PHI 800-12 Transformative Learning and Adult Education

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Omega Graduate School

Date October 19, 2024

Professor

Dr. Sara Reichard

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. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade

assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

**Andragogy: The Foundation of Adult Learning**

Andragogy, a term popularized by Malcolm Knowles, refers to the methodologies and principles inherent in adult education. In contrast to pedagogy, which emphasizes child-centered learning, andragogy recognizes that adults learn differently due to their diverse experiences, motivations, and the need for autonomy. Understanding and applying the principles of andragogy is essential for facilitating effective adult learning, particularly within professional and higher education contexts.

Knowles identified six core principles of andragogy: the learner's need to know, self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning, and motivation (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2015). These principles illustrate that adult learners are generally self-directed, bringing a wealth of prior knowledge and experience into the learning environment. This background serves as a valuable resource; adults often prefer learning that has practical, real-world applications. For example, they are frequently motivated to acquire skills that directly enhance their careers, personal development, or societal contributions.

A key distinction between adult and child learners lies in the role of autonomy. Adults typically assume responsibility for their own learning, actively seeking opportunities for self-directed study and participating in shaping their educational experiences. Merriam and Bierema (2013) emphasize that adult education should empower learners to make choices and engage actively in their learning processes. This approach fosters a sense of ownership and investment in the material, which in turn leads to deeper engagement and retention.

Furthermore, the principle of readiness to learn is central to andragogy. Adults are inclined to pursue learning that is immediately relevant to their personal or professional lives. Consequently, adult educators must connect lessons to the real-world challenges and objectives of their learners. By incorporating problem-solving tasks, case studies, and collaborative projects, educators can enhance engagement and make the learning experience more meaningful.

In conclusion, andragogy offers a robust framework for understanding adult learning. By acknowledging the need for autonomy, relevance, and practical application among adult learners, educators can design more effective and engaging learning experiences that address the unique characteristics of this demographic.

WORKS CITED

Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F., & Swanson, R. A. (2015). *The adult learner: The definitive classic in adult education and human resource development* (8th ed.). Routledge.

Merriam, S. B., & Bierema, L. L. (2013). *Adult learning: Linking theory and practice*. Jossey-Bass.