Transformative Learning and Adult Education

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Assignment

### *Developmental Readings*

Review Assignment #3, the course essential elements, assigned readings, and recommended readings to identify selections of books and scholarly articles to identify and select developmental reading sources and entries.

* Refer to the “[Student Guide to Developmental Readings](https://drive.google.com/file/d/161V_FaYR2BnNGCSFUlWPjUSIQzcH04Hq/view?usp=share_link)” for updated information on sample comments, rubrics, and key definitions related to developmental readings.

**Source One:** Hamilton, J. L., Tsypes, A., Zelazny, J., Sewall, C. J., Rode, N., Merranko, J., ... & Franzen, P. L. (2023). Sleep influences daily suicidal ideation through affective reactivity to interpersonal events among high‐risk adolescents and young adults. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry*, *64*(1), 27-38.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

“Sleep disturbances and interpersonal stress are risk factors for suicidal ideation” (p.10).

**Essential Element:**

This quote includes the essential element of Adult Education

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

This quote is additive. The objective for leaders is to utilize transformative learning methods to persuade young individuals who are constantly distracted by social media through their mobile devices, compromising their sleep. It is imperative for adolescents and young adults to recognize the profound impact of sleep deprivation on their overall well-being.

It is worth noting that a significant portion of adolescents engage in social media, creating an ongoing struggle for those who are vulnerable to anxiety, stress, and depression. Lack of proper sleep hygiene contributes to their downfall. Even among adolescents who do not suffer from depression, research indicate that the accumulation of toxins in the brain resulting from sleep deprivation leads to symptoms of anxiety and depression (Amen, 2015).

**Contextualization:**

Last year, I conducted research to better aid adolescents struggling with depressive symptoms. I developed a program coined CHRIST, which merges a Christian worldview with naturopathy to provide support to leaders tending to individuals with anxiety and depression. CHRIST is an acrostic for Commitment and Culture, Health, Rest, Integration, Supplication, and Training.

I emphasized the importance of rest through proper sleep hygiene. In addition, by using training to incorporate transformative learning theory, learners and supporters could reshape their existing meaning schemes. Further, as leaders transformed by new knowledge, we can provide the support and care needed.

In the book "Change Your Brain, Change Your Life," Amen (2015) asserts that one of the quickest ways to harm one's brain is by depriving it of sufficient sleep. Amen further states that teenagers who consistently get less sleep than their peers are more susceptible to depression. Transformative learning provides adolescents with newfound knowledge regarding their existing personal perspectives, which suggests that sleep is important.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

“Suicide is the second leading cause of death for individuals ages 18-24 years” (p.11).

**Essential Element:** This quote includes utilizing the essential element of Educational Taxonomy

 **Additive/Variant Analysis:**

Adult education must include education on suicide and suicide prevention to adolescents and young adults. By utilizing Bloom's taxonomy theory, adult education can effectively achieve this goal. Suicidality arises when individuals suffering from depression yearn for relief from their anguish or the fear of recurring episodes. Furthermore, those grappling with mental health challenges, along with their families, often feel judged and rejected by the church community (Grcevich, 2018).

Furthermore, research indicates that the early onset of cannabis use increases the risk of developing depression, while individuals who start using cannabis later in life also face higher risks (Silins et al, 2014).

**Contextualization:**

I envision a future where I can make a positive impact by educating young adults on the dangers of depression, drug use, and the alarming prevalence of suicide ideation. I recall reading about a remarkable woman who had achieved great success - a law degree, a former Miss America, and a journalist for a television network. However, she tragically succumbed high functioning depression, jumping from her apartment building in New York (Iñiguez & López, 2023).

It is crucial that we refrain from viewing individuals solely through the lens of their accomplishments without genuinely understanding their mental well-being. Success stories can mask inner pain and a sense of hopelessness. By integrating Bloom's Taxonomy theory into adult education, we can empower students to delve deeper into the root causes of suicide and identify the signs. Through this process, learners become better equipped to support and advocate for individuals suffering from this condition, ultimately achieving mastery in their learning journey.

The devastating effects of suicide deeply move me, and I believe that educating ourselves and others is a vital step in prevention. I desire to embark on this journey of learning and spreading awareness before it's too late.

**Source Two**: Singer-Brodowski, M. (2023). The potential of transformative learning for sustainability transitions: moving beyond formal learning environments. *Environment, Development and Sustainability*, 1-19.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

 “Nevertheless, these examples also represent situations where questioning basic assumptions can hinder transformative learning processes and, therefore fuel a resistance to change, especially when challenging (edge) emotions arise because the stable identity of learners is questioned and neurobiological dynamics lead to a denial or ignorance of the call for perspective transformation” (p.6).

**Essential Element:**

This quote delves into the essential element of Transformative learning theory

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

When it comes to change, individuals often resist due to their deeply ingrained personalities and cultural backgrounds. The longer people hold onto their personal and psychological perspectives, the more challenging it becomes for them to recognize the need for a new approach. Individuals may even deny the existence of any problem stemming from their own biases. However, the approach to transformation is critical. How facilitators present the new model to the learner's perspective and how much input they allow them to contribute will ultimately facilitate the transformation process.

**Contextualization:**

I witnessed a pastor who lost his congregation- going from a large group to just a few faithful followers. While I'm uncertain what this leader was unwilling to alter, I am certain that his minor perspective did not warrant the departure of his entire congregation. For instance, a minor perspective – such as submersion or sprinkling in water baptism, does not impact the core of the gospel.

Leaders will dismiss the importance of personal growth if they are unwilling to engage in constructive discussions over trivial matters. Further, if they persist in causing disunity through their teachings, they will ultimately miss the opportunity for transformative change, thereby forfeiting their role as shepherds.

**Source Three:** Arslan, G., & Coşkun, M. (2023). School belongingness in academically at-risk adolescents: Addressing psychosocial functioning and psychological well-being. *Journal of Happiness and Health*, *3*(1), 1-13.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

“As explained, revealed, and discussed above, school belongingness is a school-based contributor to the fulfillment of a basic psychological need, which is crucially important for the personal and academic recoveries and development of students” (p.9)

**Essential Element:**

This quote includes the essential element of Transformative learning theory

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

By embracing transformative learning principles, individuals can experience a remarkable enhancement in their psychological need for belongingness. This approach begins by acknowledging and addressing the preconceived assumptions people may hold about certain groups they deem as unworthy. Through the application of transformative learning, inclusive methods are encouraged, fostering not only character development but also a deeper understanding and appreciation of diverse perspectives.

**Contextualization:**

Our Christian principles guide us in embracing the concept of inclusion, where everyone is welcomed into God's kingdom, regardless of race, creed, or color. We deeply value the sense of belonging that arises from this inclusivity. Although some individuals may struggle with their sense of self-worth, we find solace in the assurance provided by the redemptive work of Christ on our souls. As followers of Christ, it is our sacred duty to invite others to the epistemic knowledge of the absolute wisdom of God and experience his faithfulness.

**Source Four****:** Livingston, M., & Cummings-Clay, D. (2023). Advancing adult learning using andragogic instructional practices. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Perspectives in Higher Education*, *8*(1), 29-53.

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

Adult Learner Experience—Adults accumulate a growing pool of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning” (p.5)

**Essential Element:**

This quote includes the essential element of Andragogy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

This quote is additive and variant. Adults bring a rich pool of knowledge acquired through various life experiences, providing a solid foundation for further exploration and development. With each passing day, adult learners can tap into this growing reservoir of experience and apply it to their ongoing educational journey, creating a dynamic and enriching learning process. However, this pool of knowledge may contain drawbacks. According to Mezirow, a disorienting dilemma arises when adults experience self-doubt and uncertainty that misaligns their existing knowledge. Consequently, their personal meaning perspective fails to accept new knowledge.

**Contextualization:**

As an adult student at OGS, I have integrated my experience as a business owner and real estate investor to apply the principles of business law, business ethics, and leadership concepts that align with Christ's teachings. Moreover, I am deeply committed to transformative learning. This approach has not only empowered me to gain a profound understanding of biblical principles but also equipped me to effectively impart this valuable knowledge as a student and a leader within my educational journey.

**Source Five:** Taylor, E. (2000). Fostering Mezirow's transformative learning theory in the adult education classroom: A critical review. *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, *14*(2), 1-28.

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

“These studies reveal that involving learners in intense experiential activities accommodates many essential conditions necessary for fostering transformative learning. First, they offer a shared catalyst for change, initiating a mutual context for individuals and groups to explore relevant issues through a different medium. Second, within this shared experience, reason and discourse becomes more relevant and meaningful to those involved. Third, these experiences not only provide opportunities for learners to develop greater self-awareness, essential for transformative learning, but also offer ways to confront issues that they find painful and are often resistant to learning about” (p.13).

**Essential Element:**

This quote addresses the essential element of Adult Education

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

This quote is additive. By actively engaging and immersing themselves in thought-provoking experiential activities, learners are not only able to expand their knowledge and skills but also undergo personal and intellectual growth. Through hands-on experiences and interactive learning opportunities, they acquire a deeper understanding of the subject matter, develop critical thinking abilities, and gain invaluable insights that shape their perspectives. The transformative learning process enables learners to unlock new levels of achievement and confidently navigate the complexities of the world around them.

**Contextualization:**

I intend to support young people who are struggling with mental health issues and turning to illicit drugs as a coping method. As research indicates that church ministries are necessary to support youth mental health, I think that in a church setting. Youth can thus benefit from assistance in coping with everyday challenges of anxiety, depression, and negative thoughts when a church community leader facilitates an interactive learning style that encourages learner centrism.

Christian supportive learner participation techniques can be highly effective in encouraging positive behavior. Research has indicated a robust association between enhanced mental well-being and religious practices. Scholars argued that Jesus-style hospitality increases a sense of community and church membership. Transformative learning affords inclusion to all groups. Learners learning to embrace an effective learning style will gain an optimistic outlook on mental health. In turn, the new outlook on mental illness will foster the afflicted person's self-awareness a sense of community, and lessen stigma.

**Source Six:** Smith, D.L. (2018). *On Christian teaching: Practicing faith in the classroom.* Eerdmans.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

“Yet the shape of the teaching and learning process affects how students access and experience that content, helping weave the web of values, relationships, and actions within which learning becomes meaningful” (p.145).

**Essential Element:**

This quote includes essential elements of Transformative learning theory

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

By intricately combining ideas and concepts akin to a vibrant tapestry, students can fully absorb the information they gain, develop a profound appreciation for a variety of viewpoints, and enhance their understanding of the complex world. This enhanced educational encounter nurtures in students a sense of interdependence among diverse fields of study, empowering them to develop into lifelong learners equipped with the capacity for critical and creative thinking.

**Contextualization:**

Leaders have a mission to educate both adults and young adults about depression and substance abuse disorder (SUD). It is crucial to establish a connection with users and address their need to find solace in the "medication" they take. Understanding the users' circumstances is paramount before attempting to bring about any change in their environment. Often, users already have established coping mechanisms to alleviate symptoms, making it necessary to employ strategies that delve into the reasons behind their negative coping skills. By providing opportunities for users to replace negative coping methods with positive ones, we can initiate actions that make learning truly meaningful.

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**

“My students have probably spoken English for most of the summer and need to shake off some rust, so I begin with a relatively easy speaking task that reviews familiar words and gets them using German right away, reactivating latent vocabulary. If my students are to acquire a new language, they will need to embrace the idea that speaking practice is a part of learning, and that unlike some of their other classes it will not be possible to succeed by watching and taking notes” (p.362).

**Essential Element:**

This quote entails the essential element of Transformative learning, specifically using communicative knowledge.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

This quote is additive to my knowledge of applying Transformative learning in language learning. By allowing the students in this scenario to use familiar setting, familiar groups of fellow students and reviving vocabulary already learned creates a form of ease practicing the new language acquisition. The students get the opportunity to talk about themselves and their fellow students’ backgrounds which allows them to use both tenses in the first and third person, thus practicing to use the verbiage and tenses of the language they are learning.

**Contextualization:**

When I was learning Spanish last summer, I found that because my instructor was a high school friend who lived and worked in the Venezuelan Embassy, created a sense of ease and fun way of practicing Spanish compared to the undergrad college instructor for Spanish. I learned vocabulary that became useful for my everyday life. I also gained the confidence to go to the Mexican stores and ask for what I needed. The ease of the class gave me the confidence to speak more, and in the process, I developed a natural accent in the language. Communicative knowledge fostered growth when practicing any skill in learning rather than rote memory or note tacking or when the expert stands in front of the empty learner.

**Source Seven:** Bradbury, N. A. (2023). Do I have your attention? Attention and engagement: What are they, and do I want them?. *Advances in Physiology Education*, *47*(2), 318-325.

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

The concept of “student-centered learning” is often echoed in the mantra that educators should be “guides on the side and not sages on the stage.”

**Essential Element:**

This quote includes the essential element of Andragogy

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

This quote is additive to my knowledge of transformative learning methodology. In cultures outside of the United States, particularly in developing countries, the teaching approach often revolves around a top-down training method. This perpetuates a vicious cycle, as teachers continue to employ the same approach they were taught. Unfortunately, this approach negatively impacts learners, compromising their self-esteem and hindering their ability to ask questions or contribute creatively to discussions. Consequently, learners' education remains stagnant, confined to their own limited experiences, plagued by the trauma and intimidation associated with this style of learning.

**Contextualization:**

During secondary education in my country, I encountered the authoritarian teaching style known as the sage stage. In this approach, teachers held absolute authority and dictated the subject matter without room for student input. I witnessed a distressing incident where a student was humiliated for displaying knowledge and accused of taking over the class. When students are subjected to such intimidation and chastisement for asking questions or giving too many answers, it creates an unwelcoming environment that discourages further inquiries. Consequently, their perception and engagement with the learning process undergo a shift. Transformative learning empowers a facilitator to step into the role of a guide, helping learners navigate their educational journey with clarity and purpose

**Source Eight:** Taylor. W.E, Cranton. P. (2012). *The handbook of transformative learning: Theory, research, and practice*. Jossey-Bass.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

“Intense experiences in the classroom are not always initiated by design. Transformative learning often deals with material that evokes powerful feelings” (p.541)

**Essential Element:**

This quote addresses the essential element of adult learning

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

This quote is additive. It is worth noting that incorporating subjects that evoke strong emotions, for instance, depression in young adults or high rates of suicidality in youth, plays a crucial role in facilitating transformative learning. Such topics will engage learners, foster their personal growth, and facilitate a change in mindset and understanding of mental illness and the ills of its coping skills.

**Contextualization:**

As I navigate my role as a leader in raising awareness about youth mental health and the detrimental coping mechanisms they adopt, I recognize that transformative learning can empower young adults, parents, and church groups to truly comprehend the profound struggles faced by many young individuals. Although these topics may be challenging to confront due to societal stigmas, teaching groups need to embrace the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding, free from biases and preconceptions. As a result, learners and teachers encourage growth and progress for all stakeholders.

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

**“**Consistent with his views on mental growth, Wolf consistently prodded his students to think for themselves. They were taught to question “givens” and to recognize the fallibility of authoritative sources” (Taylor & Cranton, 2012, p.52).

**Essential Element:**

This quote includes the essential element of Transformative Learning

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

Transformative learning ideology empowers students to actively contribute to the learning process, enabling role-switching with the teacher as the expert. Teachers and facilitators also embrace the role of learners, fostering meaningful discourse within the student-teacher or facilitator-learner environment.

However, in Christian theology, faith leads to the understanding of the infallibility of the Biblical text, which is not simply "givens," but instead written by 40 individuals from diverse backgrounds over a 1400-year period under the guidance of God. As lifelong students of this remarkable book, we are both learners and teachers, always open to its authoritative wisdom. This book, the only one ever authored by God, guides us on our journey of knowledge and understanding.

**Contextualization:**

Christian leaders frequently encounter resistance when they attempt to lead in secular settings using biblical teachings. Our challenge is acknowledging the Bible's authority and truth as God's infallible word rather than taking it for granted. But when Christianity is the only religion taught in any public school, then culture becomes sensitive.

I'm studying herbal medicine to become closer to God, a misnomer to the new-age herbalist. Research asserts that anxiety and well-being derive from religiosity. My objective is to disassociate Christianity from religiosity. I observed that many cultures accept Christianity as long as it is considered an option among other faiths. I discovered through my research that spirituality and religion frequently go hand in hand. As individuals seeking to bring about positive change in the world, we must encourage transformative learning so that communities can gain fresh insights into the healing purposes of Christianity and spirituality

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

“Like many ideas that become trendy in higher education, learner-centered teaching is defined loosely and variously by many who advocate its use or who want to have institutions that advocate its use” (p.440).

**Essential Element:**

This quote centers around the essential element of the adult learning environment

**Additive/Variant Analysis:**

This quote is additive and variant. Leaner-centered teaching allows teachers to adapt to students' learning styles. By fostering students to engage with each other and nurture their creativity, teachers exemplify the power to make a difference. Appreciating students’ cultural perspective by employing a sociolinguistic approach to transformative learning not only cultivates awareness of the world but also facilitates accessible learning.

However, when it comes to learner-centered teaching, one should not overlook the cultural backgrounds of students who may not wish to be categorized as passive learners but prefer to be diligent observers. This passive behavior may arise from students' conscientiousness about their native accents or their inclination to learn in a manner that has proven effective for them throughout the years.

**Contextualization:**

Speaking as an international student raised in the Caribbean and completed a portion of their education outside of the US, I admit that I encountered a moment of disorientation when I was required to share new experiences at the tertiary education level openly. Culturally, it is challenging for Trinidadians to discuss personal experiences, at least in my era, candidly.

Still, adjusting to a learner-centered environment remains challenging for educators and students in some cultures.

My personal experience consisted of observing the proceedings from the gage on stage rather than teachers serving as a guiding influence on my academic development. Having been trained to seek answers, I developed a deep affection for conducting research. I am a thinker who ascended through the taxonomy stages to formalize solutions to societal ills, such as the need to wean young adults off harmful coping skills associated with depressive symptoms. Today, I devote most of my professional life to tertiary education while enjoying my love for research.

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