canada. Adult education in Canada began as a community-based movement with an emphasis on social change, equity and greater democracy. Historically, education was considered key to citizenship and labour market access, enhanced social cohesion, and increased access to economic, political and cultural heritage (Zambeta, 2005). Indeed, many of these initial educational goals can still be witnessed, albeit somewhat transformed, within contemporary adult education practices. In the following section, I examine significant historical trends within Canadian adult education as a means of identifying social and
economic conditions that have influenced and continue to influence contemporary adult education in Ontario.

In the 1800s to well into the 1930’s education in Canada was shaped by labour and social needs. For example, gender often influenced access to educational opportunities for men and women were often educated separately. The Mechanics’ Institutes (1827-1890s), for instance, provided scientific and technical information for workers (Mechanics' Institutes, 2008). They were present in Nova Scotia, Quebec and British Columbia, but had the strongest presence in Ontario where there were 311 institutes by 1895 (Spencer, 1998). Whereas technical, labour oriented education was directed at men, Women’s Institutes developed in Ontario in 1897 and focused on education and community activity. These institutes provided women with an opportunity to interact and learn more about homemaking and even discuss ‘worldly events’ such as emphasizing the importance of organizing the rural women of Canada so they might speak as one voice for needed reforms.

Nation building was still a factor in the early 20th century, connecting the east to the west via railway expansion, mining and agriculture. This required labourers in rural areas with limited educational resources. Universities (e.g., University of Toronto, Queen’s University) were founded in urban centres and were inaccessible to those in remote areas. Frontier College began in 1901 and provided training and education to workers on the isolated frontiers that were cut off from social and educational programs in cities and towns (Spencer, 1998). Frontier College taught leadership skills to young university students, and provided "Canadianizing" or citizenship education to the post-war influx of immigrant labourers in the frontier. The college began hiring women in the 1920s to provide the same benefits to women labourers (Frontier College, 2008).
The educational concerns for those in less remote areas could be seen in Nova Scotia in the 1920’s. The Antigonish Movement, which began to take off in 1929, viewed adult education as a social activity where ordinary men and women could participate in a university education (Spencer, 1998). Whether in cities or rural areas, education strived to meet labour, social and personal development needs. As progressive as it was to provide women with post-secondary opportunities, it was still reflective of the times – gendered education, with minimal representation of women in professional or business faculties. Institutions such as Frontier College, the Mechanics’ and Women’s Institutes reflected that adult education could rise to meet the social, economic and labour needs of the early 20th century and may have set expectations for higher education to continue this tradition into the future.

World War II caused significant changes in several areas of Canadian life – from where people lived and the impact of soldiers being sent abroad to changes in the labour force and the economy. Many young men went overseas to fight on the front lines, unemployment virtually disappeared, and more than one million women, who were previously homemakers, moved into the workforce. There was also a huge shift in where people lived. In the early 20th century most Canadians resided on farms and about a third of the population lived in urban centres. By the end of the century, urban dwelling had skyrocketed to approximately 80% (Canada, 2008).

During World War II, industrial production intensified through capital investment and technological advances. Canadian workers produced raw materials, farm products, and manufactured goods needed to fight the war at a volume unprecedented in Canadian history (Canada and World War II, 2008). Manufacturing goods for both home and the war effort required skilled and educated individuals. Agriculture became increasingly mechanized, requiring new skills. Canadian scientists, technicians, and engineers worked on advanced
weapons technology, including the atomic bomb. The economy created the need for a more highly skilled labour force as organized labour had virtually doubled in size during the war and was involved in the automotive, steel, and transportation industries (Canada, 2008).

Several changes occurred after the World War II – continued economic growth and prosperity, exports dramatically increased, the development of the suburbs, increased government spending and an emphasis on social welfare programs. From 1946 to 1957, the country saw rising prosperity, fuelled partly by the needs of a rapidly growing population for homes, schools, hospitals, roads, and factories. Canada’s exports also continued to grow with its participation in the U.S.-led reconstruction of a war-ravaged Europe (Government of Canada, 2008). Institutions were more conducive to sustained economic growth. When the soldiers returned home, many women left their jobs and returned to their traditional role as homemaker, creating immediate employment opportunities for the men. Marriages that had been postponed because of the war now took place and the baby boom followed with a high birth rate for more than a decade (Government of Canada, 2008). These new families created a shift in where people chose to live. The growth of the suburbs stimulated transportation construction, including new freeways and rapid transit systems. A new phase of industrial development was also seen, spurred by large-scale electronic, aeronautic, nuclear, and chemical engineering. Much of the growth derived from the expansion of earlier established industry, such as steel production, though new sources of minerals were part of the boom of the 1950s (Canada, 2008).

Educational changes were also seen after World War II. There was an expansion of higher education as well as varied expectations of public higher education. Post-secondary education grew to meet the need for increased industrial development. Manufacturing comprised 20% of the economy and was required to satisfy the demand for aeronautics, nuclear and
chemical engineering (Canada, 2008). The expansion in the service and manufacturing industries continued to create educational demands such as broadened access, knowledge advancement through research, and the production of workers for the accelerated development of industrial applications (Madhukar, 2003).

There were other positive outcomes of World War II. While government created new systems of public support after the war, there were also international efforts to maintain positive international relations. The United Nations was a further attempt to turn the war in the direction of constructive change, an imperfect but deliberate effort to construct a system of international co-operation where possible, and a method of deterrence when peace failed. The state also stepped into the lives of Canadians as never before, and those in government thought seriously about a system of benefits – a social welfare state – to ensure the health and well-being of all citizens. (Canadian War Museum, 2008).

The federal government continued to strongly support vocational and technical education in the 1960s but a historical shift was beginning (Selman et al., 1998). During the 1960s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) still linked lifelong learning (adult education) to democracy and individual skill development. By the 1980s, the democracy and individual skills-building emphasis of adult education tide began to turn, with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development’s emphasis on economic development began to shift adult education toward a more focused role within economic development (Korsgaard, 1997). Adult education and training were considered gateways to increasing global markets and a lifelong commitment to education was required to maintain national competitiveness in this labour market, foreshadowing the need for education in a global economy (Korsgaard, 1997).
The 1970s began to usher an era of learner choice and increased accessibility. Education still supported economic agendas; however, adults now had opportunities to continue their learning while still working. Communication education was established in the 1970s, with TV Ontario, Radio-Quebec and AC-CES Alberta that broadcasted credit and non-credit courses increasing adult learning options (Selman et al., 1998). The recurrent theme of social change also continued into the 1970s. The Canadian Association for Adult Education allied with several social movements – women’s literacy, peace, environmental – as an endeavour for education aimed at creating social change (Selman et al., 1998). Community colleges became an alternative to university education and provided practical instruction – nursing, hospitality, and automotive mechanics – which could also be undertaken on a part-time basis. This social emphasis illustrated that education was not solely for economic purposes. Allen Tough helped spearhead the awareness of self-directed learning as a legitimate form of education in Canada, and highlighted that most adult learning was not course or program driven, but learner directed (Selman et al., 1998).

Distance education was also created in the 1970s and was offered through Tele-Universite in Quebec, Athabasca University in Alberta and Open Learning Agency in British Columbia (Selman et al., 1998). Distance education respects the harried lives of adults’ and replaces the physical classroom with a virtual one. Asynchronous classes enable people on different shifts, time zones or even parts of the world to share in a common discourse. The elimination of the formal classroom, set course hours and the commute to an institution strongly influenced my decision to “attend” Athabasca University. This flexibility was essential to my participation in continuing education. The opportunity to interact with students from around the globe in several of my classes provided a richer exposure to my global community than any of
the international students I never met in my traditional university experience. In spite of the many benefits of community and distance education, they presume access to technology and therefore are unspokenly biased towards those with the financial resources to obtain this access.

In the 1980s there was an economic recession with significant implications on educational funding and delivery. This recession was an impetus for the reduction in education funding that fully manifest in Jean Chrétien’s 1995 budget that resulted in the decentralization of educational power to the provinces as well as the erosion of federal support (Selman et al., 1998). Provincial governments followed suit of the federal government– either due to a lack of funds or active downsizing. In Ontario, government focused on reducing educational costs, and increasing private sector and labour participation in funding education (Selman et al., 1998). Consequently, adult and continuing education had to find means of non-governmental support or cease program deliveries. Upgrading programs, community development, outreach, and unprofitable non-credit courses at colleges and universities suffered in the process. As a means to reduce education delivery costs or recognize existing human capital, Ontario community colleges began to invest in prior learning assessment and recognition in the 1990s (Selman et al., 1998). Prior learning assessment and recognition reduced costs by recognizing students’ previous life and employment skills as legitimate, recognizable educational background.

Contemporary educational challenges under globalization

In the previous section, I outlined the historical development of adult education in Canada, as a means of identifying significant social and economic trends in the development and delivery of education. In particular, I identified how adult education has been developed as a means of nation and citizenship building, as part or the creation of a skilled work force to meet economic need, and as a means of individual development. In this section, I build off this history
to speak more specifically to the notion of contemporary globalization and its implications for adult education.

Educational goals under globalization, as in the past, are about creating workers with skills in demand, but also about creating global citizens and more equitable social and economic conditions. The challenge is providing an education that is equitable when economic goals appear to be paramount. Gacel-Avila (2005) reports that universities or higher learning institutes have multiple global pressures and responsibilities in providing the education required in the 21st century to face the challenges of globalization. Educational institutions must ensure their graduates are adequately prepared to live and participate as global citizens and professionals. Required characteristics include pragmatism, anti-discrimination and liberal, historical, civic and cultural consciousness (Gacel-Avila, 2005).

Although educational rhetoric has largely been invested with the ideal of creating equity between individuals, the reality is that historically, the gap between the privileged and the disadvantaged has grown. In fact, it was hoped that adult education would counter the negative repercussions of contemporary forms of globalization. Instead it has been detrimental to human rights as the divide between rich and poor has widened as both nations and trans-national corporations have restructured their organizations around the globe to take advantage of cheap labour (Mulenga, 2001). These actions have resulted in unemployment, underemployment, low wages, job insecurity, inadequate health and safety protection, destruction of habitat and indigenous communities in developing countries. Mulenga (2001) proposes that adult educators could correct these injustices by challenging the mindset that contemporary forms of globalization are the inevitable product of development and creating awareness that other forms of social and economic structure and interaction are possible. Educators can create change by
generating an arena for discussion via networks, opposing discrimination, using an interdisciplinary approach and developing new tools that take history, class, power and the state into account.

Globalization has had multiple impacts on education, from social and community purposes, to economic and market concerns. Education has become a trade commodity subject to goods and services trade agreements such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) (Beveridge, 1996). Instead of education being key to participating in the economy it has been co-opted into a marketable product for the state and global markets (Zambeta, 2005), and is increasingly perceived as part of economic and labour market policy today. The past ideology that education provided opportunities for equality for all has switched to policies with national and global economic agendas (Zambeta, 2005). The Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) meeting in 1986, for example, allowed education to be treated as part of global trade regulations. This agreement set the rules of international competition in services and facilitated the establishment of an international market in education (Zambeta, 2005). The implication of GATT for the future of public education is that it opened national educational systems to the global education market. This opening of national educational systems created pressure for internationally recognized accreditation of educational institutions. This was a cause for concern for two reasons. First, these educational policies influenced what knowledge was considered socially valuable. Second, the reality was that the “international education market” was not truly international or egalitarian but instead open to social elites, and was largely unidirectional – from Western or English-speaking institutions to the rest of the world (Zambeta, 2005). Unfortunately, this is also reflected in Ontario education, where educated professionals come from around the
globe – doctors, engineers, teachers – yet are unable to work in their fields because their education or credentials are not recognized here; particularly if they have immigrated from countries other than the United States, United Kingdom or Australia. It is a sad reflection that many immigrants are underemployed or unemployed while there is a shortage of locally trained professionals.

Language is another area where the uneven impact of contemporary globalization on non-English cultures is seen. Zambeta (2005) identifies that via globalization the English language has caused the elimination of national languages from educational discourse. English language instruction occurs around the world and impacts discourse in other countries. English has affected the type of knowledge produced, reduced intellectual inquiry in other languages and limited the variety of interpretations of the world (Zambeta, 2005). The challenge of the 21st century is for adult learning to confront the issues of globalization and marginalization by moving from cultural confrontation, to intercultural communication, and to recognize the positive influence of cultural diversity (Rao, 2004).

Fortunately, there are signs of hope for adult education under globalization. Although there is unevenness within contemporary educational access and practice, Rao (2004) writes that traditional education values persist in the 21st century. Adult learning is based on cooperation, on both a national and international level, and includes mutual learning as part of the vision. Other components of this vision include: learning that encompasses personal and professional development; informal, rather than formal settings; and global concerns that connect people across the world. In this vision, adult learners are autonomous and active, not passive consumers, learning is all-encompassing, touches all areas of our lives and is not confined solely to the education sector. In this environment, learners are encouraged to be actively involved in all
stages of their education. These examples reflect the continued relevance of andragogy, self-directed learning and informal and incidental learning in contemporary educational practice. These adult education philosophies will be discussed later in this paper.

There is an unwritten charter between higher education and the society it serves. There are some hopeful possibilities driving contemporary adult education. The advent of virtual higher education prompts us to rethink many fundamental beliefs about universities as storehouses of knowledge and communities of learning. Virtual education also prompts us to rethink the respective roles of teachers and learners (Madhukar, 2003). Technological innovations have potentially democratic and equalizing effects by reaching a broad constituent of students. Several new factors in contemporary adult education give hope under the reign of globalization.

Continued research and development in effective work-related adult learning practices should provide positive direction for labour education. Recognizing competencies in all areas of learning and having increased emphasis on experiential and contextual learning can have beneficial impacts in the workplace, at home, and in the community. Measuring the inputs and outputs of adult learning would be helpful in determining what is not working or is irrelevant in a modern learning context (Rao, 2004). Education must reflect the needs, values and social conditions of the time but we are still influenced by ideals and practices of our past.

Globalization is used as a mechanism that infers powerful market forces are better than government in managing social and political reform. The ineffectiveness of the state means that globalization provides justification for economic setbacks like high unemployment, government cutbacks and wage restraints (Urmetzer, 2005). While dissatisfaction with state involvement in education has led to a cry for education’s reintegration into these economic and labour market policies, caution must be taken for the financer influences or dictates educational content
International finance agencies and organizations shape educational agendas through funding, policy advice and determine national state regulations that influence both developed and developing countries (Robertson, 2006). As such, it also is important that government remains involved in universities so that business-supported private institutes are not the sole curricula providers or directors (Coulby, 2005).

The tools used to understand globalization must be challenged if critical research on education and globalization is desired. Robertson (2006) cites that the lack of representativeness in research must be examined, specifically the alteration of political and democratic representation caused by globalizing education. It will be important to identify who has access to education, who is providing it (government versus for profit organizations), and where the information being taught originates is also required (Robertson, 2006).

Practice of adult education under globalization

I have identified that globalization has several implications for adult education – there are varied social impacts; it impacts purpose of education; it tends to make education a commodity; and, challenges whose knowledge is used, valued, or taught as well as what language material is taught. Next, I discuss how globalization has affected the practice of education. Four adult learning theories have been chosen and will be described below and their utilization will be discussed. More importantly, the impact (whether globalization is shaping the practice of specific adult education philosophies more than these theories have impacted globalization) will be examined.

Adult learning is a prominent social and economic issue. There are educational demands from the perspectives of upgrading, labour market skills, and personal development (Belanger & Tuinijnman, 1997). Global economic demands create a need for education and particular areas of
expertise – a knowledge economy. Universities are traders of knowledge as a commodity with the movement of students around the world (Coulby, 2005). There are two distinct aspects to the emergence of this knowledge economy that are important to the state and its educational institutions. First is the knowledge the state can generate via its business institutions, universities, its marketability and renewability. Second is the relevance of the knowledge that a society’s workforce can mobilize in economic activity (Coulby, 2005). In the United States and Western Europe (and I would argue Canada, including Ontario), the shift to globalization and the knowledge economy has been accompanied by anxiety about the curriculum and has been associated with a perception of a disconnect between school curriculum and the needs of the workplace (Coulby, 2005).

These concerns about a knowledge economy and where knowledge is developed are bound to influence the adult education philosophies practiced under globalization. Of the many adult education philosophies exist, andragogy, self-directed learning, informal or incidental learning and emotions and imagination were selected on the assumption (by this author) that they were relevant and in practice in contemporary post-secondary education. Before the effect of globalization on adult education can be examined, the tenets of the four philosophies in question must be identified.

Malcolm Knowles (1980) defines andragogy as the “art and science of helping adults learn”. This philosophy challenges the paradigm that adults and children learn the same way and that adults are incapable of learning. In this theory, adults are actively involved and self-directed. Adults need their learning to have current applicability and be problem-focused and expect to use their personal experiences in the learning process (Knowles, 1980). Adult learning is also
motivated by internal factors (Merriam, 2001), facilitated by a comfortable environment and instructors that balance institutional and learner needs (Knowles, 1980).

The second learning theory builds on one of the pillars of andragogy – self-directed learning. Self-directed learning recognizes that although an instructor in a classroom may assist learning, adults also learn systematically throughout their daily lives. Self-directed learning involves critical thinking and extracting meaning from complex situations. As such, cognitive (e.g., self-management and monitoring) and motivational dimensions play a role in this learning theory (Garrison, 1997). Although self-directed learning occurs in unstructured environments, it is relevant in the critical practice of adult education for it has transformative and empowering purposes (Brookfield, 1993). Self-directed learning is not without its challenges, for it is impacted by factors such as time, money and who controls the direction of learning.

Informal and incidental learning, like self-directed learning are not restricted to the classroom and can occur in any environment. Marsick and Watkins (2001) define informal and incidental learning as unstructured, intentional, and unconscious learning that can begin with a trigger. In this learning theory, people interpret new experiences and assessed outcomes. Examples of informal or incidental learning include becoming more adept in using computer software through trial and error, taking dance lessons at a community centre or learning where best to put the tomato plants in your vegetable garden based on past year’s experience.

Perhaps one of the most progressive theories that incorporate the adult into the learning process is emotions and imagination. This philosophy recognizes that emotions and imaginations affect our meaningful learning, a departure from the presumption that learning was shaped and influenced solely by objective and rational factors. Emotions are powerful and can aid or impede learning. Learning can occur anywhere and results from the connection made between our
emotions and imagination and the world around us. Meaningful learning results from the connection between the emotional, imaginative self and social interactions (Dirkx, 2001). Imagination helps connect our inner feelings with external, measurable learning experiences. The individual is integral to the learning process – not just a repository of information (Dirkx, 2001).

Adult education practice in Ontario

To truly see the effects of globalization on education, we must first become acquainted with the current post secondary education practice in Ontario. In Canada, education is primarily a provincial responsibility, provided by government, industry and the private sector. Adult education is provided predominantly by employers, and then split fairly evenly between universities, colleges and private educational institutions (Belanger & Tuijnman, 1997). The federal government has cut support to English and French-speaking adult education bodies and in Ontario, adult education provisions in the school boards have been essentially eliminated, whereas adult education linked to job creation, skills training or economic readjustment is booming (Hall, 2001).

The labour market and global economies are the major reasons for the emphasis on lifelong learning. Increasingly, employers require workers who possess “generic” learning and research skills, thinking skills, and communication skills that allow them to function effectively in new and unfamiliar situations, adapt to changing technologies and jobs, and engage in continuous learning (Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, [MTCU], 1996). This need is translating to the classroom as enrolment in post-secondary institutions has increased. College and university enrolment increased by 47% and 17% respectively between 1984 and 1995. (MTCU, 1996). Humanities experienced the fastest growth of all fields of study in 2005/2006 accounting for 49% of enrolment (The Daily, 2008). Social and behavioural sciences and law;
business, management and public administration had the highest number of registrants whereas
the decline in mathematics, computer and information sciences field continued a long-term trend
and accounted for only 3.5% of total enrolment in 2005-2006, the lowest proportion since 1992
(The Daily, 2008). These requirements are reflected in andragogy and self-directed learning
theories. Adults desire solution-focused education and educators expect students to actively
partake in their learning, as do the participants themselves. Self-directed learning theory is also
evident in Ontario as adults are expected to avail themselves of information, to think critically,
and make meaning in complex situations. Additional evidence of the use of this theory includes
students using the Internet, asking advice and referring to books for knowledge (Peters, 2004).

Government cost cutting in the 1990s led to an emphasis on technology as an alternative
way of delivering education. The federal government cut post-secondary education funding by
$400 million in 1995 and another $2.2 billion in contributions to Ontario health, post-secondary
education and social services in 1997-1998 (MTCU, 1996). These cuts align with self-directed
learning theory – putting the emphasis on the learner taking the initiative for their education.
Adult education must be viewed by government as an investment rather than a cost and consider
the larger social context when calculating cost-effectiveness and making policy decisions
(MTCU, 2005). Some gains have been seen in the 21st century, such as in 2007, when the federal
government announced a one-time injection of $390 million for post-secondary education
(Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, 2007); however, it is difficult to
determine if these were funds redirected from education in the 1990s or a renewed commitment
to adult learning. Business, non-governmental organizations and communities must also do their
share (Rao, 2004). There is much to be done as revenue from non-tuition, non-government
sources, namely the private sector, forms only about 4 per cent of the operating revenue of
colleges and universities (MTCU, 1996). This funding strategy suggests we can anticipate a continued reduction of government funding, increased expectations for individuals to finance their learning and subsidies directed towards “profitable” programs rather than general interest or personal development.

Although employers desire workers with generic learning, the continued real estate and construction boom demands expertise in areas such as electrical, mechanical, formwork and plumbing. This emphasis on practical training or education has amplified the demand for skilled trades, with Canada’s construction boom fuelling a ten percent increase in apprenticeship training program enrolment in 2005 over 2004 (The Daily, 2007).

As resources become increasingly scarce, self-directed learning continues to have a place in Ontario adult education as students are expected to navigate program offerings with little community or institutional direction or support. This emphasis can be seen as fuelling the tension between businesses in the global economy and the needs/pedagogy of adult learners and a significant factor in why emotions and imagination will become increasingly important, since a holistic approach to education is important. Adult education must embrace not only work, but also personal development goals. Emotions and imagination has made little headway into Ontario formal education. It is evident that the market is driving the curricula. Skilled trades’ instruction demands specific, observable tasks be learned. Learning to wire a house or rebuild an engine makes little appeal to emotion or imagination. There is room for this learning theory to be exercised, particularly with employer demand for thinking and communication skills. Emotional intelligence is valuable in occupational settings, but little emphasis is spent on developing it in the classroom. Even though organizational behaviour segments taught in classrooms focus on
this concept or measuring emotional intelligence through a tool but not on investing the time to
tap into our thoughts and feelings.

The demands to do more with less – fewer teachers and reduced funding – have
influenced teaching philosophy. With the increasing enrolments to post-secondary institutions
and shrinking staff-to-student ratios, informal and incidental learning appear will continue to
increase in popularity as they lessen the burden on governments and institutions to mandate
educational programs. Adults are attending non-institutional learning centres, participating in on-
the-job-training and supporting their own personal development. Other factors such as the
demand for learning in later years from social and economic sources are also at play (Belanger &
Tuijnman, 1997). Older adults desire to continue their learning. Although they participate in
formal education, they are quite active in informal education – taking courses and classes such as
gardening, computers, arts and crafts, and learning languages or other subjects that interest them.
It may increasingly become the case that student initiative will be inadequate to ensure
participation in post-secondary education, eroding the social equalizing factor of education, as
only those with financial means to participate will be able to do so.

Evidence of globalization in Ontario

When the economy changes, there will be resulting alterations in society and education.
People feel that government must play a crucial role in promoting the value of adult education to
the public, employers, the business community as well as to potential adult education partners
(MTCU, 2005; Zambeta, 2005). Globalization has given primacy to economic structures, and
adult learning related to job creation or market adaptations has dramatically expanded in the last
ten years. The social demand for adult education has had a similarly dramatic expansion but is
not being responded to as fully (Hall, 2001). People feel that government must play a crucial role
in promoting the value of adult education to the public, employers, the business community as well as to potential adult education partners (MTCU, 2005; Zambeta, 2005). The state must also intervene in adult education if it is to be assessable and must create political strategies to increase the demand for adult education amongst those on the periphery as well as responding to the additional demands of those already engaged in lifelong learning (Rubenson, 2001).

Globalization in education should mean that there is one ultimate goal to be supported by general education in all countries – how to make citizens able to understand both the local and global societies well enough to learn to live together and act as responsible citizens in local and global terms (Madhukar, 2003). This will require us to embrace change in order to thrive in this global environment as well as being capable of surviving future paradigm shifts.

Recommendations

We can get to a place where philosophy impacts the worldview by recalling Nyerene’s statement about the possibility of change. The time is ripe for a rising global effort to create a dramatically new path and to look at what roles adult educators and adult education may play (Hall, 2001). Sinnott (1999) suggests universities could be both transformative and relevant in the 21st century, if they develop the human resources of students and not just ideas or technology. A holistic approach to learners is required, focusing on the physical, emotional biological, interpersonal, cultural, spiritual and economic aspects of problems and learners rather than just the intellectual. New learning environments are needed – problem-focused “campuses” located across the globe and focusing on one specific problem (e.g., poverty) and supported by research or service “parks” selling goods or services related to that problem.

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities’ 2005 report reviewing the Ontario adult education system recommended a focus on the diverse population, and recognized the
varied learning goals of adults – from employment, personal development, to increased independence and that curricula were cooperatively developed and based on learner’s goals. Interdisciplinary teaching methods in an environment where learners receive support to overcome participation barriers, and that learning environments were respectful of adults’ special or cultural needs are also part of this vision for change.

As a final component in keeping adult education philosophy out of the shadow of globalization, the government should adopt the following recommendations for adult education: implement a province-wide outreach strategy to engage learners and educators; create clear routes for adults to achieve their learning goals and support partnerships amongst community, volunteer, and delivery agencies and employers; (MTCU, 2005).

Conclusion

Adult education has a long history in Canada. The research supports that globalization has surely impacted education in Ontario. Change is possible and is evident in adult education. Some core values have been maintained such as the social value of education and work-related learning, however, the level of funding has declined. Andragogy, self-directed learning and informal and incidental learning are practiced in Canada and will become increasingly prevalent as adults are expected to take the initiative for their educational needs in a global society. Emotions and imagination however, appears to be on the sidelines, particularly in globally motivated education. Learning expectations have clearly changed – adult education is no longer solely about social policy or citizenship education. Business as well as government expects adult learning to translate into skills to contribute to local and global economies. Personal development is not frowned upon; it is just unlikely to be well subsidized.
References


