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A Critical Review of Reflectivity, Andragogy, and Confucianism

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A Critical Review of Reflectivity, Andragogy, and Confucianism

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A Critical Review of Reflectivity, Andragogy, and Confucianism

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ABSTRACT

The link between Confucian humanism, Mezirow's theory of reflectivity, and the convergence of a worldwide concept of andragogy (the art and science of helping adults learn) articulated by Savicevic, Knowles, Mezirow, Henschke, and Cooper is explicit. While Confucian humanism emphasizes inner experience, Mezirow's theory has increasingly developed to integrate inner reflection expressed through transformed perspectives and decision and action, and andragogy has focused on facilitation of collaborative interaction and self-direction in learning involving the whole person. To appreciate the basis of these three schools of theory, this chapter presents a discussion of these originating theorists. As an introductory thought, the following quotations illustrate how Confucius' thought has long been valued and aspired to in the pursuit of reflection and wisdom. Rather than the routine or inattentive action that tends to dominate our lives in the 21st century, this widespread 2000 year-old Eastern philosophy and tradition has been synonymous with questioning the meanings and assumptions of one's surroundings and values. In addition to advancing our understanding of transformative learning, andragogy, and an integrated model of reflective thought, the authors hope this chapter will stir further international research in reflective learning and the intersections of Eastern philosophies with Western traditions and philosophies, as well as those that bridge both traditions. Worldwide, there are many rich traditions; if our understanding of teaching and learning can build upon our understanding of one another, we can open new doors for appreciation, insight, interaction, and inquiry.

Study without thought is labor lost; thought without study is perilous. By nature men are nearly alike, but through experience they grow wide apart. Those who are born wise are the highest type of men; those who become wise through learning come next; those who are dull-witted and yet strive to learn come after that. Those who are dull-witted and yet make no effort to learn are the lowest type of men (as cited in Chai & Chai, 1965, pp. 44-45). Confucius or Kong Fuzi (551-479 BC)

INTRODUCTION

Since Mezirow (1978) proposed his theory of transformative learning, which he based on his interpretation of Habermasian critical theory, interest in the theory has grown. Concurrently, Mezirow (1981) sought to coalesce his own ideas into a critical theory of adult learning and education which included self-directed learning and a charter for andragogy, although this fact is generally overlooked in discussion of transformative learning (or, theory of reflectivity as it is known in Europe). Over the years many articles, books (Cranton, 1994; King, 2005; Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1997; Mezirow, 2000), journals and even conferences, e.g., The International Transformative Learning Conference, 1998-2012, have examined, critiqued, and further developed this theory. This research has emerged within the field of adult education and provided a framework to support further detailed analysis of andragogy and to demonstrate how this theory has affected the development of adult learning thought (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Notwithstanding the context of transformational learning, Mezirow (1981) expanded his adult learning and education perspective to include ten core concepts, which he called a charter for andragogy. Thus, the educator could enhance adult learners' capability to function as self-directed learners in the following ways:

- Decrease learner dependency.
- Help learners use learning resources.
- Help learners define his/her learning needs.
- Help learners take responsibility for learning.
- Organize learning that is relevant.
- Foster learner decision-making and choices.
- Encourage learner judgment and integration.
- Facilitate problem-posing and problem-solving.
- Provide a supportive learning climate.
- Emphasize experiential methods.

In his dissertation research, Suanmali (1981), a doctoral student of Mezirow, reported concurrence with these ten core concepts on the part of 174 adult educators, including professors and practitioners. However, in the years that followed Suanmali's (1981) research some concern has arisen over the belief that discussion of transformative learning has been too strongly focused on a rational perspective (Dirkx, 1997), a western perspective (King, 2005), and too narrowly within the formal field of adult education alone (King, 2004). Indeed, the discussion in Canada of transformative learning (O'Sullivan, 1999; O'Sullivan, Morrell & O'Connor, 2002) and in Europe (Jarvis, 1987) has often had a different focus than that of the discussion in the U.S. In Europe, adult theorists introduced Mezirow's work as "the theory of reflectivity" (Jarvis, 1987) as this was the focal point of the work; distinguishing it in its early years from the contemporaries of the behaviorists.

We present this article and model by which the similarities and differences among Mezirow's (1978) original theory of transformative learning; the worldwide history, philosophy and major themes in andragogy (Henschke, 2009, 2010, 2011a & 2011b; Henschke and Cooper, 2007; Savicevic, 2008; Knowles, 1990,); and the long-standing philosophy of Confucius can be considered. The need for such a model arises from a

sense of our global connections and community, the need and urgency for multicultural perspectives, the venue of different academic disciplines, varied philosophical foundations in social radical pedagogies, and the insights garnered from andragogy's world-wide history and philosophy.

It is from this multinational perspective that one of the authors, Wang, schooled and familiar with Eastern philosophical traditions, was introduced to Mezirow's work and through which we approached this dialogue together, on a potentially vibrant common ground of reflectivity and laced it with the world-wide threads of andragogy. All three schools of thought; Confucius' reflection, Mezirow's reflection, and andragogy's facilitation, emphasize the process by which adults critically reflect in order to foster a broader perspective on learning and action. From each of these perspectives, the process leads to the creation of new knowledge via critical reflection. Though the many linkages and commonalities among these theories merit further exploration, very different perspectives and pathways are evident and they, too, merit consideration.

Although the means of creating internal critical reflection differs based on the traditions (Western practice vs. Confucius), similarities are evident. We will demonstrate what few scholars realize – despite its popularity, Mezirow's theory of reflectivity may be considered to have originated in the seminal Confucian humanism. Though humanism is discussed in relation to the theory of reflectivity and transformative learning, the chief contributor of humanism, Confucius, seems to have been forgotten by Western scholars. This is not an uncommon occurrence as linking Eastern and Western literature, thought and philosophy is a rarely attempted. Education theory as a social science is built upon the foundation of philosophical thought. Western traditions tend to subsume Eastern traditions in the literature and deepen the fracture between them as the Eastern traditions become buried beneath Western orthodoxies. Nonetheless, andragogy in its global setting includes some elements of perspective transformation, Confucianism, and the inner reflection that accompanies facilitation of interactive and collaborative learning.

Bringing to light Confucius' humanistic assertions regarding learning and reflection and their role in inspiring Mezirow's theory and andragogy is critical if we are to understand the process of critical reflection. The fundamental theory of andragogy has antecedents that harken back to ancient Hebrew, Greek and Roman times, while the theory of transformative learning is relatively new.

The purpose of this article is neither to study Confucian concepts in a contemporary perspective nor to present an analysis of Mezirow's critical reflection within transformative learning. Nor is it exclusively to advance a broader view of andragogy. Rather, it is an attempt to examine Mezirow's evolving theory of reflectivity by contrasting it with what was advanced by Confucius twenty-five centuries ago in China and to benefit from that knowledge as we bridge these two schools of thought. Indeed, rather than providing definitive answers, this article poses many questions as we probe connections and possibilities among the theories of origin of andragogy. In addition to advancing our understanding of transformative learning, we hope this article will stir further international research in reflective learning and transformative learning specifically, and the intersections of Eastern and Western philosophies, traditions and educational theories more broadly. We hope to inspire our colleagues to work to intersect different multicultural perspectives with our knowledge and benefit the entire body of work by their juxtaposition.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As we consider the theoretical framework of this proposal, we are reminded of some basic understandings and comparisons between human and animal learning. While animals learn via reflexes

and behavior modification; humans also learn through reflection. Specifically, adult learners are faced with learning problems and these learning problems perplex and challenge the mind so to make belief uncertain (Dewey, 1933, p. 13). To Dewey, it is this perplexity that leads to reflective thinking, and in Western traditions of adult learning it has been promoted by Schon and also Freire in the 1970s (Argyris & Schon 1974; Freire, 1970, 1973; Schon, 1983) Mezirow in the late 1970s through the 1990s (Mezirow, 1978, 1981, 1990, 1991, 1997, 2000) Savicevic in the late 20th century and early 21st century (1991, 2006a, 2006b, 2008) and Knowles in the later part of the 20th century (1970, 1975, 1980, 1989, 1990, 1996).

In comparison, the Chinese tradition of humanistic thought date back twenty-five centuries to Confucius (Elias & Merriam, 1995). At that time, humanism emerged in China in the form of self-criticism, which in the tradition is characterized as "inner digging and drilling", (like that of a well) that necessarily leads to self-awareness not as a mental construct, but, rather, as an experienced reality. To Confucius, learning could not occur without silent reflection (Confucius, 500BCEc).

In the late 20th century, Mezirow considered both Confucius' inner experience and external situation when he developed three types of reflection and seven levels of reflectivity. . A detailed analysis of Confucian humanism and Mezirow's theory of reflectivity may shed more light on the much-debated issue of how adults learn. Further, this analysis may equip adult educators with necessary knowledge and skills to better help adult learners in this knowledge society and information age.

ANALYSIS

This manuscript provides a careful review, analysis and comparison of the literature related to Confucian humanism, Mezirow's theory of reflectivity, and the convergence of a number of scholars on the theory of andragogy. *These literatures repre-sent major traditions of thought and can provide provocative insight and stir additional inquiry regarding these separate yet today necessarily intersecting schools of thought and practice.* Understanding this social phenomenon through these philosophies and their related traditions will help teachers and learners reach beyond their individual, culture-bound perspectives of teaching, learning and worldviews. This study is uniquely positioned in that these extensions and transformations of understanding are at the very root of reflective thought, so that our analysis is a metacognitive analysis of our very reflective thought, collaborative / interactive / facilitative, and transformative itself. That is, we are using the method we are studying.

Miles and Huberman (1994) defined the literature review as largely an investigative and critical process during which the researchers gradually made sense of a social phenomenon by contrasting, comparing, cataloguing and classifying the data reported in accounts of the object of study. The purpose of the literature review was to provide a framework for establishing the importance of the study as well as a benchmark for comparing the results of a study with other findings (Creswell, 2003). The reason for this study was to establish an in-depth understanding of Confucian humanism and Mezirow's theory of reflectivity to appreciate adult learning from a different perspective.

CONFUCIUS' SILENT REFLECTION

Confucius' major concern lies in his quest for self-realization. He reminds his followers (adult learners) to be authentic persons that are to be truthful to both their selfhood and their sociality. Confucius focuses on the cultivation of the inner experience, both as a way of self-knowledge and as a method of true communion with the other (Tu, 1979, p. 103). Within the Confucian tradition, to realize one's inner self one should be completely free from four things: arbitrariness

of opinion, dogmatism, obstinacy, and egotism. Most importantly two major tenets emerge: (1) Confucian thought of learning emphasizes meditation to control oneself and (2) there needs to be an internal integration between self and nature. The learning process that facilitates the development of this meditative and integrated self is to be continually extended through dialogue with others within many different structures of human relationships.

As Zhu (1992) explains, Confucian philosophy is recorded in the *Four Books: Daxue (The Great Learning)* (Confucius 500BCEb*), Lunyu (The Analects)* (Confucius 500BCEa), *Zhongyong (The Way of the Mean)* (Confucius 500BCEc), and *Mengzi (The Mencius)* (Mencius 500BCE) (p. 20). *The Analects* and *The Mencius* are the sayings of Confucius and Mencius, respectively. The religious orthodoxy of the writings is carefully traced through the centuries, as seen in this article's Appendix, The Four Books Tradition of Orthodoxy.

It is literature of *The Great Learning* that advocates eight steps that should be followed to reach one's sagehood. In this journey, the "rectification of the mind" is a crucial step to extending knowledge of the self (Confucius, 500BCEc). The rectification of the mind is the phrase used to refer to the meditative practice that cultivates and furthers the devotee's pursuit of self-control and integration with nature. Based on the philosophy and teachings of *The Great Learning*, self-directed learning is the primary adult learning method used in the quest to become fully human or a sage.

According to this tradition, the integrated development of the sage's self-concept is not possible without silent reflection. According to Confucius, silent reflection is not a cognitive process isolated from the rest of the human being, rather it involves the entire "body and mind" (as cited in Tu, 1979, p. 103). Derived from the meanings of Confucius' *Four Books,* the original meaning of silent reflection refers to a deep examination of one's being rather than a thorough

investigation of some external object, process or philosophy (as cited in Zhu, 1992, p. 20). Of course, this mental activity involves more than the comprehension of something beyond the Self, it requires a continuous process of internalization, that is, reflection, questioning, and seeking to integrate into harmony a resulting change of the understanding of the Self. Within the Confucian tradition it is widely understood and acclaimed that, "Study without thought is labor lost; thought without study is perilous." Upon consideration of the theories of reflectivity from Western thought, it can be seen that these same perspectives are aspired to and appreciated.

MEZIROW'S THEORY OF REFLECTIVITY

Since Knowles (1970, 1973, 1975) popularized principles of adult learning in the early 1970's in North America, no other theory has sparked more interest and research in the field of adult education than the theory of transformative learning, or reflectivity (as it is referred to in Europe (Jarvis, 1987) proposed by Mezirow (1978, 1990, 1991, 2000). This theory of reflectivity is described by Mezirow as having ten stages that progress from a characteristic "disorienting dilemma" that uses an experience of imbalance in one's life as an opportunity for considering new perspectives. From this new vantage point one may continue to examine unfamiliar views, critically reflect and evaluate them, test and explore new perspectives as one's own, make choices as to whether to adopt those positions and finally perhaps reintegrate these new perspectives (King, 2005).

The central focal point and power of transformative learning is fundamental change in perspective that transforms the way that an adult understands and interacts with his or her world. Reflective thinking is the foundational activity that supports and cultivates such "perspective transformations." The field that studies reflec-

tivity has sought to describe and understand this focal experience of perspective transformation through multiple explanations and terms. Over the years as the dialogue, literature and research developed, the vocabulary has described this broad, yet foundational, change of understanding as new "meaning perspectives" (Mezirow, 1978), new "frames of reference" (Mezirow, 2000), new "habits of mind" (Mezirow, 1997) and new worldviews (King, 2002, 2003).

As described by King (2005) within an adult education setting this theoretical approach recognizes that learners who enter the educational process may realize a reawakening of their intellectual side. As they engage in learning that includes critical reflection, they may question their beliefs, values, and assumptions and begin to discover new perspectives. As they carefully contemplate and weigh their purposes and futures from different vantage points, they may also gain confidence in their abilities and from this confidence be empowered to try new philosophies, beliefs, careers, or other ideologies and experiences.

ANDRAGOGY AS FACILITATIVE, COLLABORATIVE, AND INTERACTIVE

The term 'andragogy', as far as we know, was first authored by Alexander Kapp (1833), a German high school teacher. In the book entitled '*Plato's Erziehungslehre'* (*Plato's Educational Ideas*) he describes the lifelong necessity to learn. He begins the book with a discussion on childhood. However, from page 241 to 300 he turns attention to adulthood – Andragogy or Education in the man's age (a replica of this may be viewed at http://www.andragogy.net). Kapp argues that education, self-reflection, and educating the character are the first values in human life. He then refers to vocational education of the healing profession, soldier, educator, orator, ruler, and men as the family father. Here we find patterns which repeatedly

can be found in the ongoing history of andragogy: Included and combined are, the education of inner, subjective personality ('character'); outer, objective competencies (what later is discussed under 'education vs. training'); and, that learning happens not only through teachers, but also through self-reflection and life experience, which makes it more than 'teaching adults.' The term andragogy lay fallow for many decades, perhaps because adult education was being conducted without a specific name to designate what it was.

Nonetheless, in the 1920s Germany became a place for building theory and another German resurrected the term (Reischmann, 2005). Rosenstock-Huessy (1925) posed andragogy as the only method for the German people and Germany, dispirited and degenerated in 1918 after World War I, to regenerate themselves and their country. He suggested that all adult education (andragogy), if it is to achieve anything original that shapes man, which arises from the depths of time, would have to proceed from the suffering which the lost war brought them. Historical thinking is a fundamental dimension of andragogy, in that past events are to be analyzed for what can be learned from them so that past failures might not be repeated. Thus, Andragogy is not merely 'better' as an education method for this purpose, it is a necessity.

About the same time, Lindeman (1926) from the USA traveled to Germany and became acquainted with the Workers Education Movement. He was the first to bring andragogy to America. Although he clearly stated that andragogy was the method for teaching adults, the term did not take hold in the new land until many years later. Lindeman presented an interesting piece on the method for teaching adults. Basically he asserted in his first use of the word andragogy, that the method for teaching adults is discussion, which is different from the teaching of children. Knowles (1970, 1990) provided the most articulate expression of andragogy from the American perspective. The structure of the theory is comprised of two conceptual foundations: The learning theory and

the design theory. The learning theory is based upon adults and their desire to become and/or to express themselves as capable human beings and has six components: (a) Adults need to know a reason that makes sense to them, for whatever they need to learn, (b) They have a deep need to be self-directing and take responsibility for themselves, (c) Adults enter a learning activity with a quality and volume of experience that is a resource for their own and others' learning, (d) They are ready to learn when they experience a need to know, or be able to do something to perform more effectively in some aspect of their life, (e) Adults' orientation to learning is around life situations that are task-, issue-or problem centered, for which they seek solutions, and (f) Adults are motivated much more internally than externally. Knowles' (1990) conceptual foundation of the design theory is based in a process, and is not dependent upon a body of content, but helps the learner acquire whatever content is needed.

There are eight components of the design process: (a) Preparing the learners for the program; (b) setting a climate that is conducive to learning (physically comfortable and inviting; and psychologically – mutually respectful, collaborative, mutually trustful, supportive, open and authentic, pleasurable and human); (c) involving learners in mutual planning; (d) involving learners in diagnosing their learning needs; (e) involving learners in forming their learning objectives; (f) involving learners in designing learning plans; (g) helping learners carry out their learning plans; and, (h) involving learners in evaluating their learning outcomes. Active involvement seems to be the watchword of Knowles' (thus American) version of andragogy, and each step of the andragogical learning process (Knowles 1970, 1972, 1980, 1989a, 1989b). Savicevic (1991, 1999) was the most articulate in expressing European Andragogy. He provided a critical consideration of andragogical concepts in ten European Countries – five western (German, French, Dutch, British, Finnish), and five eastern (Soviet, Czech-Slovak, Polish, Hungarian, Yugoslav). This comparison showed common roots but results in five varying schools of thought: (a) Whether andragogy is parallel to or subsumed under pedagogy in the general science of education; (b) Whether agology (instead of andragogy) is understood as a sort of integrative science which not only studied the process of education and learning but also other forms of guidance and orientation; (c) whether andragogy prescribes how teachers and students should behave in educational and learning situations; (d) the possibility of founding andragogy as a science is refuted; and (e) that endeavors have been made to found andragogy as a fairly independent scientific discipline. Savicevic (1999) clearly aligned himself with the fifth school of thought in that this research aims toward establishing the origin and development of andragogy as a discipline, the subject of which is the study of education and learning of adults in all its forms of expression. The primary critical element in European andragogy is that an adult accompanies or assists one or more adults to become a more refined and competent adult, and that there should be differences in the aims of andragogy and pedagogy (assisting a child to become an adult). Likewise, there should be differences in the relationship between a teacher and adult pupils and the relationship between a teacher and children. Savicevic (2006a) expressed his realization that almost 50 years of experience with andragogical ideas acquired in different social, cultural and educational environments, are reflected through the prism of his personal experience. Very importantly, he also observed that since his first visit to the USA in 1966, up through 2006, the identifiable trace of andragogy on USA universities is that there had not been a single serious study on adult education and learning that did not refer to andragogy as a conception. Savicevic (2006b) reflected about his perception of Knowles' position in sustaining andragogy over the long range of its history into the future:

Forty years in development of a science is not a long or ignorable period. I met professor Knowles four decades ago and argued on term and on concept of andragogy. Since then, the term and the concept of andragogy enlarged and became rooted in the American professional literature. There is no doubt that Knowles contributed to it, not only by his texts, but with his spoken word and lectures. He was a 'masovik', i.e. a lecturer on mass events. He told me that he lectured in 10,000 visitor stadiums; as if inspired by an ancient agonistic spirituality! His contribution to the dissemination of andragogical ideas throughout the USA is huge.

The history of andragogy will put him on a meritorious place in the development of this scientific discipline. (p. 20)

Houle (1996), in talking about Knowles' work in andragogy said that it remains the most learner-centered of all patterns of adult educational programming. He also added a number of other things. Knowles kept evolving, enlarging, and revising his point of view and therefore became something of a moving target, particularly since he was intimately involved with numerous projects at every level of magnitude in both customary and unusual settings all over the world. He could bring to discussions and debates a wealth of experience that his opponents could not match. In addition, some of his followers developed variant conceptions of andragogy, thereby enlarging the discourse. Knowles' idea on andragogy had application to a wide variety of settings.

Henschke (2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b), one of Knowles' doctoral graduates from Boston University traces the world-wide history and philosophy of Andragogy through 15 distinct eras and even discovers that some of andragogy's antecedent roots reach back into ancient Hebrew, Greek and Roman times. Six major themes that provide a foundation for Andragogy have emerged and been identified: Evolution of the Term; Historical Antecedents Shaping the Concept; Comparison of American and European Understandings; Popularizing and Sustaining the American and World-Wide Concept; Practical Applications; and, Theory, Research, and Definition. All of this came out of the discovery of and reflection on more than 400 English Language documents addressing andragogy in various countries.

As if seeking to culminate and bring together all these valiant efforts, Savicevic (2006b. 2008) reflects extensively and thoroughly traces the panorama of the historical converging and diverging of ideas on andragogy in various countries. He dispels the notion of andragogy being part of pedagogy, but asserts that andragogy arose and emerged because of conflicts with some ideas surrounding pedagogy. He seeks to help lay a scientific research foundation for andragogy being the studying of the learning and education of adults, and declares the 21st century as a century of adult learning. Thus, he outlines what historical and comparative researchers tell us; emphasizes change of the paradigm from education to learning; provides a critical consideration of the pedagogy vs. andragogy relationship; and, highlights the convergence and divergence in the contemporary concepts of andragogy.

CONFUCIUS' SILENT REFLECTION COMPARED

As Jarvis (1987) describes, Mezirow's theory of reflectivity is an important stage in the development of adult learning theory (p. 92). The power of this theory lies in the possibility of creating new knowledge and different techniques. In today's Knowledge Society and Information Age critical reflection and analysis holds one of the keys to successful learning. Although Mezirow (1978) never discussed Confucius in a study of eighty-three women returning to college in twelve different programs, he very clearly states that the roots of his theory lie in Habermas's humanism and

critical social theory. Although Confucius never claimed that he had himself attained sagehood, his ultimate concern was not to become a Confucianist, but to become a genuine human being, a sage. Therefore, he prescribed "self-realization" as the ultimate goal of every learner. This goal is not only mirrored in Mezirow's theory but also in that of another widely popular Western educational psychology theory: Maslow and his theory of self-actualization (Maslow, 1954).

With this brief consideration of how these different traditions gravitate towards the similar goals of what Confucius terms sagehood, this section provides Confucius' description of how the pathway is experienced. To achieve the goal of sagehood, adult learners must "travel" the way of Confucius as a standard of inspiration:

- At fifteen, I set my heart upon learning.
- At thirty, I established myself in accordance with ritual.
- At forty, I no longer had perplexities.
- At fifty, I knew the Mandate of Heaven.
- At sixty, I was at ease with whatever I heard.
- At seventy, I could follow my heart's desire without transgressing the boundaries of right (as cited in Tu, 1979, p. 46).

To date, critical reflection first appeared in Confucius' doctrines of learning in the form of self-criticism. Confucius claims that self-criticism is far from being simply a heuristic device, that is, only to search for meaning; instead, he asserts that the pursuits should include improvement of the self, even in ordinary responsibilities. At the same time, learning for self-realization occurs when learners probe more deeply within their personal knowledge about how to be human; learners need to transform their lives into meaningful existences.

Confucius' definition of learning poses a challenge to Western modes of investigation of external experiences. To Confucius, learning is both much more than the acquisition of empirical knowledge and more than another method of internalizing the proper manner of behavior in society. Confucius' definition of learning focuses on the cultivation of the inner experience so that learners can deepen their knowledge about how to be human and transform their lives into meaningful existences. As for critical reflection, Confucius describes it as follows, "to learn without silent reflection is labor in vain; to think without learning is desolation." Explicit in this statement is that the importance of learning is possible through intense reflection characterized by the Confucian phrase and metaphor of inner "digging and drilling," which corresponds to Chinese peasants ancient work in digging salt mines (Kurlansky, 2003).

Unlike Western scholars, Confucius suggested that to learn through silent reflection is not to truly comprehend an external truth. Instead, silent reflection is a way of examining, "tasting," comprehending, understanding, confirming, and verifying the quality of one's life. Underlying this process of integrated effort to reflect deeply, "digging and drilling," necessarily leads to an awareness of the self not as a mental construct but as an experienced reality. In Confucius' concept of "inner experience" conveys the meaning of involving the whole person. Thus, he characterizes knowledge as the "learning of the body and mind," which not only articulates the points, but further explains the concept of Confucian understanding as the way of becoming a genuine person.

Later, Confucius' writings indicate, "I won't teach a man who is not eager to learn, nor will I explain to one incapable of forming his own ideas. Nor have I anything more to say to those who, after I have made clear one corner of the subject, cannot deduce the other three." Implicit in the above statement is that unless reflection occurs, the teacher does not want to help a learner learn. The Confucian perspective on learning and reflection may be summarized in three proposals:

- Learning results from reflection.
- Those who are incapable of reflection are less capable of learning.
- Hence, growth and development cannot emerge.

Alexander Kapp, the person who coined the beginnings of the term and concept, andragogy, reaches back into the ancient times of Confucius and argued that education, self-reflection, and educating the character are the first values in human life (Reischmann, 2005).

MEZIROW'S THEORY OF REFLECTIVITY COMPARED

In considering a comparison of Mezirow's theory with Confucian thought on a deeper level, the concept of the "authentic person," or to reach sagehood, provides an additional dimension of understanding. To be Confucian is to become an authentic person. An authentic person must have no arbitrariness of opinion, no dogmatism, no obstinacy, and no egotism (Confucius, 500 BCEb). This sagehood cannot be realized without the rectification of the mind or self-criticism. To Confucius, meditation and self-control help adult learners reach their highest excellence.

Mezirow's and others' exploration of the theory of reflectivity and transformative learning led him to a position very similar to the Confucius' focus on "inner experience." However, it should be noted that these explanations on adult learners' making sense or meaning of their experiences included not only an "inner experience", but also external experiences that may interact with one's inner experience. King and Wright (2003, p. 102) further recognize this position by saying that more than a "change of mind," perspective transformations entail fundamental reframing of how individuals understand and conceptualize their worlds.

Although Confucius was the first to define reflection twenty-five centuries ago, Mezirow should be credited with categorizing three types of reflection and seven levels of reflectivity. These types and levels of reflection help adult educators discern how adults learn. Western scholars have taken the inner experience promoted and described by Confucius' one step further by adding the importance of an external experience.

Boyd and Fales (1983, p. 100) define reflection as the "process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective" (as cited in Cranton, 1994, p. 49). And Mezirow (1991) defines reflection as "the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience" (p. 104). According to Mezirow, "content reflection" is an examination of the content or description of a problem. "Process reflection" involves checking on the problem-solving strategies that are being used. "Premise reflection" leads the learner to a transformation of meaning perspectives. While these types of reflection encourage learners to think reflectively upon their situation, Mezirow's levels of reflectivity provide further focus and explanation of learners' inner experience as proposed by Confucius:

- **Reflectivity:** An awareness of a specific perception, meaning, behavior, or habit.
- **Affective Reflectivity:** Awareness of how the individual feels about what is being perceived, thought, or acted upon.
- **Discriminant Reflectivity:** The assessment of the efficacy of perception, thought, action or habit.
- **Judgmental Reflectivity:** Making and becoming aware of value judgments about perception, thought, action or habit.
- **Conceptual Reflectivity:** Self-reflection which might lead to questioning of whether good, bad or adequate concepts were employed for understanding or judgment.

- **Psychic Reflectivity:** Recognition of the habit of making percipient judgments on the basis of limited information.
- **Theoretical Reflectivity:** Awareness that the habit for percipient judgment or for conceptual inadequacy lies in a set of taken-for-granted cultural or psychological assumptions which explain personal experience less satisfactorily than another perspective with more functional criteria for seeing, thinking or acting (as cited in Jarvis, 1987, p. 91).

While Confucius claims that reflection involves the whole person, Mezirow recognizes that reflectivity demands both affective and cognitive aspects. From these different perspectives, a very similar conclusion is arrived at, and yet different dimensions of the journey are articulated by the traditions represented by Confucian teachings and the Western literature on reflectivity. Rosenstock-Huessy (1925) reflected on the devastation Germany experience from World War I and he posed andragogy as the only method for the German people and Germany, dispirited and degenerated in 1918 after World War I, to regenerate themselves and their country. He concluded from his reflection that andragogy was not merely 'better' as an education method for this purpose, it was a necessity – it was then and is now.

A CRITIQUE OF CONFUCIUS' REFLECTION AND MEZIROW'S REFLECTIVITY

As has been described in this article there are many similarities when one examines Confucius' reflection and Mezirow's theory of reflectivity. With the framework of Confucius' philosophy and practice of reflection the criticisms of Mezirow's theory of reflectivity provide another dimension of understanding. Although a powerful model and tool to guide the examination of adult learning, the theory of reflectivity has never been immune from criticism (Cranton, 1994; King, 2005; Mezirow, 1990, 1991, 1997).

Among a number of criticisms, the very first one is that this theory has included little attention to the social context that may strain the reflection process so that the social context may facilitate or inhibit the reflection process (Boxler, 2004; McWhinney, 2004). Secondly, gender and socio-economic class may play important parts in the reflection process and yet they are not frequently brought out as factors in the discussions of Mezirow's theory of reflectivity (King, 2005). For instance, while in many cultures women may tend to be intuitive learners, men may tend to be cognitive learners (Hayes & Flannery, 2000). Therefore should we expect a greater proclivity and ability among women and perhaps less ability, understanding, value, and more resistance among men? These are questions that are not asked frequently (King, 2002, 2005). Regarding socio-economic class, Freire (1970, 1973, 2003) argues that the oppressed have lost the ability to challenge living conditions and thinking about their life. They no longer have the self-confidence to be independent thinkers. Therefore in this paradigm, critical reflection does not exist among the oppressed. What does the ability of and consequences for all socio-economic classes to be able to engage in and benefit from reflectivity?

Thirdly, reflectivity may be age related (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Confucius has addressed this question in his teachings (Confucius, 500BCEc). Noncontrolled studies in transformative learning have shown no direct correlation, but what would further studies indicate (King, 2002, 2003)? Fourth, reflectivity may vary from culture to culture (Baumgartner & Merriam, 1999; King, 2005; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). People see the world differently and learn differently when they become conscious of their social situation. The reflection process may be shaped by different cultures. A recent critique by Merriam (2004) is that a high level of cognitive functioning serves

as a prerequisite for critical reflection. Indeed, this analysis of the literature would indicate that without this prerequisite of cognitive functioning critical reflection may not occur. What does this mean regarding reflectivity, education, and opportunity, contextualization and impact among different cultures?

Despite all these critiques, the theory of reflectivity advanced by Mezirow has endured and continues to spark innovative, provocative and a prolific research in the adult education field (Cranton, 1994; King, 2004, 2005; Mezirow, 1990, 2000). Since Confucian humanism emphasizes how to become a sage through self-effort, his emphasis is on the experiential "how-to" rather than on the cognitive "why," and the road to sagehood is a matter of self-criticism and not only intellectual argumentation. The continuing Confucian "silent reflection" process proceeds from a foundational "inner experience" of critical reflection and progressively unfolds into self-transformation, over and again. While in one respect it has a goal of sagehood, and in another respect the journey is the goal as well.

While Mezirow's theory agrees in concept with Confucius' inner "digging and drilling" metaphor and practice in order to learn how to be human, Mezirow's three types of reflection take into consideration the external situation which poses challenges to inner experience so that analysis, synthesis and evaluation may occur. Mezirow's seven levels of reflectivity relate to Bloom's 1956 taxonomy of educational objectives, which helps adult educators more fully illuminate the different experiences that lead to reflective learning.

DISCUSSION: A MODEL OF LEARNING THROUGH CRITICAL REFLECTION

The strength of Mezirow's theory of reflectivity which has developed over the last 20 years lies in the critical reflection process, which may lead to growth and development of the learners (Merriam, 2004). If Confucius was right twenty-five centuries ago by advocating that "at seventy I could follow my heart's desire without transgressing the boundaries of right," then "critical reflection" holds the key to that goal. Prior to Mezirow's theory, Levinson (1978, 1986) and Erikson (1959) developed models similar to the way of Confucius. However, Levinson focused on life's developmental tasks while Erikson focused on identity development. Neither theorist recognized Confucius' silent reflection as the key to sagehood or wisdom. Mezirow's theory of reflectivity built upon a tradition of critical reflection that can be found in the humanistic thought and practice of Confucius. Mezirow's three types of reflection and seven levels of reflectivity help educators and learners more fully understand how one's sagehood, or wisdom, can be reached.

Confucius' humanism emphasizes self-realization, or self-actualization in its modern sense. Reaching this goal is the focus of learning for many adult learners and educators from a humanistic tradition. In this context, Mezirow's theory of transformative learning becomes one of the major factors that assist adult educators in articulating goals of learning and delineating learning processes for adult learners. More importantly, a better understanding of this theory may enable adult educators to:

- Plan learning experiences that are conducive to learners' critical reflection.
- Capture and build on "teachable moments" to accelerate critical reflection.
- Prepare adult learners for critical reflection.
- Modify teaching styles and methods to fit learners' critical reflection.
- Become a co-learner in the reflection process.
- Become a genuine facilitator of the reflection process.
- Avoid teaching styles and methods that may inhibit learners' critical reflection.

- Grow and develop together with learners via the reflection process.

On the other hand, as an additional point of view, Henschke (1998, 2009, 2011a) in reflecting on research in the andragogical perspective offers eleven items that comprise the foundation and essence of andragogy and illustrates that those facilitators of learning who believe, internalize, reflect on and enact the very humanistic foundation of trust will:

- Purposefully communicate to learners that each is uniquely important.
- Express confidence that learners will develop the skills they need.
- Trust learners to know what their own goals, dreams, and realities are like.
- Prize the learners' ability to learn what is needed.
- Feel learners need to be aware of and communicate their thoughts and feelings.
- Enable learners to evaluate their own progress in learning.
- Hear what learners indicate their learning needs are.
- Engage learners in clarifying their own aspirations.
- Develop supportive relationships with learners.
- Experience unconditional positive regard for learners.
- Respect the dignity and integrity of learners.

THE MODEL OF LEARNING THROUGH CRITICAL REFLECTION

In our process of analyzing and reflecting on these Eastern and Western theories and philosophies, we have seen a model of learning emerged. The *Model of Learning through Critical Reflection* is described and illustrated. In this model the work of

Confucius and Western theory of reflectivity are blended in order to enable educators to envision the processes of how adult learning from seemingly diverse humanistic tradition moves towards one common goal.

While a Confucian mode of learning focuses on experiential understanding (Tu, 1992), contemporary modes of learning focus on the art of argumentation, or dialogue (Mezirow, 1990, 2000). An overview of the Model indicates that: for the art of *dialogue* to occur, first there must be a *hypothesis* about possible *solutions* to *problems* followed by a comprehension of the problem to be solved. Following this stage, there is then *data collection*, *reasoning,* and *experimentation* to solve the problem.

The theory of reflectivity offers a tool, namely critical reflection that can tackle both experiential understanding and the art of dialogue. Therefore, this theory furthers Confucius' humanism and can be further applied to educational settings. The wide-range of adult learning experiences is a complex phenomenon which defies any one learning model (Merriam & Caffarella, 1999). Indeed discreet, enumerated principles of adult learning alone cannot explain every aspect of learning. However, Mezirow's theory of reflectivity, transformative learning, provides a powerful vantage point to explore adult learning. Through this discussion of Confucius, Mezirow's model of learning through critical reflection, and a World Perspective of Andragogy that is illustrated in Figure 1 has been developed.

Model of Learning through Critical Reflection

This Model illustrates the dynamic interaction of factors (variables) that contribute to Mezirow's critical reflection and Confucian silent reflection. Derived from this model of learning through critical reflection are a number of significant points:

Figure 1. The model of learning through critical reflection
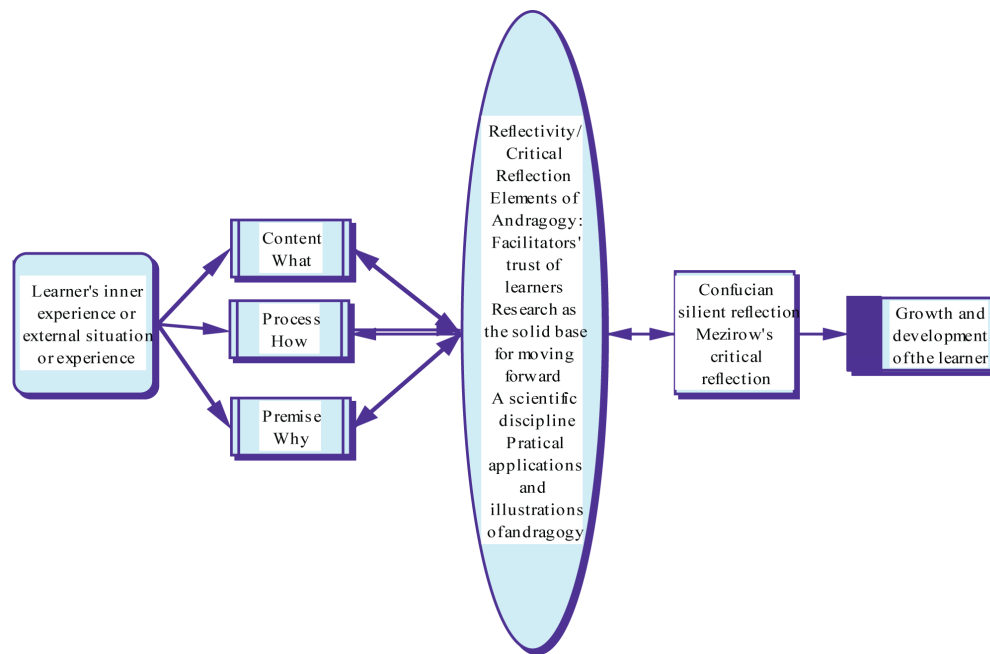
1. Mezirow's three types of reflection can be dependent upon learners' inner experience *or* an external situation or experience. An internal issue of concern has to be triggered by an experience. In Mezirow's terms, the learners then engage in asking what, how and why questions in order to make meaning out of these experiences...

2. The three types of reflection relating to what, how and why questions are dependent upon the seven levels of reflectivity Bloom's (1956) affective and cognitive domains of educational objectives. The three types of reflection in most cases predetermine a learner's level reflectivity. The types of reflection and the levels of reflection interact with one another via what Confucius describes as "inner digging and drilling" to deepen one's knowledge of the self or what Mezirow describes as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of one's perspectives to "make meaning".

3. The three types, the seven levels of reflection and elements of andragogy take the learners to the next stage of reflection. It is at this stage that learners' silent reflection or critical reflection occurs. The three types and the seven levels of reflection enable learners to develop the ability to think analytically or evaluatively as well as casting negative judgments. It is at this stage that learners' self-criticism becomes automatic as a result of the interaction of the three types of reflection and the seven levels of reflectivity. Without the multiple types of reflection or the levels of reflectivity, the automaticity of silent reflection or critical reflection cannot occur.

4. This crucial stage of silent reflection or critical reflection leads to an end result: growth and development of the learner, or changed perspectives of the learner as proposed by Mezirow. It is interesting to note that according to Confucius learning via reflection denotes a rather lengthy journey

so that learners could follow their heart's desire without transgressing the boundaries of right. Indeed, self-actualization can be realized if learning is undertaken via silent reflection or critical reflection.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As Confucius' *Great Learning* reveals, learning can move one through a journey towards sage-hood, or toward becoming a sage (Shengren) (Zhu, 1992). In its modern sense, the purpose of adult learning is to transform society, in Confucian terms- to love the people, who comprise that society, and to find "rest," or peace, in the highest excellence. Indeed, Confucius' humanism is foundational in its impact on the dominant modern branch of adult learning theory—the theory of reflectivity as advanced by Mezirow. Without a fuller understanding of Confucius' philosophy in learning, our understanding of Mezirow's theory would be limited.

Like Confucius' humanism, Mezirow's inner critical reflection seeks to foster positive outcomes and development in learning. Both Confucius' and Mezirow's approaches lead to the possibility of creating new knowledge via critical reflection. In learning, we seek theories that are truly revolutionary and utilitarian. In this sense, both Confucius' humanism and Mezirow's theory of reflectivity are useful guides to help adult learners become fully human (sage) or to realize self-actualization and development in learning as in Merriam's terms (2004).

Therefore, this comparison of Confucius and Mezirow is not only necessary, but also vitally important in our further development of new models and theories of adult learning. Despite its vigor and vitality, in comparison to Confucianism, the theory of reflectivity is still in its infancy. Further research is needed to validate many dimensions and implications of this well-reasoned theory. As of yet these concerns have not been addressed

within the Western traditions in which it has been primarily been studied, discussed and developed.

It is crucial to reflect on following important elements in considering the future directions and combined developments of Confucianism, Mezirow's transformative learning, and the broad perspective of andragogy. Henschke's (2011a) focus on the andragogical foundation of trust, Houle's (1996) support of Knowles' learner oriented andragogical model, Savicevic's (2006a, 2008) future commitment of andragogy being scientifically oriented and his perception of Knowles' very strong influence of this long range andragogical perspective, and Mezirow's (1981) and Suanmali's (1981) research on self-directedness contributing to a Charter for Andragogy, could well set a beneficial, comprehensive course for merging theory, research and practice in adult education.

POLITICAL ISSUES: MORE THAN SOCIAL CHANGE?

One area of significant interest would be its political dimension. Although the Cold War is over, in our world today it cannot be denied that there is still a considerable portion of our global society that has had political issues and crises take precedence over educational policies. In such an environment, critical reflection could be twisted to serve political purposes at the expense of learners' self-authentication amid a variety of depersonalizing forces. Freire's work in Brazil demonstrates how addressing the political context through educational applications can result in political *and* educational outcomes (Freire, 1970, 1973). Rather than mobilizing social change through empowerment, voice and literacy learning, the theory of reflectivity offers another theme of potential impact on political conditions.

CAN CRITICAL REFLECTION OCCUR WITHIN A PEDAGOGICAL MODE OF LEARNING?

It would seem that the theory of reflectivity has endured in the field of adult education because it resonates with a breadth of human philosophy and human condition- it is derived from Confucian humanism and Habermasian, Marxist critical theory (Mezirow, 1978, 1990). Based on the roots in adult learning (andragogy), scholars may assume that the theory of reflectivity may be in conflict with pedagogy, which emphasizes a directing relationship between educators and learners (Wang, 2005). If this is true, research is needed to find out why the directing relationship between educators and learners inhibits learners' critical reflection. The question becomes, Can critical reflection occur within a pedagogical mode of learning? Sporadic studies regarding how social contexts can strain critical reflection can be found in the literature (Wang, 2004-2005). However, more comprehensive studies are needed in this area in order to produce a definitive model for researchers in the field.

Knowles (1989), a proponent of andragogy, provided a startling clue concerning a major ingredient necessary and quite obviously present in everything he did, as a caring human being, and everyone he touched deeply. In his development and revision of his theory he reflected extensively and considered both pedagogical and andragogical assumptions as valid and appropriate in certain varying situations (to the delight of some and to the dismay of others). The pitfall and problem he discovered with this approach is that ideological pedagogues will do everything they can to keep learners dependent on them, because this is their main psychic reward in teaching. However, on the other hand, Knowles reflected very long and saw that andragogues will accept dependency when it clearly is the reality and will meet the dependency needs through didactic instruction until the learners have built up a foundation of knowledge about the content area sufficient for them to gain enough confidence about taking responsibility for planning and carrying out their own learning projects. And even pedagogues, when they experience being treated like an adult learner, experience greater psychic rewards when learners become excited with learning, and began experimenting with andragogy.

BODY AND MIND TOGETHER: "I DO, I UNDERSTAND"

The literature discusses the cognitive and affective domains that reflection may involve within adult learners (Bloom, 1956). However, we must also consider the psychomotor domain when learners are engaged in reflection. As a Chinese proverb says, "I do, I understand." It seems that there is a positive correlation between the psychomotor domain and reflection. Yet, it would seem that researchers have yet to address this particular area. How do we effectively assist adult learners in using active learning in reflective learning within Western traditions? Building on eastern traditions, do currently renewed interests in Yoga and Tai Chi illustrate westerners experiencing the benefits of focusing mind and body together in reflection, rather than prior practice of mind alone?

CRITICAL REFLECTION FOR A "KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY"

The reflection process is a complicated process that may result in creating new knowledge and different techniques in this knowledge society and information age. In our global and technological society only gathering information is no longer sufficient; successful learning is evident when individuals are able to reflect, critically analyze, synthesize and apply knowledge (Bloom, 1965). Increasingly, critical reflection has replaced memorization as preferred by Confucian learners.

In learning, there are many ways to cultivate critical reflection, thus raising the question: "How do we apply a seemingly non-technical perspective to the fast-paced constantly changing Knowledge Industries of today? "How can adult education articulate our growing understanding of the depth and benefits of reflectivity and critical thinking to business and industry to increase the quality of life in the hectic multi-tasking, information overloaded business community?

MULTIPLE FACTORS AND LEARNING

Additionally, we cannot overlook the fact that multiple factors and dimensions enter the learning process and reflection, such as age and gender. Confucius recognized these dynamics when he said, "At forty I no longer had perplexities." If people no longer had perplexities at a certain age, then apparently reflection has truly occurred. However, what about those who still have perplexities? Has reflection not occurred? Can reflection still be learned? What are the obstacles to learning reflection and how can they be overcome? Indeed, in order for all to benefit from this rich tradition of learning, research is needed to determine what variables lead to this non- reflective learning process and how to surmount them for people of varied ages, races, traditions, cultures, backgrounds and genders.

CONCLUSION

This preliminary analysis of the literature on reflective theory and andragogy has introduced the landscape of Confucian humanism and Mezirow's reflective theory, transformative learning. Adding to this, a worldwide perspective and reflection on andragogy contributes not insubstantially to a solid foundation for the years to come. By doing

so we have sought to bring together similarities from these different traditions, and yet illuminate differences by the very fact that these different cultures and histories represent different perspectives. Drawing from a highly rational and behaviorist tradition of the West and connecting with the much longer spiritual traditions and history of the East, many questions arise that help us begin to examine our assumptions in new, thought-provoking and exciting ways.

While examining these different traditions of reflective thought, we have also integrated them into a conceptual model to express the process of reflectivity. Taking a wider view, drawing back from what we take for granted, considering and analyzing our theories from different vantage points, brings new questions to the surface. Undoubtedly, some of these answers will be found through future academic inquiry, some through our experiences of teaching and learning, some within ourselves, and some through our seeking to reach within ourselves, outside of ourselves to one another and understand. Learning experiences that create such moments have meaning beyond ourselves.

It is with great appreciation that we realize that through understanding one another we create ourselves, and by knowing ourselves, we can reach one another. We invite you to enter into this journey with us and to share your research and understanding share with our global academic community.

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KEY TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Andragogy: It is defined by Knowles as the art and science of helping adults learn.

Confucius: Another name is Kong Fuzi who lived between 551 and 479 BC in China. He advanced Confucianism, which is still being applied/practiced in Confucius-Heritage countries.

Facilitation: A major instructional principle in adult education as opposed to K-12 education based on the characteristics of adult learners.

Knowles: Referred to as the father of adult education who popularized andragogy in North America.

Mezirow: A retired professor from Teachers' College, Columbia University who "popularized" the theory of transformative learning, which was advanced by Confucius 2,000 years ago in China.

Reflectivity: It can be used interchangeably with reflection in North America. Europeans use reflectivity to replace reflection.

Silent Reflection: Advanced by Confucius, similar to critical reflection as advanced by Mezirow.