Transformative Learning and Adult Education

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Professor

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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:** Rocco, T. S., Smith, M. C., Mizzi, R. C., Merriweather, L. R., & Hawley, J. D. (Eds.) (with American Association for Adult and Continuing Education). (2021). *The handbook of adult and continuing education* (2020 edition. First edition.). Stylus Publishing.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Historical characteristics of a pedagogical model are teacher-directed, a subject-centered orientation to learning and view of the learner’s role as a passive one. Andragogy emphasizes the learner’s experience, self-directedness, problem-centered instruction, and readiness to learn. (Knowles, 1980) The andragogical model shifted away from the pedagogical model because of the realization that adult learning is connected to multiple social and personal vicissitudes such as work, employment, technology-----matters that have to do with gaining confidence and dealing with uncertainty and unpredictability regarding daily living (Savicevic, 2008).

**Essential Element:** This element is associated with andragogy (contrast with pedagogy).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the subject of andragogy. In this chapter, the authors discuss the difference between pedagogy and andragogy teaching methods. The authors discuss how there are times when both methods can be used for their nontarget audiences, but time has proven adults learn differently than children, and thus, a method must be employed that speaks to the learning style of these adult learners.

**Contextualization:**  As an adult learner who educates adults within the spiritual realm, I have noticed a need to engage these adult learners in a space that best suits their learning styles. When we craft Bible lessons to educate our general church population, we carefully craft them according to the specific student population. We engage K-12 in a method that best suits them and our adult population in a style that best suits them to grasp the information.

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** We must understand the needs and facilities of adults of all ages if we are going to support them as learners and advance as a society (Arnett et al., 2020). Knowledge of adult development principles can help adult educators design and implement learning endeavors that facilitate adults’ adaptation to their environments (Ackerman & Kanfer, 2020). Boucouvalas (1989) noted that development is closely linked to adult learning in that it “leads to changes in the nature, social, and emotional development and their respective links to learning during adulthood.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with adragogy (the adult learning environment).

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to the discussion of adragogy, specifically regarding the adult learning environment. The authors note how, as adults advance within society and continue in the biological maturation process, it is closely linked to how they engage in the learning process. Awareness of how these adult learners engage the material and the learning process as they mature is helpful to the facilitators of adult education and those who design adult-based educational content.

**Contextualization:** I have genuinely appreciated academies like OMEGA Graduate and many other institutions that seemingly adapted their programs to the learning style of adult learners. There was a time when many colleges and universities seemed to target “adults”; their methodologies seemed targeted towards “older children” because they still employed pedagogical teaching methods. As technology progressed, many colleges adopted a more andragogical teaching method, which allowed them to craft their methodologies toward educating working adults and adults who couldn’t leave their home base.

**Source Two:** Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2014). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice* (First edition). Jossey-Bass, a Wiley brand.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Transformative learning can also be viewed from a social change perspective, or as Taylor (2008) calls it, a social-emancipatory perspective. Here the goal is to challenge and transform oppressive structures in society. In order to do this, according to the chief spokesperson for this perspective, Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, people need to first become aware of power and oppression in their own lives, and then work to change these structures. This is about transformation at both the individual and social levels. In Freire’s view these processes are inseparable.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with transformative learning theory.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to the discussion to discussion of transformative learning theory. Regarding social change related to transformative learning, one must be aware of their social stature and how it affects others and be self-aware to change that structure if it is detrimental to them or others.

**Contextualization:** Growing up in rural South GA, I became keenly aware of racism and other oppressive systems at an early age. When I got much older, my eyes were more greatly opened to how racism and oppression had even found its way into Christianity. It baffled me that a community founded upon a Man who sought to truly free all of humanity had allowed itself to be co-opted to introduce shackles based on distorted readings, personal opinions, and hermeneutical baggage. This line of reasoning helped me to be intentional in helping the black faces that I have been charged to preach to see that the biblical canon is filled with faces that look like theirs and not just in subservient roles.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** As a site for learning, classrooms of adult students can be found everywhere including colleges and universities, online, in corporate training centers, in churches, museums, or community agencies. We think of these classrooms as institutionally sponsored formal learning environments with a planned curriculum and an educator who structures the learning activities. There is usually some assessment, outcome, or closure to the experience. Students are there to learn something, and rarely is it to change their perspectives of themselves. But perspective transformations do sometimes happen, and there are some educators who actively engage in practices to promote this type of learning along with their other content-based learning objectives.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the adult learning environment.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the discussion about adult learning environments. This chapter reflects on the sites of learning for adult learners. The author states that many of these sites usually have a planned curriculum with forecasted outcomes. The least of these outcomes is perspective transformation.

**Contextualization:** While I commented that this additive to my understanding concerning the dialogue around adult learning environments, I slightly disagreed with the sentiment expressed by the authors. Though the sites the author mentions come with a planned curriculum with a nearly predetermined outcome, the author believes perspective transformation is the least of the predicted outcomes or is an unintentional outcome. I, however, approach adult education very differently personally and in educating adults. It is my intention, as a student and when I’m the instructor, to be intentional that one of the top priorities, if not the top priority, is to ensure that everyone is better leaving than when they arrived.

**Source Three:** Conway, P. F. (2022). Andragogy in prison: Higher education in prison and the tenets of adult education. *Adult Education Quarterly*, *72*(4), 361–379. <https://doi.org/10.1177/07417136221100481>

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Andragogy is premised on the basis of adult learners needing to understand the importance of learning something before actually undertaking the effort to do so. The first task of an educator is to assist learners in recognizing the value of course content and material, with particular attention focused on how such learning is relevant within students' lives. This most typically involves a process early in a course in which time is dedicated to supporting learners in discovering for themselves gaps between where they are within their own learning and where they would like to be ([25]).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of andragogy with respect to the characteristics of adult learners.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the discussion to the characteristics of adult learners. In order for instructors to facilitate giving the information and to ensure the students best grasp it is to help the learner know exactly where they are in there learning continuum and where they’d like to end.

**Contextualization:** In my context, I was best able to learn, whether guided or not, when I was honest about where I was (am) in my learning experience. I had to be frank about my deficiencies and willing to fill in those gaps to be better suited to learn and apply the information correctly.

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** This first step is especially important, but also presents unique challenges. Incarcerated students often enter prison classrooms at different points within their own educational development. Student differences in socio-economic backgrounds, prior exposure to higher education courses, time that has elapsed since being involved in educational pursuits, as well as differences in terms of the number of years remaining on prison sentences, may each impact student perspectives in relation to desired outcomes for coursework. Educators should be cognizant of how these differences might manifest themselves in the classroom, with the early parts of coursework dedicated to discerning and learning about what individual students hope to gain from the course. Achieving student academic goals may not always be easy to reconcile with the tendency of prisons to restrict what is considered permissible curricula ([ [8](https://research.ebsco.com/c/gr32rs/viewer/html/gw5y76lgwv?contentLink=%2Flinkprocessor%2Fv2-html-full-text%3FsourceRecordId%3Dgw5y76lgwv%26recordId%3Dgw5y76lgwv%26profileIdentifier%3Dgr32rs%26type%3DhtmlFullText%26lang%3Den#bib8) ]).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of andragogy concerning the characteristics of adult learners.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the discussion around the subject of the characteristics of adult learners.

**Contextualization:** I’ve witnessed that in many instances, especially in the pedagogical teaching method, a failure to account for the whole student and their background correctly will affect how a student learns. In the same way, educators of adult learners must be conscious of the culture, norms, beliefs, socio-economic background, and experiences that come with each student so that they can best craft the material and design the instructor to meet their needs.

**Source Four:** Cranton, P. (2016). *Understanding and promoting transformative learning: A guide to theory and practice* (Third edition). Stylus Publishing.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Traditional learning theory focuses on how an individual person learns, and although the context of the learning may be considered, it is generally about that person, not that person learning in and from relationships with others. This sounds odd, given the emphasis on groups and interactive methods in education, but learning has long been seen as an individual process, even though discussion and group work may be used to achieve learning. Perhaps the roots of this assumption lie in behaviorism, with its emphasis on the individual organism, or perhaps they lie in the models of assessment that drive educational systems. Intelligence and aptitude are always measured individually, and scoring systems are based on comparison and competition among individuals. Evaluation of learning is based on individual performance in education from the first grade through to doctoral studies.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of transformative learning theory.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the subject of transformative learning theory.

**Contextualization:** I’ve witnessed within the academic sphere that many assignments labeled as “group projects” ultimately become a singular project, mostly resting on the shoulders of the most competent. What group projects reveal is that our learning system is targeted toward educating and enhancing the individual. Individualism has a high value in the American educational system, and all methods of assessing if the information has been retained are through assessments focused on the individual. While this learning system works for most, including me, it can significantly hinder processes when it calls for community involvement.

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Although the debate that began in 1991 when Mezirow wrote that “adult learning transforms meaning perspectives not society” (p. 208) continues today, there seems to be a stronger sense that transformative learning theory can be more holistic in nature and incorporate both individual perspective transformation and social transformation, without arguing about which must come first. The primary educator role for fostering emancipatory learning is that of reformist. The reformer sees education as a means of helping individuals and groups exercise their own power, which may result in personal and social change.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of transformative learning theory.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the discussion concerning transformative learning theory.

**Contextualization:** I have witnessed and am a testimony to the fact that if people can be in an environment where they can learn something to improve themselves, they will often use this newfound information to improve the world around them. It starts with them educating those in their circle, and it grows from there. It is nearly, if not altogether, a form of discipleship.

**Source Five:** Hmoud, M., & Ali, S. (2024). AIEd Bloom’s taxonomy: A proposed model for enhancing educational efficiency and effectiveness in the artificial intelligence era. *The International Journal of Technologies in Learning*, *31*(2), 111–128. https://doi.org/10.18848/2327-0144/CGP/v31i02/111-128

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Recently, the educational system has undergone numerous rapid changes in the realms of scientific and technological advancements. These shifts have compelled it to alter its curricula, methodologies, and pedagogical strategies. This adjustment aims not merely to keep pace with technological evolution but also to adopt quality standards that allow for the establishment of an educational framework that harmonizes various dimensions—political, cultural, technological, and social—with both current and aspirational objectives. Given that the educational process is in a constant state of dynamism, trending toward the renewal of methods, approaches, and strategies in line with the demands of the times, the educational system has intensified its efforts toward developing an advanced electronic and technological version. This initiative is particularly evident in countries committed to the continuous development of their educational systems.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of educational taxonomies.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is variant to my understanding of the discussion around educational taxonomies. The authors seem to suggest that because we are in an evolving world and the methods of education are consistently evolving, schools, colleges, and universities should adopt AI into their pedagogical and andragogical methods of instruction. I can't entirely agree that every trend should not be adopted, especially one that makes an intimate community like education more hands-off and impersonal. Furthermore, reliance on AI severely damages our world and environment.

**Contextualization:** I fully believe in progress and that culture will often dictate our methodologies (think Netflix, Uber, and Facebook). While I believe many of these advances have been great for individuals, society, and the economy, there is one area I feel has already seen adverse effects of increasing technology – education. While I’m sure AI is a great tool, it should be just that: a tool that aids in educating those in K-12, colleges, and universities. It should not be the primary source of instruction because AI misses the human element that comes with helping students.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** AI has opened new horizons in instructional design, strategy construction, and all related matters, such as planning, organization, analysis, development, implementation, management, and evaluation (González-Pérez and Ramírez-Montoya 2022). This drives us to explore seizing the unique services and advantages provided by AI technologies in constructing and designing instruction based on sound principles that serve the educational process (Matos et al. 2017; Selwyn 2016). Despite the positives of AI, which benefit the educational system, opinions on the application of this type of education within educational institutions differ among educators, ranging from supporters who are extremely optimistic to opponents who are highly skeptical. This has led to shortcomings in presenting a proposed model that enables us to develop a pedagogical conception for integrating AI technologies in a way that enhances the educational environment (Zawacki-Richter et al. 2019).

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of educational taxonomies.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is variant of my understanding of the discussion concerning educational taxonomies.

**Contextualization:** While it is true that AI has opened up new horizons in instructional design and other areas, I am with those who are hesitant to fully adopt it and integrate it into the system of educational instruction. We still do not know much about this new technology, but we do know it is very impersonal and cannot factor in the human equation that must be at the forefront of educating the populace. Like any tool, AI must be placed within its proper perspective and should not be considered substitutionary.

**Source Six:** Arce, Patrica A. (2006). Learning Futures: Using Multiple Intelligence Theory for Adult Learners. *Futurics*, *30*(3/4), 89. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/learning-futures-using-multiple-intelligence/docview/219812129/se-2

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** When Howard Gardner first explored the theory of Multiple Intelligence, his focus was on childhood learning. But over time, his theory has been adapted to include adult learning as well as organizational leadership; namely, how to get the most from one's employees. As more adults return to school, knowing the best ways of developing curriculum has become crucial to their ultimate success. And as business has become ever more competitive, attracting the best workforce possible and getting the most out of them has also become a high priority. MI has proven to be helpful on both fronts.

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of multiple intelligence theory.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the discussion around multiple intelligence theory. The author suggests that employers are seeking the best employees as the business world expands, and as many adults return to the classroom, schools are seeking ways to develop the best curriculum to suit their growing and aging population.

**Contextualization:** As I look at my learning experience, especially now in my late 40s and looking to explore other career fields to supplement what I currently do, I want to ensure I have credentials that will make me attractive to employers. Further, as I return to the classroom, I face some difficulties because I’m more of a visual learner. If my instructional period can be incorporated with visual learning, I can better grasp and demonstrate the material.

**Source Seven:** Arce, Patrica A. (2006). Learning Futures: Using Multiple Intelligence Theory for Adult Learners. *Futurics*, *30*(3/4), 89. https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/learning-futures-using-multiple-intelligence/docview/219812129/se-2

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** The current generation of students is often referred to as "digital natives," having grown up in an era of rapid technological advancement. They are accustomed to interactive and dynamic content online, which can lead to a preference for engaging and outstanding teaching methods. As we all are aware, students have diverse learning styles and preferences [1] Some may thrive in traditional lecture formats, while others require more interactive and hands-on experiences to effectively grasp concepts. If a teaching method doesn't cater to a variety of learning styles, some students might feel left behind. Furthermore, when lecturers solely depend on conventional lectures, they might encounter challenges in building a personal rapport with their students [2].

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element of multiple intelligence theory.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This comment is additive to my understanding of the discussion around multiple intelligence theory. The author suggests that many students entering their undergrad years are coming with a distinct gravitation towards digital learning and receiving information from digital and social content. With this being the case, many of them can’t grasp information relayed by conventional means. This necessarily requires educators to seek different methods to relay the information.

**Contextualization:** As one who instructs on the spiritual level, I have to ensure we are engaging all our learners in a way that best engages them and guarantees they will grasp the information. For my older adult learners, conventional means of instruction seem to still work best, though many are able to work within the digital sphere. For my younger audiences, it requires being more innovative and using the methodologies that best align with their style and those used in pedagogical instruction. They need more digital than hardcopy material.

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