**Synthesis Essay**

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A good learning should involve good understanding of the subject studied. Good understanding does not necessarily mean mere analysis of data and theory collected but deep understanding of the notions/ theories/ numbers in order for the student to be able to apply it in a certain case.

Good learning comes with the learning centered approach, which focuses primarily on the learning process and the characteristics of those who help the learner to learn. I have teaching experience both in formal working context (Foundation) and in informal (Private lessons), however, presently I am mastering my knowledge and skills on Education through MAED program of MSU. I learn new and old ways, methods, techniques and theories on how to provide effective education. Based on my opinion, a good starting point in my trial to provide the best education I can to my future students is, first of all, to situate myself as a learner in this program.

I consider myself an adult because I have studied, worked and arrived at some point in my life where I am responsible for my choices and myself. It is not that I am too old- actually I am only twenty- three- but it is precisely what the authors of the book *Learning in Adulthood* are trying to pursue. The learning that I am obtaining as an adult is shaped by the specific life context and the society that I am living in. Likewise, in this program, I can be considered as an adult learner since I have significant life responsibilities beyond that of the role. My learning is something that I have chosen based on the demands of my preferred practice setting. It is a kind of self- directed learning (a term that I have studied in depth in the course EAD860; The Concept of A Learning Society).

From September 2014 I have been accepted as a PhD student in the United Kingdom and, therefore, my whole practice setting will be based on teaching adults. Students who have left Secondary School (High School) and entered Higher Education will be my main area of expertise. While studying my Master degree in Education (Bath University, Michigan State University), I came across the notion of international mindedness; a term that caught my attention. Since I was and actually I am an international student within United Kingdom, I realized how important is to develop such concept and adopt it to each and every University classroom. From Engineering to Law, and from Medicine to Social Sciences, every student should be taught by educators to be international minded. We are going through a century that international education cannot stand as an option but rather as a precondition. International education, global citizenship education, peace and conflict resolution education are all part of what is used, here, as international mindedness.

Searching and researching for a unique and well-agreed definition of international mindedness is hard to realize. Literature keeps using interchangeably the term international mindedness with ‘globally minded’ ‘intercultural understanding’ or ‘global citizenship’ (Cause L.: 2).

The concept of international mindedness has been linked frequently with international education. Hill considers the former to be the key concept associated with the latter. Mainly, international mindedness came as a term serving the need to prepare students of today to develop behaviors and attributes that cultivate ethical and inclusive intercultural relations.

What this thesis aims is not to find a singular way to teach international mindedness. As Haywood suggested; there is no one correct way to understand or teach international mindedness. The actual aim of the research is to propose multiple ways to encourage a general predisposition to international mindedness. Those ways should leave enough space to students to develop their own realization of international mindedness. Furthermore, what appears to be happening in some of this literature is a developing ‘acceptance’ that international mindedness is too complex to describe. Human beings have always been engaged in learning. They have learnt how to survive, live peacefully with each other and many more. While the pedagogical model emphasizes content, which is determined, organized, delivered and assessed by the teacher, the andragogical emphasizes process.

I believe that andragogy is a valid perspective of adult learning and very contemporary I would say (a concept i came across through EAD861; Adult Learning). This is the main reason why I have chosen as a general theoretical framework binding my research. It depicts and/or represents the model of the educator as facilitator that sets climate for learning of students and assessing their own learning. In andragogy there is no any traditional form of school teaching (pedagogy). Many contemporary theories of Progressivism and Developmentalism are emphasizing what andragogy strives for. Students should be more independent and self- directed. Students are not waiting the instruction by their teacher but they are planning, delivering and evaluating their own learning. The teacher just acts as a initiator in the above learning procedure. This notion of educator as initiator is the one that I will adopt in the description of the educator’s stance towards international mindedness.

As I have argued above, I strongly believe in the validity of andragogy as many educational institutions and contemporary theories have stressed the need for a global shift in education from direct instruction to self- directedness and experience, which is what andragogy strives for. The reason why I have chosen first year Undergraduate students is because they are new to University teaching format and their past experiences, ethnic backgrounds and cultures are exposed directly. Even though all students enter the same educational program; past experiences, social, and cultural background determine their variation in terms of their learning styles.

There are a variety of variables that may be influencing the learning environment that should be taken into account for the effectiveness of the research. This is the main reason why I have limited my research in, precisely, first year Undergraduate students within Derby University. I have chosen that target group in order to improve the efficacy of my research. Having a large number of Universities under my research felt like I would minimize the preciseness of my research outcomes. The criterion for the division of my target population is their age. I have made this choice because their age is a good starting point in order to determine their current vacancy. For example, students up to 20 years old seem to just have left School/ College and entered higher education. From ages of 20- 50s are adults who may have left their current vacancy to pursue what they really want from their lives (self- directed learning).

Statistics acquitted within the University will assist on finding those facts and figures. My purpose is not to place them under a single category but rather explore the magnitude of their attributes and characteristics. Therefore, the individuals that I am focusing on are young adults (under 20 years old) and adults (20- 50) who have made their choices on what they prefer to study at the University level and have just entered it. Dividing my target population into age categories will assist me in find the appropriate teaching methodologies and strategies to promote international education. As an adult learner, I learnt to distinguish the different types of teaching. More accurately, in the UK I had been introduced- as a student- to the so-called more ‘didactic teaching’ in which learners merely become passive recipients of information. Now, as an adult learner in Michigan State University, I have been introduced to a totally new teaching format where reflection, discussion and critical thinking are the main modes.

Another perspective, which I found as an adult learner is being ‘intrinsically motivated’. This is a term I came across in the European Union’s project called Asset when they tried to define the characteristics of Adult learners for this particular project. What is meant by that term is, once adapted to my perspective, is that I am motivated due to a need, interest and desire to learn. This need has to do with the career and objectives that I want to pursue in my life. Considering myself as an adult learner, in a more practical stance, I have observed that through democratic, participatory and collaborative environments I become a more active learner. More precisely, I have passed from the phase of instruction based learning and/ or being lectured to a learning format that keeps me actively involved with minimal passive learning experiences.

At this point, it is worth noting that the strategies and communication that gives me the opportunity to achieve a better learning do not always coincide with what happens in reality. More analytically, my ideal learning experience consists of all the above but, in reality, job obligations, life demands and the distance (time difference) made it hard to realize. This does not mean that effective and thoughtful discussion does not occur but certain obligations coming in adulthood hold back such case. In other words, such conditions holds back and impede my learning. As I mentioned at the very beginning of the paper, I consider myself an adult because I undertake certain responsibilities that I am wholly responsible as well as the fact that I had worked full time. Now, as an adult learner I consider myself since I have chosen a program that fulfills me as person. I am learning something valuable for my future work. I have learning needs related to current life situations and future expectations. Precisely, this essay will act as a tool to define myself as an adult learner in the rather broad and vague spectrum covering such term. Afterwards, I will identify the most appropriate means and approaches for my forthcoming formal teaching setting (Derby University) involving predominately adult learners.

I have mentioned above the contribution that EAD860 had in my further learning around Education. Here, just before the conclusion, i will mention two more courses which affected my thinking to a greater extent. Starting my MAED program i was located as a major in the Educational Leadership. Through EAD801, I learnt the basic principles underlying such notion and applied it to my teaching practice setting. Moreover, ownership (accountability, efficacy, sense of belonging, understanding), strategic redundancy and evidence use in decision- making are the essential ingredients of effective and functional leadership scheme in any form of organization. Being accountable and efficacious, provide the followers/ staff with a sense of belonging composes the grounds for effective and adaptive leadership. When the Mother holds herself with the title of accountable, the same time she composes the grounds for her leadership. More analytically, the application of clear rules (accountability), enhancement of dialogue (efficacy), sense of belonging and the understanding of all those values by the followers/staff are critical elements for effective leadership. The leader, therefore, should have all those values in order to lead adaptive change, manage the environment for the change to occur and enforce motivation among the group/ followers for that change to mature adaptively and not technically.

Nowadays, education is moving into many different venues in which learning materials are available through the Internet. Learning is not restricted any more to home, farm, or school. This engagement with learning activities can occur anywhere and anytime. This connectivity is spreading rapidly. EAD882 gave me the opportunity to explore this emerging issue and consider it as an important factor for my prospective academic career. In other words, the location within education takes place has expanded and learning can occur in any social environment where wireless connection is on; this is something that i should be well aware on. For instance, references of students are available in which they argue that they do not read books. They do not have time to do so, moreover, they use reliable sources like Sparknotes to get their essays done on time.

The mission of educators is to prepare students to communicate in this emerging world using different media with people who do not share the same cultural assumptions. Students need to learn to communicate in all these different contexts. Educators should work to integrate as well as manage these new communities of interest technologies into their classroom. To conclude, I need to know why I am learning something with specific and concrete objectives to be considered as an adult learner. This is what distinguishes me from other types of learners. I am studying to fulfill some objectives and become better as an educator. Definitely, I have not chosen a subject that just interests me- it is a subject that enhances my career objectives and fulfills me as person overall. I am, currently, an adult learner, studying and researching how adults learn and how I could be a more effective educator.