Transformative Learning and Adult Education PHI 800

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Professor

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**Assignment #3 – Essay**

● Explain Jack Mezirow's transformative learning theory. How does the OGS

approach to transformative learning promote critical reflection for transcending

barriers to personal growth and social impact?

“Paul experienced Christ in a way that transformed him so completely that God was able to use him to lead like Christ and establish the church of Christ as we have it today” (Tozer,2021, p.178).

Transformative Learning emphasizes personalized learning and inclusive education for adults to unlock their full potential. Mezirow’s pioneering work in transformative learning was driven by his research on the experiences of women returning to college and the workforce. His research catalyzed an understanding of the profound impact of women’s life experiences and their transformative potential (Mizerow,1991)

Mezirów’s alternative way of learning and thinking is explained through transformative learning. The ten distinct phases in his theory include the approach that compels individuals to examine their beliefs and perspectives (Singer-Brodowski, 2023). Thus allowing learners and teachers to pave the way for personal growth and expanded knowledge using critical reflection.

This researcher leveraged the power of Transformative Learning (TL) to revolutionize research methodologies. This researcher collaborated with a distinguished research professor, acquiring a deep understanding of problem-solving nuances and the importance of questioning authorship. “They were taught to question “givens” and to recognize the fallibility of authoritative sources” (Taylor & Cranton, 2012, p.52).

Nevertheless, individuals needing more familiarity with adult education literature frequently employ methodologies from universities or public schools that may not correspond with the consensus of adult education authors (Jennings, 2001). The traditional teaching approach, where teachers are seen as knowledge providers, has created a culture of dependency among trainees and trained teachers. This mindset has persisted for so long that it has become deeply ingrained in the education system (Steinbach, 2012). While acknowledging the changing role of teachers as a starting point, it is crucial to emphasize the necessity of thoroughly examining the simultaneous shift in the role of students. They are no longer passive recipients but rather active participants in the teaching-learning process (Morrison, 2014).

Transformative learning contains a series of steps that involve questioning intellectual assumptions to change one’s point of view (Dirkx,2006). Unconscious energies, viewed through a Jungian lens, depict the mind’s journey toward individuation and wholeness. These transformative forces begin and sustain vital changes in adult learners’ lives (Dirkx et al., 2006).

According to transformative learning theory (TL), students acquire valuable insights by comparing their new learning experiences with their previous ones. Bloom (2008) suggests it can be the driving force behind profound transformation. The issue lies with young individuals trapped in a challenging present because they lack knowledge about the past and a vision for the future (Bloom, 2008).

 OGS implemented (TL) to encourage critical reflection, transcending the barriers to getting into the spirit of God. The professors act as ministers to the students and guide them along the way to influence their role as first ministry leaders within students’ vocation.  Jesus, through his teachings, connected his disciples with God and encouraged them to help others in need. He equipped them with the tools and sent them out to minister while teaching them how to be followers. Christ’s life, death, and resurrection exemplified scriptural lessons. (English Standard Version Bible), 2017, Matt 28:19-20, 1 John 3:16-18, Matt 23: 3-34). Adult Transformative learning allows individuals to release biases and embrace new knowledge.

Biblical hermeneutics allows OGS students to acquire deeper insights and understanding of scripture through the rules of exegesis. It involves bringing out the human writer's thoughts, attitudes, and assumptions (Packer,1975). This transformative approach enriches students' insight into human nature, fostering empathy and compassion in their interactions.

OGS encourages students to engage and analyze social issues through various disciplines and the underlying assumptions in their coursework (Smith, 2018). The coursework challenges students to think like Christ and apply Christlike principles to address societal issues as change agents. The Christian worldview is profoundly integrated across all areas of study, providing a comprehensive and enriching educational experience.

Arslan (2023) argued that school-based belongingness impacts learners’ social connections and eases their stress levels. To address these concerns, OGS professors and staff reach out to students, helping secure time management and offering assignment help. Professors also extend their availability via email and phone, ensuring students have the support they need. Additionally, fostering a sense of belonging through spiritual engagement, such as worshiping together and collaborating ideas about assignments. OGS encourages the development of student relationships by encouraging student interactions.

Passionate content professors present the material and actively engage with their students (Bradbury, 2023). Various professors at OGS exemplify their passion through community ministries, aiding veterans struggling with depression and substance abuse or rescuing victims of human trafficking. Some professors serve as pastors, facilitating church ministries. OGS’s foundation of belief in action enables learners to contrast their enrollment in the university, motivated by their lifelong aspirations for financial stability and personal fulfillment of purpose. “God does not call the equipped. Rather, in His wisdom, God equips the called” (Tozer, 2021, p.93).

Students' growth is apparent in every aspect of transformative learning. The new person emerges through how learners write, think, act, and perform actions. They strive to become more active in their churches, seeking ways to assist those in need in their communities as leaders of change, with Christ as their guiding principle. Furthermore, the research method of OGS influenced this researcher to author a book on a genre of music embedded within the history of the Flores family. I am writing a book on synchronizing walking in the spirit, referenced by Galatians, and deep breathing techniques to ease anxiety.

Bradbury (2023) advised that active student participation is imperative for attentiveness to be effective, casting doubt on the dichotomy of active versus passive learning. When OGS provides the syllabus, allowing students to explore the material independently before the courses begin allows them to engage with the material at their speed. Therefore, learners employ active learning in an andragogical manner (Livingston, 2023).

 Additionally, some non-native English speakers may need help with confidence in engaging actively online because of their accents or previous learning methods. Students who do not share the Christian faith or feel they need to be Christian enough may face their unique obstacles. Thus, stepping out of their comfort zones can be challenging. OGS offers an inclusive campus that values diversity, where admission is based on merit rather than religion, culture, or prior learning styles. Students are encouraged to embrace transformative learning through leadership education and examples that align with Christian faith and values. According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2019), “Inclusive education is fundamental to the achievement of human, social, and economic development. “Equipping all individuals to develop their potential significantly encourages them to live together in harmony and dignity” (UNESCO, 2019, p.73).

Distractions from social media and familial challenges can impede students' ability to concentrate on assignment demands and persevere toward a successful academic trajectory. As the CEO of OGS, McClane distributes newsletters imbued with words of encouragement. Students' use of sacred space helps them cultivate strength and achieve goals despite challenges, as God supports them (McClane). OGS creates an environment that encourages students to embrace Christianity.

OGS explains the significance of each coursework (Bradbury, 2023) Assignments play a vital role as the foundational building blocks for both the final assignment and future action research projects. They serve as a means for students to grasp the relevance of their courses, fostering a deep understanding. For example, hermeneutics, transformative learning, self-concept, and the significance of leadership empower students to confront biases, delve into challenging research, critically reflect on the analysis and application of newfound knowledge, and acknowledge personal growth within their leadership journey. These experiences mold students’ character and influence their environment, cultivating a new paradigm for learning, thinking, and impacting their surroundings.

However, risks include students being expected to work independently and manage their time effectively. Some students may struggle to adhere to deadlines despite OGS’s efforts to support them and provide reminders. Thus, the Chief Student Success Officer (CSSO) sends out regular bulletins to motivate students to persevere, especially when they may be tempted to quit. As McClane (2022) asserts, the messages serve as encouragement. His timely newsletter encourages students to overcome personal barriers and understand that the journey is toward the glory of God. In his newsletter, he emphasized the three essential priorities for OGS students. Students uphold the role of studying as a ministry, worship, and a testament to constant learning. Yet, OGS students must know their greater purpose is fulfilling their calling. (McClane, 2022). Pastoral Professors function as CTOs (chief theological officers) (Tozer,2021, p.107).

  Transformative learning involves questioning intellectual assumptions and comparing new learning experiences with previous ones to gain valuable insights. It is a driving force behind profound transformation in adult learners. The approach encourages students to engage and analyze social issues through various disciplines, fostering empathy and compassion.

The OGS program revolutionizes students’ learning styles and ideologies, empowering them to become catalysts for social change while establishing a firm foundation for Christ’s ministry. It enables and equips individuals to embrace their vocation with a renewed sense of purpose and impact, contributing to the church’s mission.

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