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GIANTS OF INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE ADULT EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

By looking to "historic" persons of international comparative adult education, this presentation aims to make others aware of the value of knowledge developed long ago. The contributions of five selected persons are presented, and focussed on aspects of their work that might have "everlasting" value. This can avoid "reinventing the wheel", avoids pitfalls in comparative work, and makes this work easier and more profound. The panel will discuss why Adult Educators (Andragogues) should care about these "old" perspectives and what implications are likely to emerge from this "looking back."

Keywords: International comparison, history, international adult education.

INTRODUCTION (JOST REISCHMANN)

"The purpose of the International Society for Comparative Adult Education is to increase the awareness and value and quality of comparative adult education." – this is how ISCAE describes its mission on its homepage. In our former conferences, we dealt, toward that goal, with standards of comparative work, with pitfalls and weaknesses, and with reflected experiences (Reischmann et. al. 1998, 2008, 2009). In this meeting, we focus - to further the value and quality of comparative adult education - on the (historic) contributions of selected "giants" of International and Comparative Adult Education. Our goal here is to illustrate the range and diversity of this work found within "historical" scholarship in the field – how "Comparative Adult Education in Global Times" started.

Why is this "looking back" helpful?

1. A basic principle of academia is that we build on existing knowledge. "Standing on the shoulders of giants" allows us to look further and deeper than continually re-inventing the wheel.
2. Too often comparison is done "naively", "spontaneously", "just compare", without methodological reflection on the comparison-process, without reference to the available comparative literature, to the available methods, knowledge, and standards – thus falling into pitfalls that were described long ago. Referring to prior knowledge makes comparative work more profound, insightful, and easier.
3. It seems to be true even today what was criticized years ago (Plecas & Sork, 1988): pedagogy (and andragogy) are too often going "sideward", instead of "downward or upward". Examining historic giants of the field helps us to look "inward" to our discipline's identity, "downward" to its continuity, and "upward" to its future development.

Checking the helpfulness of "looking back" we use in the coming presentations selected historic persons of the field and ask for their long-lasting contribution that still have value

today. We try to point out, how these "giants" contributed to comparative adult education, what would not exist today without them, what is/should be their lasting "eternal" impact - and exemplify what every comparatist should discuss and refer to in his/her work.

JAMES ROBBINS (ROBY) KIDD (1915-1982). (BY TOM SORK, CANADA)

Kidd, born in Saskatchewan, spent his formative years in British Columbia where he first became involved with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). Like others in his generation, he started as **practitioner**. This involvement later took him to Montreal where he worked in the North Branch YMCA while he completed his first university degree at Sir George Williams College. "In a course at [the College] in 1935 Kidd discovered the terminology for what he was doing at the North Branch YMCA. He learned that he was involved in adult education during attendance at the only course in that subject then offered in Canada" (Carlson, 1985, p. 310).

Ten years later, Kidd enrolled at Columbia University becoming the **first Canadian to hold a doctorate in adult education** when he graduated in 1947. On his return to Canada, he joined the staff of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), serving as Director from 1951-1961. While at the CAAE, Kidd began his comparative work through "... a policy of bringing in each year one adult education idea from the United States for Canadians to consider critically for possible adoption" (Carlson, p. 313). He resigned from the CAAE in 1961 and became the Secretary-Treasurer of the Humanities and Social Science Research Councils of Canada where he worked for five years.

According to Kidd himself (Kidd, 1995), he became a "**World Citizen**" during the period 1956-1966, travelling and consulting widely, publishing various "country studies", serving as President of the Third World Conference on Adult Education held in Montreal in 1960 and as Chairman of UNESCO's International Committee for the Advancement of Adult Education from 1961-1966. This lived internationality seems to be another "trademark" for those we add to this list of "giants."

In 1966 he joined the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto to establish the Department of Adult Education where he served as Chairman until 1972. While at OISE, Kidd introduced the first course there on Comparative Adult Education in 1967 **and established the internationally-focused journal *Convergence* in 1968**. In recounting the OISE focus on comparative studies, Kidd (1979) listed the following reasons for engaging in this work – one of his "enduring" contributions which is still valid and useful today:

- to become better informed about the educational systems of other countries or cultures;
- to better understand the educational forms and systems operating in one's own country;
- to become better informed about the historical roots of certain activities and thus to develop criteria for assessing contemporary developments and test possible outcomes;
- to satisfy an interest about how other human beings live and learn;
- to reveal how one's own cultural biases, personal attributes and history affects one's judgement about desirable ways of carrying on learning transactions;
- to better understand the richness of meaning of such concepts as lifelong learning, learning society, etc.;

- to become more capable of making rational decisions about adopting or rejecting concepts, behaviours and programmes from other cultures;
- to better understand oneself. (p. 36)

Kidd was also instrumental in **establishing the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE)** where he served as its first Secretary-General from 1973 to 1979 (ICAE, 2020). This long list of accomplishments – practitioner, first generation academic, founder, manager, world citizen, researcher, organizer, and author - illustrates the key role played by Kidd in establishing and promoting the comparative study of adult education...he was indeed a "giant" of the field. <https://halloffame.outreach.ou.edu/inductions/hof-1997/kidd/>

ALEXANDER N. CHARTERS (1916-2018). (BY JOHN HENSCHKE, USA)

Dr. Alexander N. Charters, born 1916, retired from Syracuse University in 1983. In 1987, he convened and chaired the founders' meeting of the Committee for Study and Research in Comparative Adult Education (CSRCAE), which was in 1992 renamed as the International Society for Comparative Adult Education (ISCAE). At this AEGT Conference, ISCAE is conducting their 7th Conference.

One of the most comprehensive research projects on comparative adult education spearheaded by Dr. Charters was reported in his 1989 book titled *Landmarks in International Adult Education: A Comparative Study*, co-authored with Dr. Ronald J. Hilton. And there we find his "**eternal**" definition of "**comparative adult education**":

A study in comparative international adult education ... is not the mere placing side by side of data ... in two or more countries. Such juxtaposition is only a prerequisite for comparison. At the next stage one attempts to identify the similarities and differences between the aspects under study ... The real value of comparative study emerges only from stage three – to attempt to understand why the differences and similarities occur ... (Charters/Hilton 1989, p. 3)

There were eight programs (and international authors) selected for comparison:

1. Study Circles in Sweden;
2. Folk High Schools in Denmark;
3. Workers' and People's Universities in Yugoslavia;
4. Workers Education Association in United Kingdom;
5. Frontier College in Canada;
6. Cooperative Extension in the United States;
7. People and Culture in France; and,
8. Volkshochschule (Folk High School) in Germany.

Older studies often remained on the level of juxtaposition of country reports; as each author focused on what seemed to him/her interesting, it was difficult to do a comparison based on such diverse material. As a consequence - to enable comparison - **Charters/Hilton asked the contributors to structure their program descriptions** along nine topics, for example:

- Program needs and identification of needs,
- Mission and objectives,
- Cultural/societal considerations,

- Operational considerations,
- Evaluation standards, criteria, and validation processes.

With this organizational framework for the description of each program, Charters/Hilton offered in the closing chapter a data-based comparative analysis, identifying and analyzing patterns of similarities and dissimilarities. Just to name a few (Charters/Hilton, p. 162ff): "In no instance was the centrality or importance of the individual learner lost; formal evaluation ... was little employed; throughout these descriptions there recur somewhat passionate statements, extolling high moral values; none of these programs were built upon modest aims."

With this study Charters went further than other researchers before and opened a new chapter for comparative adult education, **from juxtaposition to comparison**. Comparatists today should know and refer to his work and "sit on the shoulder" of this "giant".

Another "everlasting" contribution has to be added: The Charters Library of Resources for Educators of Adults at Syracuse University is considered the largest English-language adult and continuing education archives in the world

(<https://library.syr.edu/scrc/collections/areas/charters.php>).

Those who had the privilege to know him in person will fully agree with the closing sentence of this book: That such international research may also "**celebrate the good fortune of international collegiality**" (p. 198). <http://www.iscae.org/charters.htm>

<https://halloffame.outreach.ou.edu/inductions/hof-1996/charters/>

FRANZ PÖEGGELER (1926-2009). (BY JOST REISCHMANN, GERMANY)

1. Franz Poeggeler - and that is one of his specifics in his generation – studied **Pedagogy** with Wilhelm Flitner (a distinguished scholar of that time), and made his entire career in the university field of pedagogy. Other forefathers of our field came from the field of practice or from other disciplines. Perhaps that explains his engagement in many fields of education. Just to name some: representative for the youth-hostel-association, advisor in the ministries of education in Germany and in other European and non-European countries, consultant for the new German army, teacher education, Catholic education. So the first specific: He had learned Pedagogy from its basics. That means: Throughout his life he was interested in change, and advancement, and transformation. Of individuals and societies.

2. **Fitting into the stereotype of a "giant"**: Poeggeler was an **international person**. He did research-visits to more than 40 countries in Europe, America, Africa and Asia; more than 20 times he visited Israel (engaged in the peaceful cooperation between Israel and the Arabian region, i.e. cooperation project *House of Peace* at Catherines-monastery Sinai-Peninsula between Israeli, German, and Egyptian youth).

3. Poeggeler was **not a comparatist in the strict sense**, following the definition of ISCAE (<http://www.iscae.org/mission.htm#3>). **His work could more accurately be categorized as "International Adult Education"**. But he did that in an impressive scope: Between 1974 and 1984 he published the eight volumes of the "Poegger-handbook" in cooperation with 128 authors of 27 countries. In this series as early as 1979 he published (together with Walter Leirmann) Volume 5 "Erwachsenenbildung in fünf Kontinent" (Adult Education in five continents). This work represents an incredible achievement in scholarly adult education. Poeggeler not only built a body of knowledge with this handbook: as a side effect of this type

of work he also brought in contact scholars of countries around the world, and started networks that had long-lasting impact.

Remarkable – and that makes him a **forefather of International Adult Education** – is the date 1979: Although there have been forerunners (i.e. the country reports by the Council of Europe 1968-1970, or the ECCE-project "Organization and Structure of Adult Education in Europe, from 1977 on), this heavy handbook in his quality, scope of countries, and quality of printing was unique. Later other scholars presented similar collections (i.e. Colin Titmus, Peter Jarvis), and they did it in English. This was more successful for the International perception.

4. But: His language was German. That limits his perception. For the international discussion of today English is necessary. So I can not offer citations or excerpts which can be used when referring to the comparative history or methodology. But his work can serve as a memory when and how the scholarly international view on adult education started and grew and prospered. That makes him a "giant" for our field.

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Pöggeler

https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_P%C3%B6ggeler

<https://halloffame.outreach.ou.edu/inductions/hof-2006/poggeler/>

DUSAN SAVICEVIC (1926-2015). (BY KATARINA POPOVIC, SERBIA)

International and comparative andragogy – this was his second name. Modest, diligent and visionary, from a small Balkan country, **fully committed to adult education and andragogy as science of adult education**, he was comparatist in his work, research, travels, and as a person. His noble curiosity – to learn about adult education in other countries and regions made him one of the "giants" of international adult education in the second half of the 20th century.

Two of his books "Komparativno proučavanje vaspitanja i obrazovanja: (teorijsko-metodološki okviri)" (Comparative research of education) and "Komparativna andragogija" (Comparative Andragogy) were fundamental for this field. But since they are written in Serbian, they couldn't reach broader audience and impact, but in numerous publications in English he did (Savićević, 1999b). An outstanding comparative contribution is his paper "Understanding Andragogy in Europe and America: Comparing and Contrasting" (1999a).

It is amazing how he made a name in the world of international adult education with his imperfect English and with the specific political background: coming from former Yugoslavia, socialist country, leader of the Non-aligned Movement.

But his profound knowledge and his andragogical enthusiasm fostered his **international career**: Beside other places throughout Europe he had been visiting professor at Universities in Venezuela, USA, China... He received fellowships from the governments and foundations; he influenced many national and international conferences and projects and worked intensively with UNESCO, OECD and Council of Europe.

It needed an expertise, but also a personality, to become a friend with 'big names' in adult education – Malcolm Knowles, Alan Knox, Alexander Charters, Franz Poeggeler, Paul Belanger, John Henschke, Jost Reischmann – in times when globalisation wasn't there to make communication, exchange, and international cooperation as easy as today.

Dušan's most famous "merit" is that he pushed the term and concept of andragogy, first in USA. The anecdotal conversation, reported by Malcom Knowles, became famous: "... in 1967 a Yugoslavian adult educator, Dusan Savićević, participated in a summer session I was conducting at Boston University. At the end of it he came up to me with his eyes sparkling and said, 'Malcolm, you are preaching and practicing andragogy.' I replied, 'Whatagogy?' because I had never heard the term before" (Knowles 1989, p. 79). Later Dušan offered a profound understanding **of andragogy "as a discipline, the subject of which is the study of education and learning of adults in all its forms of expression"** (Savićević, 1999, p. 97)

The international journey of "andragogy" was coupled with Dušan's **intensive travelling** around the globe. He was teaching, preaching, practicing it – in the African villages, American universities, and Korean learning society.

After a decade of frustration of being banned from travelling (war in Yugoslavia, sanctions of international community), from contacts with international adult education community, from libraries and bookshops (Internet was at the beginning at that time), he was rewarded: the Department for Andragogy at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade, that he has established, continued to flourish, and his long-lasting contributions got recognition by his induction into the "International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame" in 2006 in Bamberg, Germany. <https://halloffame.outreach.ou.edu/inductions/hof-2006/savicevic/>

PETER JARVIS (1937-2018). (BY JOHN HOLFORD, UK)

In what ways is it fair to consider Peter Jarvis a "giant" of international and comparative adult education? His most enduring contributions to the literature of adult education would probably fall into neither international nor comparative adult education. He was above all a theorist; his important empirical contributions were largely based on observations of his own classes and students, and used to develop theory (e.g. Jarvis, 1987). His early work was located in the British context, but his worldview was always international. His first international excursion, in the first post-war British schools' visit to Yugoslavia (Jarvis, Rabušicová, & Nehyba, 2015), was clearly formative. During his years as a full-time Methodist minister, international understanding and peace were to the fore.

His academic writing took off after he moved to the University of Surrey in the mid-1970s. He was able to indulge a growing appetite for international travel, and for encountering – and learning about and from – other cultures. Initially the USA was to the fore, but he later ventured to Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, and North and South America, often many times. This, and his sheer entrepreneurial zeal, were key bases for his contribution to international and comparative adult education. He was the driving force behind the *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, which he co-founded and edited for 35 years. His book series, for Croom Helm (later Routledge), on *International Adult Education* and the *Theory and Practice of Adult Education in North America* were both major contributions to the field. As the European Union's mobility schemes grew, so did his European networks – he was in at the foundation of ESREA – and these underpinned several international edited collections (Jarvis, 1992; Jarvis & Chadwick, 1991; Jarvis & Pöggeler, 1994).

Peter's mature years were spent in the era of ever-easier international communication (fax, email, air travel, distance learning, the world-wide web) and marketisation. His international standing led to his becoming a key representative of adult education in comparative

education: he was, for instance, a key member of *Comparative Education's* editorial board. Much of his intellectual contribution was devoted to theorisation of the global. He achieved this in his own writings, which focussed increasingly on the influence of the global (Jarvis, 2006, 2007, 2008), but also through giving prominence to international authors and global perspectives in major "handbooks" (Jarvis, 2009; Jarvis & Watts, 2012). Perhaps the *leitmotif* of his contribution lies in concern with the individual as learner in the context of galloping globalisation. He achieved this partly through a genuine interest in people as learners, partly through his deeply-felt sense of humans as ethical beings, and partly through trying always to understand the cultures – professional and academic, as well as sociological – he encountered. <https://halloffame.outreach.ou.edu/inductions/hof-1997/jarvis/>

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Of course, this selection of "giants" is very male, Euro-North American, western, and white – no variation of gender and ethnicity. Following the presentations, we will discuss who else should be added to that list.

In the panel-discussion we will explore: Why should this person be called a "giant? What existed through their work what did not exist before (and behind we should not fall back)? How can we (not) sit on the shoulders of these "giants?" Why should Adult Educators/Andragogues care about these "old" perspectives? What should all researchers in comparative work use from the "giants"? How can the knowledge and wisdom and personality of our predecessors be kept alive? What implications are likely to emerge from this "looking back"?

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