

Research Article

APPLICATION OF ADULT LEARNING PRINCIPLES BY DISTRICT ELECTION TRAINERS IN SELECTED CONSTITUENCIES OF LUSAKA DISTRICT

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Received 14th November 2021; Accepted 15th December 2021; Published online 21th January 2022

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the application of adult learning principles by District Election Trainers in Selected constituencies of Lusaka District. The study's objective was to describe how District Election Trainers apply adult learning principles when training poll staff for elections. A case study design was employed with a qualitative approach. The population comprised of all District Election Trainers who participated in the 2016 general election training in Lusaka District whose number was 180. Purposive sampling was used to select 45 District Election Trainers from the four selected constituencies of Lusaka District. A semi-structured interview guide and an exploratory questionnaire were used to collect data. Findings showed that District Election Trainers applied adult learning principles ; by allowing poll staff to talk about their experiences with elections, by using proper language when addressing poll staff, by making poll staff participate in the training. The findings further showed how role plays were utilised in the training to depict real life situations. However, the findings revealed that most District Election Trainers were not able to recognise the adult learning principles that they applied, and for those who applied the principles they did it sparingly and sometimes unknowingly. Therefore, the study recommended that there was need for the Electoral Commission of Zambia to introduce workshops or seminars where District Election Trainers could be taught on adult learning principles comprehensively so that they can train poll staff effectively.

Keywords: Adult learning principles, Application, District Election Trainer, Poll staff.

INTRODUCTION

Adult learning principles are simply basic rules or ideas on how adults learn best (Brookfield, 1985 : Knowles, 1984).The use of adult learning principles in the teaching or training of adult learners has proven to yield great and positive results when applied to adult learning as attested to by Jerram (2002) and Lieb (1991). Dwyer (2004) also testifies that adult education principles have a simple elegance and grace which make the learning process extremely rewarding for both the trainer and participant. But as much as adult learning principles are cardinal to an adult learning environment, not all adult educators use them, and worse off others are not even aware of what they are and how to apply them when teaching or training adults (Earle, 2000 : Haluyaso, 2018). With several adult educators using pedagogical methodologies to teach or train adults which in most cases produces minimal positive results for adult learning, made the authors of this article wonder if District Election Trainers applied adult learning principles or not when training poll staff for elections. This was of concern because poll staff were adults who needed to be trained differently as opposed to children. The purpose of this study therefore, was to explore the application of adult learning principles by District Election Trainers when training poll staff for elections in selected constituencies of Lusaka District. The study's objective was to describe the application of adult learning principles by District Election Trainers when training poll staff for elections.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adult Learning Principles

As earlier on alluded to, adult learning principles are simply basic rules or ideas on how adults learn best. This study opted to use a

combination of adult learning principles coined by Knowles (1984) and Brookfield (1985). The reason for this selection was because the mentioned scholars' views on the principles are similar even though Brookfield adds a few principles and ideas to what Knowles already discussed in his scholarly works on adult education. The paragraphs that follow discuss the adult learning principles used in this article in detail.

Involvement of adult learners in the planning and evaluation of their instruction.

Knowles (1984) believed that since adults are self-directed, they should have a say in the content process of their learning. This would make adults not be forced to learn that which they do not want to know, or that which is likely not to add value to their lives. When they are involved in the planning and evaluation of their own learning, a spirit of self-directedness is fostered. Brookfield (1985: 48) contributes to this idea by adding that, Such adults will see themselves as proactive, initiating individuals engaged in a continuous re-creation of their personal relationships, work worlds, and social circumstances, and not as reactive individuals, buffeted by the uncontrollable forces of circumstance. Similar to Brookfield's sentiment, Knowles(1975) remarked that since Self-directed learners take initiative in the learning (proactive learners), they learn more things and learn better, than do people who sit at the feet of teachers passively waiting to be taught (reactive learners).That proactive learners enter into learning more purposefully and with greater motivation. They also tend to retain and make use of what they learn better and longer than do the reactive learners.

Experience inclusive of mistakes should be the basis for adults learning activities

Adults come to the learning environment with previous experience which could be work related, family related or even education related

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(Knowles, 1984). Thus, they have so much experience to draw from and that is why they want learning to focus on adding to what they have already learned. Just like Knowles (1984), Lindeman (1926) also considered the learners experience to be the resource of highest value in adult education. He believed that if education is life, then life is education. With Lindeman, authoritative teaching, examinations which preclude original thinking, rigid pedagogical formulae have no place in adult education. The new educational experiment implied 'learn from the simple, teach the wise.' (Linderman, 1926). Lindeman, believed that adults began to learn by confronting pertinent situations that surrounded their lives. It can clearly be seen that adult students are not 'blank slates' and their life experience becomes the medium through which content is learned and in which to redefine new goals to accomplish (Merriam, 2001).

Learning should be around subjects that have immediate relevance to an adults life

Unlike children who may not come to the learning environment with specific goals to achieve, adult learners are said to be practical and goal oriented (Knowles, 1984). This means that learning is supposed to have relevancy to real life tasks. Alexander (1999) as cited by Galbraith and Fonch (2007) adds by commenting that adults should see relevance of the material (learning) to their immediate needs since time limitations and commitments apart from work may make it difficult for learning to be a priority. Whatever the case, adults want to see learning contributing positively to their job, business or family immediately. Totally different from children whose learning is a process of acquiring prescribed subject matter, and for them the knowledge acquired is usually not for immediate application.

Adult learning is problem centred rather than content-oriented

Adults believe that learning should help them solve real life problems and should not just be centred on memorising content (Kearsley, 2010). In most cases adult learners strive to solve problems or complete projects. More often than not, an adult learner is motivated to learn when there is a problem (need) to be sorted out or a goal to be achieved (Knowles, 1970).

Adults voluntarily participate in their learning

This is where adults get engaged in learning as a result of their own volition. Sometimes it could be circumstances surrounding the adult at that particular time which could be prompting them to learn. For instance, it could be that they want a promotion at work, or they want to keep busy just to get away from the daily pressures of life. All in all, the decision to learn is that of the learner. Bryan, et al (2009) adds that adults who enter the learning environment voluntarily enter a learning situation with a clear sense of why it is important for them or their organisation unlike those who are just forced.

Adults desire to be respected even as they engage in learning

It is important that adults' feel respected when they come to the learning environment. That is to say that their learning situation should be seen as an opportunity for reciprocal learning (Earle, 2000). Meaning that throughout the learning sessions the facilitator is supposed to treat everyone equally without showing favouritism to anyone. But that he or she should demonstrate through examples and attitude that all participants have dignity and equal worth. When adults feel respected it is very easy for them to participate fully in the learning in that they don't get intimidated by their facilitators but instead feel like their equal.

Learning for adults is collaborative

Adult learning entails that teachers and learners are engaged in a cooperative enterprise in which, at different times and for different purposes, leadership and facilitation roles are assumed by different group members. This shifts the focus away from the teacher as the gatekeeper to knowledge, and instead views the teacher as a facilitator and collaborator of knowledge who continuously guides the learner and helps co-create an environment for self-directed learning (Merriam 2001; Tough 1979). Freire (1970) emphasised that education is dialogue which involves respect. He went further to say that education was not only supposed to involve one person action on another, but rather people working together. Freire concluded that the prevailing forms of education reduced students to the status of passive objects to be acted upon by the teacher. That it was the job of a teacher to deposit in the minds of students, which was considered to be empty, he called this 'banking education'. He argued against this type of education by proposing what he called a dialogical problem posing method of education (Freire, 1970). In this model the teacher and student become co-investigators of knowledge and of the world. Instead of suggesting to students that their situation in society has been transcendently fixed by nature or reason as the banking model does. Taylor (2013) noted that when learners co-exist with their trainers or teachers, and are considered as colleagues, they become more productive. Similarly, that when learners' contributions are acknowledged, they become willing to do their best because they don't feel inferior.

Adult education fosters a spirit of critical reflection

Dewey (1993:9) as cited by Chen (2015) defines critical thinking as, 'active persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further conclusion to which it tends.' Brookfield (1987:1) adds by saying that 'being a critical thinker is part of what it means to be a developing person.' This simply means that a person just doesn't take everything they are taught as gospel truth but that they challenge assumptions, explore alternatives and also develop skepticism. This, in the end, helps adult learners uncover possible biases or unjust assumptions that surround their lives be it in the political scenario, work places and even religious circles (Chen, 2015). Thus, through education, adult learners come to appreciate that values, beliefs and behaviours are culturally constructed and transmitted, and that they are provisional and relative. Adult educators are concerned, therefore, to prompt adults to consider ways of thinking and living alternative to those they already inhabit. In the same vein, Claxton (1996:13) as cited by Gravini (2012) states that 'to be a learner you not only need confidence and stick ability, you also need the ability to monitor yourself, to tell you how things are going, to know when to stick at it, when to change tack, and when to quit.' Hence it is important that adult educators should make sure that the kind of learning offered to their learners should be that which encourages them to critically think.

Application of Adult Learning Principles by Adult Educators

Evidence has shown that adult educators who are familiar with adult learning principles and apply them as they teach or train adults tend to achieve the set objectives for the learning better than those who don't. It puts them at an upper hand in knowing how adults should be treated, trained or taught as compared to children. This results in educational experiences that are of a great value to the adult learner. Some studies carried out where adult learning principles were deliberately applied to the learning environment of adults, bring out positive results and learners are seen to be very interested in the learning. One such study is that done by Chen (2015), and another by

Borsari(1999). Chens' study involved a class of psychology students who were 25 years and above, while Borsaris' class consisted of biology second year students. Borsari (1999) deliberately chose learners who were having difficulties and were losing interest and could drop out of school anytime. In these two scenarios, adult learning principles were applied by the educators and evidence was visible. For instance, Chens' lessons were packed with a personal, problem solving approach (Knowles, 1980) instead of a text book approach, though readings were assigned. This is a clear indication that Chen utilised one adult learning principle which explains that adults prefer learning which is problem centred and is practical rather than learning that is content oriented only. On the other hand, Borsari (1999) also applied one adult learning principle of self-directedness when he gave his class individual and group presentations on topics of their own choice. As Knowles (1984) clearly states, that as a person matures, their personality moves from that of dependency to that of independency that is why they should be allowed to direct their own learning. However, even though adults are supposed to be allowed to direct their own learning, there is still need to set objectives for the learning so that there is some form of order with the learning (Dwyer, 2004). Furthermore, students from both studies were also able to arrange with the educators on how and when they could present their topics, an aspect which brought out the principle of dialogue, collaboration and respect (Knowles, 1984). Dialogue was possible because of the negotiations between the students and the educator on when and how they would want to do their presentations. This resulted in collaboration in that it was not just about the educator but about the students' also taking part in the decisions. In all this both sides had to show respect to one another so that no one felt belittled. Borsari (1999) further made the outcomes of the assessment to be evaluated both by the student audience and himself after the presentation. Making self-evaluation be done in a none biased way unlike with children where the teacher is the only one allowed to evaluate the learning. Both Chen (2015) and Borsari (1999) utilised the learners' vast experience as a great source of learning. For example, Chen discovered that by using his students' life experience as the main medium, contributed to a fundamental shift that their present situation was unacceptable and that they had to take action. This resulted in the learners also using the principle of critical thinking in that the learning allowed them to focus on personal observations and experiences which gave them an opportunity to make meaning out of the learning materials (Gibby, 2014). Despite both scholars utilising the students' experiences and knowledge (Lindeman, 1926) on selected topics, not all students were open enough to share their lives experiences so that their educators could use these experiences as examples during the lessons. Thus even though the principle of adult learners experience was utilised during lessons, it was applied partially. In both studies, participation to learning activities on the part of the learners was encouraged. This made the learners feel respected and had their needs met as adult learners in that they were not passive learners. This was in contrast to Earles' (2000) study, where the lecturers came to class late and most of the time used the lecture method on adult learners. The learners could barely participate, collaboration was not seen and there was no dialogue between the learner and the lecturer. This, in the end, frustrated the adult learners because they didn't feel respected and their needs were not met as adult learners. In another study by Larrotta and Serrano (2012) which involved Spanish speaking parents in a literacy class of English, it was discovered that by reading three chapters on financial freedom every day when starting the lesson, sparked students' interest about vocabulary, pronunciation and grammar. This made the learners make connections with personal or family finances a practical touch which they added to the lesson. As Knowles (1984) emphasises, adult learning should be relevant to an adult life and the knowledge

acquired should be applicable immediately. In this study, learners were also involved in their learning by the educators, thereby making them build personal glossaries and writing story books (self-directedness). In this case, the principle of critical reflection was utilised by the educators which in turn promoted self-awareness among students, an aspect which enabled them to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Illuminating from the above discussion, is the fact that adult educators who apply adult learning principles to their teaching get the best from their students and their objectives are achieved even as the learners also get to benefit from the learning. Evidence can be seen from Jerrams' (2002) study titled, 'Applying adult education principles to university teaching.' Jerram, used several adult learning principles with his computer mediated communications class which included principles such as, participants active participation, learners life experiences as a source of learning, self-directedness, collaboration between the learner and facilitator, self-evaluation, dialogue, problem posing followed by problem solving and critical thinking including reflection. At the end of the programme, he discovered that learners were happy with their learning and looked forward to attending the lessons daily. Jerrams' (2002) findings go hand in hand with those of Chen (2015) and Borsari (1999), who also discovered that when adult learning principles are employed in adult learning experiences, the objectives that adults come to the learning environment with are achieved and learners are easily motivated. However, Jerram does bring out the fact that the application of adult learning principles to an adult learning environment has a high cost in terms of time and money. An aspect which can be overcome by planning the adult learning programmes well before implementing them.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theory of Andragogy which was popularised by Malcolm Knowles in 1968 was what guided this research. According to Knowles (1984) Andragogy is the art and science of adult learning, thus Andragogy refers to any form of adult learning (Keasley, 2010). The theory has conveniently encapsulated the distinction between adult and adolescent education in contrast between 'Andragogy' and 'Pedagogy' respectively (Knowles, 1970; 1984). Brookfield (1986: 91) described Andragogy as the 'single most popular idea in the education and training of adults'. The theory simply proposes that the learning approach should not be instructive, it should rather be problem-based and two-way and that the teacher-learner relationship should be egalitarian (Fidishun, 2000). The Andragogy theory encompasses adult learning assumptions which include; self-concept, adult learners' experiences, readiness to learn, orientation to learn and motivation to learn (Knowles, 1984). Knowles (1984) believed that as a person matures, his or her self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality towards one of being a self-directed human being. That as a person matures he or she accumulates a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning (adult learners' experience). Further, that as a person matures his or her readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles. That one's line perspective changes from one postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application (Readiness to learn). Also that, as a person matures, his or her time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application (Orientation to learn). Lastly, that adults are goal-oriented, so upon enrolling in a course, they usually know what goal they want to attain (motivation to learn).

METHODOLOGY

A case study design was employed for this study with a qualitative approach. The population comprised of all District Election Trainers

(DETs) who participated in the 2016 general elections training from the seven constituencies of Lusaka District, whose number was 180. The District Election Trainers were divided as follows per constituency: 29 Kanyama, 20 Chawama, 33 Mandevu, 22 Kabwata, 30 Munali, 18 Lusaka Central and 28 Matero. Then 45 District Election Trainers segmented as follows; 12 Mandevu, 12 Kanyama, 11 Kabwata and 10 Lusaka Central were purposely selected as a sample for the study. The reason for this selection was because this sample allowed the researcher to collect data from different training environments. A semi-structured interview guide and an exploratory questionnaire were used to collect data for the study. An interview guide was preferred because it allowed the researcher to collect comprehensive, systematic and in depth information about this particular case of interest (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). While the questionnaires' flexibility made it easy for respondents to fill it in at any point without being forced or subjected to a particular environment. Data from questionnaires was compared to that from interviews and common responses were categorised into themes.

FINDINGS

In responding to the question, "how do you train poll staff for elections considering that they are adults?" the Research question for the study (how do District Election Trainers apply adult learning principles when training poll staff for elections) was answered. District Election Trainers applied adult learning principles through different ways which included;

Experience

The findings showed that District Election trainers applied adult learning principles by giving chance to poll staff to talk about their experiences with elections. These were experiences which were related to how elections are conducted on election day. There was a consensus view amongst DETs who emphasized the importance of acknowledging the election experiences that poll staff came with to the training environment. It was those shared election experiences by poll staff which the DETs combined into the training, as explained by one DET who said:

"... we train poll staff who may have been involved in elections... During the training we allow some of them to give their personal experiences of how they may have handled election related issues previously in that way we combine these experiences into the training..."

Similarly, another DET echoed:

"... we teach adults with an understanding that they have a lot to offer in the education or rather learning process because of their life experiences as compared to children who may depend on what is taught to them as first-hand information..."

The findings from this theme brought out one adult learning principle which was that of "adult learners experience" as can be seen from the verbatim.

Use of Language

The findings also showed that District Election Trainers used proper language when addressing poll staff during the training. By so doing they realised that the poll staff felt respected. They reported that this act made it easy for poll staff to be able to participate in the training without feeling inferior or intimidated by the trainer. As remarked by one DET who said:

"... the manner in which you ask questions is paramount coz as much as you may have something to teach the trainees you are cautious of how you come out so that you make them feel respected..."

Added another DET:

"... we are very aware that some of the people we train are our bosses at our work places, some are far too old than us in age, so we make sure that we choose our words very well..."

This second theme revealed a second adult learning principle which District Election Trainers applied when training poll staff, a principle of respect. Most DETs kept emphasizing that it was of greater importance that the poll staff feel respected during the training and that the only way they could be able to do that was to speak to them politely and treat them like capable adults.

Participation

The findings further showed that District Election Trainers put poll staff in groups to have discussions on particular topics of the electoral process, and later present the work in a preliminary session to their fellow poll staff. After the presentations, the District Election Trainers would then make a summary of the main issues. This allowed the poll staff to participate during the training as indicated by one DET, who said:

"When we train poll staff, we make sure that they are involved in the training... so we give them tasks like group presentations where they first discuss in groups and then present to everybody in relation to the electoral process, and we also allow them ask questions were necessary... because by so doing we allow the poll staff not to just be spectators in the training."

This third theme brought out yet another adult learning principle which was that of adult learners' participation. The findings showed that at least some of the poll staff were able to participate during the training, though others did not due to lack of time.

Role Plays

Lastly, the findings showed that DETs involved poll staff in role plays in relation to the electoral process as declared by one DET:

"... we involve the learners in plays... where we let them act on certain election related issues... this takes away the learning of theory only to practical considering that as much as we may teach the theory aspect of it, elections are more practical because with elections they are no mistakes."

This last theme brought out the fourth adult learning principle which was that adult learners want learning to be practical. The DETs reported that role plays made it possible for most poll staff to be active during the training. Also that their getting involved in role plays made them learn what really happens on the actual day of elections especially for those who were first timers. The findings also showed that most District Election Trainers did not recognise adult learning principles that they used during the training. But as they answered to the question of how they trained poll staff seeing that they were adults, the adult learning principles that they applied became apparent.

DISCUSSIONS

The study's objective sought to describe how District Election Trainers (DETs) applied adult learning principles when training poll staff for elections. The findings indicated that District Election Trainers

applied adult learning principles by allowing some of the poll staff talk about their experiences with elections. The Utilisation of poll staffs election experiences by District Election Trainers helped to enhance the training. This finding demonstrates that District Election Trainers were aware of the importance of the experiences that poll staff came with to the training environment and they knew that if they combined it to the training, it would add value. The finding is in conformity with the views of Brookfield (1985), Knowles (1984) and Lindeman (1926) who noted that adult learners' experience is of great value to an adults learning. They elaborated that since adults do not come to the learning environment as blank slates, it was therefore important that adult educators consider their experience when teaching or training them. By District Election Trainers bringing the poll staff experiences to the training environment, meant that poll staff were able to connect the new training to what they already knew. This generally makes adults feel that their previous experiences are not in vein. As Lieb (1991) affirms, adults like their learning to be built on what they already know, be it work related, family related or education related. Moreover, when adult educators make use of this principle when teaching adult learners, it makes the learners begin to question where they are, to where they may want to be. This is in agreement with Chens' (2015) finding, who upon using his students' life experiences to teach, noticed a great shift that students were now able to critically question their positions in life and make better changes. The finding is also in harmony with the Andragogy theory assumption of adult learners' experience. As Knowles (1984) puts it, when a person matures, they accumulate a growing reservoir of experience in every area of their lives. Thus, it is important that as they come to the learning environment, their experiences are acknowledged and utilised. Despite District Election Trainers using the principle of adult learners experience during the training, the study revealed that the principle was not fully applied. This was because the only people in the training that were able to talk about their experiences were those that had previously worked as poll staff. That meant that the first timers had nothing to share since they were new to the training programme. Therefore, the DETs needed to consider all manner of experiences that the poll staff came with to the training environment which they would be able to blend into the training programme. There also could have been some aspects of experiences from other areas of the new poll staff lives which could have added value to the training. An example is that previously, these poll staff would have been voters before being trained to carry out elections duties. The experience of being voters could also have been shared during the training and a few things would have been learnt from that angle which could have added value to the training. However, the findings showed that District Election Trainers allowed poll staff to only talk about their experiences with elections in their capacities as poll staff and nothing else. This may have disadvantaged others who may not have had previous experiences on elections as poll staff. Even though this finding is to some extent in congruence with the Andragogy theory, it is important to note that its conformity is partial. This is so, because when Knowles (1980) talks about the adult learners experience in relation to the Andragogy theory, he does not mean that it should only be experience that is related to one specific kind of learning. It should be experiences from all areas of an adult life which could still be used to the learning that learners get involved in, because it is such experiences that help adults redefine new goals in life (Merriam, 2001). These could be experiences acquired from workplaces and family responsibilities (social experiences) and educational backgrounds (academic experiences). In the case of this study, the experiences could have also included the mistakes that the poll staff may have made while conducting elections on the actual day, an aspect that did not come out during the interviews. It was therefore, cardinal that when District Election Trainers apply the principle of adult learners experience when training poll staff for

elections, they should consider all angles of experience that the poll staff come with to the training environment. The findings also showed that by District Election Trainers addressing poll staff politely during the training, made the poll staff feel respected. This brought to light yet another adult learning principle which was that adults want to be respected as learners. The findings suggest that District Election Trainers were well aware that poll staff were adults and deserved to be treated with respect even though they were learners in the training. Therefore, they made sure that they spoke to the poll staff politely and were conscious of the choice of words that they used when training them so that they felt respected. It was thus learnt that, the District Election Trainers did not openly rebuke the poll staff during the training even when they may have given a wrong answer to a question. This action by District Election Trainers resulted in the poll staff feeling respected and, in turn, were able to go through the training joyfully without any problem. This also made the learning environment conducive for poll staff because they may have felt that they too were looked at as capable human beings and not inferior to the DETs. This finding is consistent with the conventional opinion by Kolb (1984) and Mezirow (1981) who remarked that adults respond well to the learning environment when they feel respected, supported, encouraged to learn and when they are treated as capable adults. The manner in which District Election Trainers treated all poll staff with equal dignity and self-worth meant that, the poll staff felt at ease and not intimidated during the training. This made it easy for District Election Trainers to train poll staff better. Addressing poll staff politely by District Election Trainers was seen as a way of showing respect. Of course this aspect is common to the Zambian scenario where respect is portrayed by how one speaks to someone and also the words that they use when addressing someone. However, this may not be the case in other parts of the continent or the world, because to them respect may not only be weighed on how people are addressed by way of using polite language but they could be other components that are attached to what is considered as respect. An example is elaborated by Earle (2000), study where the learners felt disrespected when the teacher came for lessons late, when he didn't consider their opinions on the learning and also when he didn't seem ready for the lesson. Nevertheless, despite all these negatives the lecturer addressed the students politely and used proper language when speaking to them. It can therefore be concluded that how adults feel respected is not only through how they are addressed, but also other factors complement. This may be dependent on the kind of learning or training environment that adults are found in at that particular time and what a particular society perceives as respect. Furthermore, District Election Trainers made poll staff take part in the training. This was done by allowing poll staff to make presentations after having group discussions during the training. This finding brought forth another adult learning principle which was that of adult learners' involvement or participation. By applying this principle in the training implied that District Election Trainers allowed poll staff to be proactive learners. That means, poll staff were not just spectators in the training and by so doing, they were able to retain more of what they had learnt than do reactive learners. This finding is in line with Borsaris' (1999) finding who, upon giving his class individual and group discussions, noticed that his learners responded well and learnt effectively. However, there is a difference in the way these group discussions were done and the way the topics for presentation were given. In the case of Borsari, learners were able to choose on their own what they wanted to present on, while poll staff were given what to present on by District Election Trainers. This, therefore, took away one adult learning principle which was that of self-directedness, which meant that poll staff were not allowed to control their own learning. The stance taken by District Election Trainers not to allow poll staff to choose for themselves what they wanted to present on (self-directedness) was ideal for this kind of training because elections are

critical. Therefore, even though poll staff were allowed to make presentations, there was need to control what went on in the training so as not to waste a lot of time on things that did not concern the electoral process. This finding also agrees with the theory of Andragogy which emphasises the importance of adult learners' involvement in their learning. The theory posits that unlike children, adults want to get involved in their learning by having hands on. However, there is a contradiction between the Andragogy theory and the finding in that while the theory stipulates that adults should be involved in the planning and implementing of their learning (Knowles, 1980), the findings did not show that poll staff got involved in the planning of their training. What is even more is that the participation did not allow all poll staff to get involved in the presentations due to limited time allocated for the training. This then implies that there is a higher probability that even though poll staff made presentations, a number of them were still passive learners who were just in the background. Lastly, District Election Trainers allowed poll staff to be involved in role plays so as to make the training practical. This finding is in consistence with the theory of Andragogy (Knowles, 1984) which emphasizes that adult learners want learning to be practical and applicable to their lives immediately. When learning does not seem to add value to their life immediately it is likely not to have a great impact on an adult. In most cases adults may not actually be interested in the learning for the sake of acquiring knowledge but by what that learning is supposed to add to their lives (Lieb, 1991). District Election Trainers' use of the principle of practicality suggests that they took the training away from theory to reality. An example would have been where poll staff were asked to do a play of a drunkard voter on Election Day and then District Election Trainers ask them to act in form of a play on how they would handle such a situation. Such trainings in form of role plays concerning elections made it easy for poll staff to remember this information and where possible be able to apply some of the tactics in case they faced a similar situation while in the field. This finding is in consonance with the findings of Larrotta and Serrano (2012), who discovered that their reading of three chapters daily on financial freedom to their English class of Spanish speaking parents made them connect with reality. This, in the end, aroused the interest of the learners to learn the English language better and effectively because the learners were able to relate the chapters on financial freedom to their real life situations. Similarly, by District Election Trainers bringing in the practical part in the training made poll staff learn more efficiently and better because they were able to practice what they were likely to face on the actual day of elections. The findings from this study made it possible for several adult learning principles to be apparent. These were principles which included; i) adult learners experience; ii) adult learners respect; iii) adult learners involvement; and, iv) adults want learning to be practical. Although, these principles were made clear from the way District Election Trainers described how they trained poll staff, it is important to note that most of the DETs did not clearly mention the principles. Perhaps because most of them did not have an adult education background. Nevertheless, District Election Trainers should be commended for being able to apply the principles during the training considering their diverse academic backgrounds. Despite District Election Trainers being able to apply the adult learning principles when training poll staff for elections, the findings revealed that the application was done sparingly and most times unknowingly. This could mean that the benefits of applying adult learning principles to the training ground were not fully achieved. Therefore, it should be emphasised that the use of adult learning principles by District Election Trainers is cardinal to the training of poll staff because it helps them be better adult trainers. Dwyer (2004) agrees that the use of adult learning principles on adult learners benefits both the trainer and trainee in that the learning needs are met.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The intention of this study was to find out if District Election Trainers applied adult learning principles when training poll staff for elections. This was of importance because poll staff were adults who needed to be trained differently as opposed to children. It can therefore be concluded that at least they are traces of adult learning principles being applied by District Election Trainers when training poll staff for elections. Even though it is sparingly and sometimes an unknowingly. An indication that with a few measures put in place, District Election Trainers would be able to apply the principles correctly and hence train poll staff effectively. The study recommended that there was need for the Electoral Commission of Zambia to consider training poll staff comprehensively on adult learning principles. So that as the DETs train poll staff, they should train them accordingly with regard to how adults ought to be trained or taught. This in the end would make it easy for the training objectives to be achieved.

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