PHI 800 Transformative Learning and Adult Education

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Date (April 6, 2024)

Transformative Learning Theory

Professor

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# Assignment #1 – Course Essential Elements

1. **Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:**
   1. 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.
   2. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

# Transformative Learning Theory

Transformative learning theory is the expansion of consciousness through which an individual can question themselves about their feelings, beliefs, assumption, and perspective on their purpose (*Transformative Learning Theory by Jack Mezirow with Examples*, 2021). As with any theory there are those who embrace this theory and those who challenge this theory.

In the mid-70 Professor Jack Mezirow introduced transformative learning as an educational theory. Transformative learning theory links constructivist learning perspective with the importance of communication and reflection. Constructivist learning perspective is the idea that meaning comes from experience and the internal way people understand things. In transformative learning students challenge the way they understand things, thus taking a close look at their current personal worldview. This includes what they believe about themselves and their abilities, what they believe about the world and society, and what they believe about knowledge and how it is developed. Professor Mezirow believed there must be a situation that challenges the adult student’s personal worldview before they are able to engage in transformative learning. The journey toward a new personal worldview can be painful and difficult but it is worth the effort (“What Is Transformative Learning & How Can I Apply It?,” 2020).

Cranton looked at the works of Mezirow, Dirkx, and Brookfield to offer three major perspectives of transformative learning (Cranton, 2006). The combination of these three perspectives gives a well-rounded approach to adult learning.

1. Cognitive/rational perspective (Mezirow, 1991). This perspective emphasizes rationality, critical reflection, and ideal conditions for discourse, according to a constructivist and universal view of learning.

2. Extrarational perspective (*Dirkx, 1998*). This perspective emphasizes the emotive, imaginal, spiritual, and arts-based facets of learning beyond rationality, and which recognizes personal, intuitive, and imaginative ways of knowing that lead to individuation;

3. Social critique perspective (Brookfield, 2005). This perspective emphasizes ideological critique, unveiling oppression, and social action in the context of transformations, understood in terms of social change by “demythizing” reality, where the oppressed develop critical consciousness.

The emphasis of transformative learning is to bring meaningful change in the way the student sees themselves and the world around them rather than simply gaining knowledge about a subject. Transformational learning theory works well with adult learners.

# Works Cited

Brookfield, S. (2005). *The Power of Critical Theory: Liberating Adult Learning and Teaching*. Wiley.

Cranton, P. (2006). *Understanding and Promoting Transformative Learning: A Guide for Educators of Adults*. Wiley.

*Dirkx1998.pdf*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 4, 2024, from https://www.iup.edu/pse/files/programs/graduate\_programs\_r/instructional\_design\_and\_technology\_ma/paace\_journal\_of\_lifelong\_learning/volume\_7,\_1998/dirkx1998.pdf

Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning*. Wiley.

*Transformative Learning Theory by Jack Mezirow with Examples*. (2021, December 22). Valamis. https://www.valamis.com/hub/transformative-learning

What is Transformative Learning & How Can I Apply It? (2020, January 15). *Skill-Up Technologies*. https://skillup.tech/what-is-transformative-learning-how-can-i-apply-it/