LDR 800-12 Transformative Learning and Adult Education

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Omega Graduate School

Date: April 6, 2024

Professor

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Assignment #1 – Course Essential Elements 1. Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline: a. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the week of the residency. Be prepared to discuss and engage with other students during the live sessions. Post this document in DIAL. b. The professor will check for the quality of content and word count requirements. The grade assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

Jack Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory explains how personal transformation can occur through learning. This framework suggests that critical reflection on one's beliefs, assumptions, and perspectives can lead to a fundamental shift in understanding the self and the world. Learning is a lifelong process that begins at birth and is shaped by various sources such as parents, relatives, friends, traditions, experiences, and society. Mezirow's ten stages of transformative learning depict a series of evolving, recursive, and spiral elements that make up the learning process. The theory proposes that prior learning is the accumulation of interpreted experiences in meaning structures or frames of reference, which selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings (Rodríguez et al., 2020). Transformative learning entails critical reflection and self-examination of one's beliefs, values, and assumptions. By reflecting, individuals can uncover the underlying assumptions that shape their perspectives and consider alternative viewpoints. It is worth noting that the term "critical" in "critical reflection" can be interpreted in two ways. Critical thinking skills and attitudes, such as curiosity, reasonable doubt, intellectual stamina, or perseverance, are integral to reflection. Secondly, being critical during reflection pertains to issues surrounding the broader social context, relationships between different social groups, and value-based attitudes on fundamental social questions. Teachers are crucial in facilitating critical reflection—an approach to problem-solving.

According to Valdonė Indrašienė et al. (2023), it is crucial to establish a secure environment where individuals can freely express diverse opinions. Transformative learning hinges on a change in perspective or worldview, which occurs when people critically examine their beliefs and assumptions. Introspection can lead to new insights and perspectives that challenge our prior understanding. To achieve this transformation, we must re-evaluate our values, beliefs, and biases, which can result in a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to addressing issues in our worldview. Additionally, university teachers should be aware of and understand which study methods are best suited to developing critical thinking skills in each student. This will enable them to encourage critical reflection in the subjects they teach and replace ineffective methods with more effective ones. This process also requires teachers to have the ability to reflect on their teaching practices (Valdonė Indrašienė et al., 2023). The initial step of this process was Sub-term A, Core #1. Thanks to the guidance and support of the instructors and Omega Graduate School, I can reflect and gain a fresh perspective as an adult student with a narrow worldview shaped by my personal and professional experiences. Learning in a community setting is critical to transformative learning. Engaging in dialogue and exchanging experiences with individuals who hold differing viewpoints can expand one's knowledge and question deep-seated assumptions.

The application of Transformative Learning Theory spans multiple disciplines, such as education, counseling, social work, and adult learning. Its purpose is to encourage self-reflection, critical thinking, and personal development in individuals of all ages. Educators, trainers, and facilitators can create powerful learning experiences that inspire learners to challenge their beliefs and transform their perspectives of themselves and the world by integrating transformative learning principles into their teaching methods.

**References**

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Rodríguez Aboytes, J. G., & Barth, M. (2020). Transformative learning in sustainability: a systematic literature review (1999-2019). *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, *21*(5), 993–1013. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijshe-05-2019-0168

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