PHI 800-12 Transformative Learning and Adult Education

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Omega Graduate School

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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**: Knowles, M. S. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy*. Cambridge Adult Education.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Knowles (1980) states that the assumptions of andragogy are that adults are self-directed, have life experiences that contribute to their learning, are motivated to learn by internal factors, and setting goals. Knowles also asserts that adult learning requires a different approach than that used with children, as adults typically prefer to be responsible for their own learning. They bring a readiness to learn that is often based on the tasks and challenges they face in their social roles, such as in their professional or personal lives. Moreover, Knowles argues that adult learners are generally practical, seeking out learning that is relevant to their current life circumstances and immediately applicable. This self-motivated, experience-based model makes andragogy unique and distinct in its focus on adults' needs and capacities. (p. 44)

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element andragogy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** From a variant perspective, Knowles’ model may not universally apply to all adult learners, especially those unfamiliar with self-directed learning. Learners from pedagogical environments may prefer structured guidance and feedback, finding it challenging to transition to an autonomous learning model. Additionally, the assumption of intrinsic motivation may overlook adults who engage in education due to external pressures, like job requirements. Therefore, while influential, Knowles’ model may require practical adaptations for a broader range of adult learners.

**Contextualization:** As an adjunct professor, I see how Knowles’ principles may be adapted to meet various learner needs. I would like to begin incorporating more self-directed learning modules with a blend of instructor-led sessions in the courses that I teach, especially since I have recently been given some curricular autonomy in my courses. Educational programs for working adults should offer more guided pathways to account for time constraints and external pressures. These adaptations reflect the importance of balancing autonomy with support to create more inclusive learning environments. By adapting Knowles' framework, I can meet these diverse needs while beginning to fully embrace andragogy’s core principles.

**Source Two**: Knowles, M. S. (1984). *Andragogy in action: Applying modern principles of adult learning*. Jossey-Bass.

**Quote/Paraphrase: “**Andragogy is premised on at least four crucial assumptions about the characteristics of adult learners that are different from those of child learners: (1) Their self-concept moves from one of being a dependent personality toward one of being a self-directing human being; (2) They accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasing resource for learning; (3) Their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles; and (4) Their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application, and accordingly, their orientation toward learning shifts from one of subject-centeredness to one of problem-centeredness.” (Knowles, 1984, p. 55).

**Essential Element:** This quote is associated with the essential element Andragogy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote from Knowles is additive to my understanding that as adults mature, they prefer autonomy in learning, using life experiences as a resource to understand the latest information. Their motivation is often linked to their evolving roles, making education relevant to career or family responsibilities. Additionally, adults prioritize immediate application of knowledge, gravitating towards practical, problem-solving tasks rather than abstract subjects.

**Contextualization:** During my career,Knowles’ assumptions about adult learning have been reflected in my job training, where hands-on, problem-solving tasks dominate. For instance, I have been involved in employee training programs that use real-life scenarios to engage adult learners, aligning with my need for instantly applicable knowledge at work. These training programs were online education platforms that used self-paced modules, allowing me to immediately apply new skills in the workplace.

**Source Three**: Wang, L., & Zhang, T. (2021). Application of andragogical principles in online learning: Fostering engagement and autonomy among adult learners. *Journal of Adult Learning, 42*(3), 112–128.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Wang and Zhang (2021) state that integrating andragogy in online education has proven effective in increasing motivation and completion rates among adult students, who often juggle work and family responsibilities alongside their studies. This approach also validates the learner's prior experience, making the learning process both personalized and relevant. Andragogy in online learning thus meets the demands of adult learners, providing them with a supportive and flexible educational experience. (p. 115)

**Essential Element:** This quote is associated with the essential element Andragogy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is variant to my andragogical understanding of the strength of online learning, as self-directed learning may not suit all adult learners, especially older adult learners new to online platforms. A lack of pedagogical structure may lead to disengagement or feelings of isolation, impacting motivation. Furthermore, some adult learners may lack the technological skills necessary to navigate online courses independently, creating additional barriers, especially in complex subjects that require additional support.

**Contextualization:** Recently, I was offered an opportunity to conduct a training class for my wife’s company.My wife is a virtual program manager for a technological company that trains older adults to become more familiar with technology. Online educational programs should require free online training for middle aged to older adults who work blue collar jobs or have not kept up with today’s technological advances.Access to similar types of resources should be offered as a form of structured pedagogical support to successfully complete online education programs, synchronizing with andragogical support.

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Wang and Zhang (2021) emphasize the importance of collaborative learning in online education for adults, stating that facilitating peer interaction and collaborative projects in online courses fosters a sense of community among adult learners, enhancing engagement and knowledge sharing. (p. 120)

**Essential Element:** This quote is associated with the essential element Andragogy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive to my understanding as it aligns with andragogical principles by leveraging benefits from rich experiences and promoting mutual learning. By incorporating collaborative group work, such as discussion boards, educators can create more interactive and supportive online learning environments that cater to the social aspects of adult education.This highlights the need for online courses to incorporate interactive elements that create active participation among students.

**Contextualization:** As an educator, I have taught more pedagogically using online education platforms such as Blackboard and Brightspace. These platforms have special tools, such as discussion boards and in-platform messaging, allowing learners to share documents and engage outside of class hours, at their convenience. At certain times, I have ignored these features as I only focused on individual student retention using assessments and exams. Now, I can begin facilitating more group activities through online platforms in my courses, setting clear expectations, encouraging students to assign roles among themselves, and monitoring progress within the groups to ensure equitable participation. By implementing these strategies, my online and hybrid courses can create learning experiences that make use of more andragogical principles.

**Source Four:** Smith, D., & Taylor, J. (2021). Integrating transformative learning in leadership development: Promoting adaptability and empathy. *Journal of Adult Education, 52*(1), 29–45.

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Smith and Taylor (2021) state that transformative learning theory has shown significant potential in enhancing adaptability and empathy among adult learners, especially in leadership contexts. By engaging in self-reflection and re-evaluating personal beliefs, adults develop a heightened awareness of diverse perspectives and a willingness to adapt. Transformative learning also encourages critical thinking and emotional growth, which are both essential skills in today’s multicultural and dynamic workplaces. Specifically, when integrated into leadership training, transformative learning enables individuals to better manage interpersonal relationships. (p. 31)

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

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** A variant understanding of transformative learning in leadership training may argue that it places excessive emphasis on self-reflection, potentially overshadowing practical skill development. While introspection is valuable, some leaders prioritize action-oriented skills, such as strategic planning, over emotional awareness. Additionally, self-reflective practices may feel uncomfortable or intrusive to individuals unaccustomed to examining personal beliefs within a professional context. Transformative learning may not suit industries where quick decision-making is prioritized over prolonged self-examination. While transformative learning has strengths, its focus on introspection may not align with the practical needs of all leadership contexts.

**Contextualization**: I have worked extensively as a leader in the non-profit industry, where practical skills are paramount. Transformative learning theory is usually blended into a structured, task-oriented training to include self-reflection but only after overemphasis on actionable skills. Soft-skills training sessions that I participated in only engaged brief reflective exercises without extensive introspection, focusing more on technical and strategic competencies. Organizations I have worked for balanced this by making transformative learning more attractive through incentivized meetings called “lunch and learn”, allowing leaders to engage at their comfort level. This approach caused staff participants to benefit from transformative principles without undermining their need for practical skill development.

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Smith and Taylor (2021) show the significance of experiential learning in leadership development, and that engaging leaders in real-world problem-solving activities facilitates transformative learning by bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application. This approach aligns with transformative learning theory, which shows the importance of experience in deep, meaningful learning. By engaging leaders in authentic challenges, organizations create adaptability and empathy, which are essential qualities for effective leadership. (p. 38)

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

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive to my understanding of transformative learning in that experiential learning mirrors real-world problem-solving activities. Leaders can develop the ability to navigate complex situations that require innovative and immediate solutions and the consideration of multiple perspectives. This occurs through the integration of experience and reflection, giving leaders opportunities to practice decision-making, problem-solving, and interpersonal skills in a controlled environment, increasing their development in both adaptability and empathy.

**Contextualization:** In support of experiential learning, as a non-profit leader, development programs that I created for my teams always had structured debriefing sessions following experiential activities, which allowed staff to reflect on their experiences, discuss outcomes, and extract key learnings. I guided these discussions, helping my leaders connect their experiences to similar theoretical frameworks and personal development goals. I aimed to provide a safe environment for experimentation and learning from failure. By combining practical application with guided reflection, any organization can maximize the transformative potential of experiential learning.

**Source Five:** Garcia, T., & Chen, Y. (2021). Adaptive learning technologies and Bloom’s taxonomy in online education: Supporting cognitive progression. *Journal of Educational Technology*, 28(4), 56-70.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Grace and Chen (2021) state that the application of Bloom’s taxonomy in online learning environments has led to innovative approaches that allow students to progress through cognitive levels at their own pace. Adaptive learning technologies, for example, use data to adjust the difficulty and content of assignments based on a student’s individual progress. This personalized approach aligns well with Bloom’s hierarchical model, encouraging masterybefore advancing to higher levels of cognitive skills. Studies show that this self-paced learning can improve retention and engagement, especially in adult learners who benefit from flexibility. The taxonomy remains relevant in guiding the design of online learning platforms and in creating adaptive assessments. (p. 58)

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

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This study is additive to my understanding that Bloom’s taxonomy complements adaptive learning technologies, which personalize education by adjusting to student progress. Through adaptive assessments and content adjustments, online learning environments support cognitive progression with precision, demonstrating the relevance of Bloom’s taxonomy in digital education. Garcia and Chen’s findings illustrate that Bloom’s framework provides a structured pathway for learners to develop skills sequentially, benefiting from a personalized, self-paced approach.

**Contextualization:** At Long Island University, where I teach, professors do not often use adaptive technologies that allow students to progress at their own pace, but rather to meet key syllabus deadlines irrespective of individual student learning styles. This approach is not effective for students who may be behind the rest of a group in a cohort. As a graduate student in my master’s program, I was balancing my studies with other responsibilities, and I often fell behind in the course, especially among my groupmates, which shows that Bloom’s adaptive learning structure would have been a valuable tool for my success. Even among groups, personalized educational formats can be useful.

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Grace and Chen (2021) state that integrating adaptive learning systems with Bloom's Taxonomy enables personalized instruction that promotes higher order thinking skills, thereby facilitating deeper learning experiences for students. This approach ensures that online educational platforms not only adapt to individual learner needs but also systematically guide students through progressively complex cognitive tasks, for greater comprehension and mastery of subject matter. (p. 63)

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

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** While integrating adaptive learning technologies with Bloom's Taxonomy offers significant benefits, a variant understanding is that too much reliance on technology may overlook the nuanced needs of learners that only human instructors can address. Adaptive systems may not fully capture the complexities of individual learning processes, potentially leading to a one-size-fits-all approach despite personalization efforts. Additionally, the effectiveness of such technologies depends on the quality of their design and the accuracy of their algorithms in assessing and responding to learner needs. Therefore, while beneficial, the integration of adaptive learning technologies with educational taxonomies should be approached with consideration of these potential limitations.

**Contextualization:** I have taken several hybrid courses in my years as a student. I witnessed the attempt to adopt a blended learning approach, combining adaptive technologies with traditional instruction. In this model, my professors provided personalized online practice and assessment, while also offering guidance, feedback, and support that technology alone could not deliver. This combination allowed for the strengths of both adaptive technologies and human instruction to be utilized, catering specifically to my nuanced needs during each course. My cognitive skills continued to develop while maintaining the personalized touch. Those experiences helped me as I became a professor a few years later. I am now also experiencing this again as a student at Omega Graduate School.

**Source Six:** Miller, C., & Lee, A. (2022). Multiple intelligences in the digital age: Online learning and individualized education. *Educational Technology Research and Development, 70*(1), 32–45.

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Miller and Lee(2022)state thatleveraging digital tools to address various intelligences allows educators to create more effective online learning experiences. Integrating technology with multiple intelligences theory can enhance student learning. This approach aligns with Gardner's framework, which identifies diverse intelligences such as linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, and interpersonal. By utilizing digital resources tailored to these intelligences, educators can provide a more inclusive and adaptive educational environment. (p.37)

**Essential Element:** This quote is associated with the essential element multiple intelligences theory.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive to my understanding that there is transformative potential of using digital tools in addressing multiple intelligences within educational contexts. Through the integration of multimedia elements, interactive simulations, and collaborative platforms, educators can create specifically tailored learning experiences that improve participation and understanding. This approach reflects Gardner’s theory, using technology to embrace diverse ways of thinking and create a more inclusive and meaningful learning experience.

**Contextualization:** As an aspirant author, I have found a profound interest in the study of parables.Digital storytelling can resonate with linguistic learners, while visual simulations effectively engage spatial learners. I would like to combine the two. One career goal of mine is to write literary works that can be developed into both audio and visual adaptations, to address the distinct types of learning and intelligence that consumers will have.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** In their 2022 study, Miller and Lee explore the integration of multiple intelligences theory into digital education, emphasizing the importance of addressing logical-mathematical intelligence. Incorporating problem-solving software and analytical tools in online learning platforms effectively engages students with strong logical-mathematical intelligence, enhancing their critical thinking and reasoning skills. This approach aligns with Howard Gardner's framework, which identifies logical-mathematical intelligence as the capacity to analyze problems logically, conduct mathematical operations, and investigate issues scientifically. By utilizing digital resources tailored to this intelligence, educators can provide a more inclusive and adaptive educational environment that caters to individual cognitive strengths. (p. 39)

**Essential Element:** This quote is associated with the essential element multiple intelligences theory.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** While the integration of digital tools to support logical-mathematical intelligence offers clear advantages, it is essential to recognize that technology may reduce the role of traditional teaching methods and in-person interactions. These face-to-face engagements are vital for developing skills such as interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence. Digital tools should be viewed as a complement to, rather than a replacement for traditional educational practices. Striking this balance ensures a more holistic learning experience.

**Contextualizatio**n: As an adjunct professor, I have found that combining digital tools with in-person teaching effectively meets the varied needs of students. I always use online video simulations to help explain complex concepts, engaging logical-mathematical and spatial intelligences, while classroom activities such as small group discussions build people-skills. This hybrid method combines the benefits of technology with the irreplaceable value of in-person interaction. By balancing these teaching strategies, educators like me create meaningful learning experiences that embrace the many different ways students understand and engage with course material, reflecting the principles of Gardner’s multiple intelligences.

**Source Seven**: Lee, A. M., & Johnson, P. K. (2023). The impact of self-directed learning on adult learners’ outcomes: An analysis of andragogical practices. *International Journal of Lifelong Education, 42*(2), 89–105.

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**: Lee and Johnson (2023) emphasize the importance of self-directed learning among adult learners by encouraging autonomy in the learning process and equipping individuals with the skills necessary for lifelong learning. This perspective aligns with traditional andragogical principles, which advocate for educational approaches that empower learners to take control of their educational journeys. (p. 98)

**Essential Element:** This comment is associated with the essential element andragogy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis**: This quote is additive to my understanding that autonomy plays a vital role in achieving positive learning outcomes for adult learners. When learners are given the freedom to guide their own education, they become more invested in their progress and more likely to connect their studies to personal and professional aspirations. This approach makes learning more meaningful and practical, as adults can focus on what matters most to them.

**Contextualization:** In the courses that I have taught, I have seen that personalized learning projects, independent research opportunities, and flexible learning designs are better received by adult learners. I have taught independent study courses, and the quality of that work far exceeded the quality of the pedagogical courses. The students were engaged in learning experiences that felt more relevant and purposeful to their future career goals. I now realize that teaching independent study courses was my unbeknownst introduction to andragogical practice.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Lee and Johnson (2023) show that adult learners bring a wealth of experience to educational settings, which not only shapes their expectations but also provides a foundation for acquiring fresh knowledge. These experiences serve as a critical resource, enabling learners to draw connections between theoretical content and real-world applications. Adult education practices actively integrate learners' prior experiences through reflective activities, collaborative discussions, and problem-solving tasks. (p. 96)

**Essential Element:** This quote is associated with the essential element andragogy.

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This quote is additive to my understanding that experiential learning values the knowledge adult learners bring. Integrating their experiences through learning tools such as case studies and the delegation of leading projects makes learning more relevant and engaging. It affirms their existing knowledge while helping them apply new concepts in practical ways, leading to improved performance and retention.

**Contextualization**: As a college educator, I see how experiential learning enriches professional development, vocational training, and continuing education. Additionally, in healthcare programs that I have run, we used simulations and case studies to connect theory to practice, building a database of solutions with critical-thinking skills. Moreover, I use stories from my professional experience to help my adult students in the classroom have a sort of mental field experience that they can refer to once out in the real-world again.

**Works Cited**

Garcia, T., & Chen, Y. (2021). Adaptive learning technologies and Bloom’s taxonomy in online education: Supporting cognitive progression. *Journal of Educational Technology, 28*(4), 56–70.

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