Transformative Learning and Adult Education

PHI 800-12

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Omega Graduate School

Date (December 2, 2023)

Professor

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**Assignment #4 – Course Learning Journal**

The journal is a written reflection of your learning journey while working in each course. The Learning Journal integrates the essential elements of the course within your professional field of interest. The objective of the course journal is to produce a degree of acculturation, integrating new ideas into your existing knowledge of each course. This is also an opportunity to

communicate with your professor insights gained as a result of the course. The course

learning journal should be 3-5 pages in length and should include the following sections:

1**. Introduction** – Summarize the intent of the course, how it fits into the graduate

program as a whole, and the relevance of its position in the curricular sequence.

2. Personal Growth - Describe your personal growth–how the course stretched or

challenged you– and your progress in mastery of course content and skills during

the week and through subsequent readings – what new insights or skills you gained.

3. **Reflective Entry** - Add a reflective entry that describes the contextualization (or

adaptation and relevant application) of new learning in your professional field.

What questions or concerns have surfaced about your professional field as a result

of your study?

4**. Conclusion –** Evaluate the effectiveness of the course in meeting your professional,

religious, and educational goals

A “mindshift” is a deep change in life that occurs thanks to learning” (Oakley, 2017, p.163).

Learning knows no bounds. Transformative learning in adult education empowers learners to acquire knowledge and skills and ignite their passions, unlocking boundless possibilities for personal, spiritual, and professional growth. Mezirow (1991) introduced his groundbreaking research that revolutionized the concept of Transformative Learning. His influential study focused on the experiences of women reentering college and joining the workforce, shedding light on their transformative journeys.

Transformative learning and adult education (TLAE) enabled the professor to guide students through andragogy, educational taxonomy, multiple intelligence, and transformative learning theory. Learners used these principles and their experiences to propel education to new heights of personal, professional, and spiritual growth. Livingston and Cummings-Clay (2023) assert that “adults accumulate a growing pool of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning” (p.5).

(TLAE) exposed students to the principles of learning to teaching. Vella (2002) emphasized that professors acquire enthusiastic adult learners by designing courses using 12 principles. These principles focus on meeting students’ needs, engaging them effectively, avoiding repetition, and encouraging reflection and application to their learning. Bradbury (2023) argues that student engagement is characterized by their desire for content from teachers through active interaction. A concept he added is not feasible in video teaching.

 Adopting Vella’s principles in transformative learning highlights the importance of considering students’ motivation, cultural experiences, and prior knowledge. According to (Drixx et al., 2006), transforming students’ learning entails challenging intellectual assumptions to alter one’s perspective. Nevertheless, (TLAE) cautions that learners might be reluctant to abandon their previous learning approach. Acquiring a novel approach to tackling a project can induce anxiety and provoke learners’ resistance. Mezirow (1991) classifies this phenomenon as a disoriented dilemma.

Placing this course early in the program raises awareness among learners and enables them to understand that experiences are not fixed but are transferable to enhance the learning process. Teachers or course providers should provide accountability. Vella (2002) proposed that teachers should deliver the content they profess to teach, which enables learners to acquire the knowledge they intend to gain. Morrison (2014) agrees that transformative learning empowers learners as they shift from passive recipients to active participants in the teaching-learning process. This active role fosters an engaging and effective learning experience.

 Vella's transformative learning principles embrace the concept of quantum energy, recognizing that learning requires energy and leveraging it to foster a respectful connection between learners and teachers. This connection values the individuality of each adult learner, creating a safe and inclusive environment. By incorporating quantum thinking theory, learners can let go of biases and cultivate an open mind to different perspectives (Vella, 2002).

 Andragogy facilitates a one-on-one interaction that empowers individuals to build their skills and capabilities. Knowles (1980) described Andragogy as “the art and science of helping adults learn” (p.). Javis (2006) highlights that research on learning occurs within the context of teaching, prioritizing learners' needs over the curriculum's demands.

Andragogy prioritizes my needs as a learner. This course significantly enhanced my learning. Self-directed learning is another principle of adult learning emphasized in transformative learning and adult education. By guiding myself along the learning path, I gained the ability to recognize and enjoy the immediate benefits of learning and confidently putting their knowledge into practice (Javis, 2006).

Vella (2000) asserts that praxis occurs when practitioners critically analyze the quality of their practice, transforming it from mere action to purposeful reflection and action. I applied the concept of praxis to an editing course I took recently. One of the challenges I encountered was incorporating Vella’s principle of praxis into my editing process. I had to reassess an approach to a paper I intended for publication and consider how to use my newfound understanding of employing detailed editing phases. Now, I handle editing with a more comprehensive perspective.

Garner’s Multi Intelligence Theory (MI) heightened my awareness of my verbal-linguistic and musical intelligence strengths (Phillips, 2010). For instance, I find great joy in writing and editing, not solely for achievement but because I derive pleasure from articulating my thoughts through writing. A walk in the park, where I observed the splendor of creation in the changing leaves, inspired me to compose a poem. Last summer, I also dedicated my time to the enjoyable pursuit of language acquisition.

However, spiritual development through transformative learning is the most significant aspect of my personal growth. Drawing upon my musical (MI) inclination, I recalled a hymn I learned about the Holy Spirit in parochial school. This hymn inspired me to study the Holy Spirit, whom scripture clearly deems as the creator God, omniscient and eternal. (The English Standard Bible, 2017, Act 5: 1-4; 1 Cor. 2:10–11; Heb 9:14).

 Transformative learning and adult education encouraged my spiritual goals through a multi-stage learning process. These stages include recall, explanation, demonstration, analysis, and the continuous expansion of acquired knowledge. (Gul et al., S. S. 2020). For example, I began writing a book that explores Gal:5, specifically focusing on walking with the spirit. In this book, I analyze the impact of the Holy Spirit’s work on my life, comparing the outcomes when I disregard his call with those when I comply. In addition, I formulated a guiding principle to utilize as a meditative practice in conjunction with the divine attributes Christians must incorporate and exemplify on a daily basis. (Gal 5: 16-26)

My experience as an adult learner and advocate for mental illness equips me to apply transformative learning theories to individuals combating depressive symptoms by resorting to illicit drugs. Individuals who acknowledge previous experiences regarding their use of illicit drugs to numb their suffering need to acquire alternative coping mechanisms. A program designed to identify and value various manifestations of intellectual expression, employing Vella’s 12 principles and Mezirow’s transformative learning, will alter the lives of individuals suffering from depression.

Furthermore, advocating for alternative health choices requires me, as a Christian, to enhance education by imploring spiritual teaching. As a facilitator, I can use andragogical approaches to encourage critical thinking and student discourse. This includes independent information retrieval, establishing causal relationships, eliciting perspectives, incorporating multiple viewpoints, and connecting abstract concepts to real-world contexts (Gul et al., 2020). Teaching sound doctrine enables individuals to question established beliefs and acknowledge the potential for past authoritative sources to make mistakes. This applies to instructing learners in a novel mindset and challenging their preexisting belief system ( Taylor & Cranton, 2012).

My question pertains to discovering solutions to assist individuals from a foreign culture in navigating their mental health challenges and adapting to the American education system. How can transformative learning theories apply to facilitate understanding of new learners who have language differences? By embracing transformative learning principles, individuals can experience a remarkable enhancement in their psychological need for belongingness (Arslan & Coşkun, 2023). To ensure comprehensive adult education, it is crucial to incorporate suicide and suicide prevention, incorporating transformative learning theory for adolescents and young adults.

However, the most significant aspect is the application of adult learning theories to facilitate adults in acquiring knowledge about God. Providing active engagement and applying quantum thinking and energy allows me to see the advantages and disadvantages of my professional view on teaching or learning. Tozer (2021) urges Christians to lead like Christ and become the leaders the church needs today.

Adult education can achieve this objective by utilizing various stages of learning, including recall, explanation, demonstration, analysis, and building upon acquired knowledge. To incorporate transformative learning and adult education into Christian discipleship, one should embrace Vella's 12 learning principles, Mezirow's transformative principle, Bloom's taxonomy of education theory, and Garner's MI theory.

As a learner and an educator, I must align transformative learning with biblical teachings, recognizing that God has equipped each individual with diverse talents and intelligence. Yet we must keep the Gospel message true (Gal 1:7). Based on my learner and leader experiences, I am ready to support and guide others in their learning journey. I am prepared to inspire others to cultivate a “mindshift” (Oakley, 2017).

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