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 #3 – Essay

1. Write a 5-page paper based on one (1) of the three (3) items below:

● List and discuss the fundamental principles of adult education theory. Identify

elements of the OGS degree program that correspond to each principle.

● Explain Jack Mezirow’s transformative learning theory. How does the OGS

approach to transformative learning promote critical reflection for transcending

barriers to personal growth and social impact?

● Assess Jane Vella's 12 Twelve Principles for Effective Adult Learning and the

application of quantum thinking. Discuss how OGS promotes quantum thinking

(holistic, integrated, spiritual, and energetic).

2. Paper Outline

a. Begin with an introductory paragraph that has a succinct thesis statement.

b. Address the topic of the paper with critical thought.

c. End with a conclusion that reaffirms your thesis.

d. Use a minimum of seven scholarly research sources (two books and the

remaining scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles).

**Integrating Mezirow’s Transformative Learning Theory and Omega Graduate School’s Adult Learning Model**

In a world of rapid change and increasing complexity, adult education must equip individuals to critically examine their beliefs and engage with diverse perspectives. Jack Mezirow’s transformative learning theory provides a framework for achieving this. The Omega Graduate School (OGS) builds upon these principles through its interdisciplinary and reflective approach, enabling learners to address personal and societal challenges effectively. How do transformative learning theory and OGS’s adult learning model converge to inspire personal growth and social impact? The integration of transformative learning theory and OGS’s adult learning model is best demonstrated through critical reflection, dialogue, and action.

**Critical Reflection**

**Role in Transformative Learning**

Critical reflection lies at the heart of transformative learning. According to Mezirow (1991), critical reflection involves reassessing deeply held assumptions and beliefs, which often develop through cultural and personal experiences. These frames of reference, while useful, can become limiting when left unexamined. Transformative learning encourages individuals to evaluate their assumptions to adopt more inclusive perspectives. Mezirow identifies critical reflection as a process that moves learners from passive acceptance of existing beliefs to actively questioning their validity. Disorienting dilemmas, which are situations that challenge deeply imbedded assumptions, frequently initiate this process. For example, encountering unfamiliar cultural practices may prompt a learner to reevaluate their ethnocentric biases (Mezirow, 2000).

**Critical Reflection at OGS**

OGS incorporates critical reflection through a specific practice called developmental readings; a process that makes the learner contextualize additive and variant analyses of carefully selected readings related to core elements of each course. This activity challenges learners to interrogate their assumptions and experiences, and to connect discovered insights from the readings to real-world contexts. Carpenter and Ritchie (2024) highlight that self-directed learning strategies, such as those used at OGS, enhance critical thinking and adaptability by encouraging learners to take ownership of their educational journey. By embedding critical reflection into its curriculum, OGS ensures that learners not only develop self-awareness, but also cultivate the analytical skills needed to address societal issues effectively.

**Dialogue**

**Role in Transformative Learning**

Dialogue serves as another cornerstone of transformative learning, providing a platform for exchanging with diverse perspectives. Mezirow (2000) emphasizes that dialogue allows learners to evaluate their assumptions through the lens of others, broadening their understanding, and refining their perspectives. These conversations promote mutual respect and intellectual openness, both of which are essential for transformative education.

Dialogue facilitates communicative learning, where individuals collaboratively explore beliefs, values, and emotions. Unlike instrumental learning, which focuses on acquiring specific skills or knowledge, communicative learning emphasizes understanding and integrating diverse viewpoints into the learning process. This exchange of ideas deepens learners’ capacity for empathy and critical analysis (Mezirow, 1991).

**Dialogue at OGS**

OGS integrates dialogue into its educational model through collaborative discussion boards, interdisciplinary conference seminars, and online residencies. These settings encourage learners to engage in meaningful conversations that support or challenge current and new schools of thought. Hogan and Kloubert (2020) note that dialogue promotes empathy and adaptability, qualities essential for navigating sociological complexities. By promoting dialogue, OGS not only enhances individual understanding but also cultivates a collaborative learning environment where learners can discuss solutions to shared challenges.

**Action**

**Role in Transformative Learning**

Transformative learning extends beyond reflection and dialogue to include applying new insights to effect change. Wang et. al (2020) describes action as the process of translating transformative learning into meaningful behaviors and decisions. Without this step, learning remains merely theoretical and fails to produce tangible outcomes.

Action bridges the gap between learning and real-world application. It involves implementing the knowledge gained through critical reflection and dialogue to address real-world challenges. For instance, a leader who critically reflects on their biases and engages in dialogue with diverse stakeholders can give directives conducted by informed actions to create a more productive organizational culture (Mezirow, 2000).

**Action at OGS**

OGS emphasizes the application of transformative learning through action research projects. These activities enable learners to connect theory with practice, addressing societal challenges such as education inequities and public health disparities. Qasserras (2024) highlights that reflective practices in action-oriented learning environments significantly enhance critical thinking skills and decision-making capabilities. Through its focus on action, OGS ensures that students not only gain theoretical knowledge but also develop the skills to create and implement solutions.

**Critical Reflection, Dialogue, and Action in Synergy**

**Interdisciplinary Applications**

The integration of critical reflection, dialogue, and action represents the essence of transformative learning at OGS. Together, these elements enable learners to achieve personal growth and social change. OGS’s interdisciplinary approach enhances the synergy between these elements. By encouraging learners to draw insights from multiple disciplines, OGS mirrors Mezirow’s emphasis on reflective learning. Carpenter and Ritchie (2024) demonstrate how interdisciplinary strategies enrich reflective practices, provide mutual understanding and integrated problem-solving.

**Faith and Ethical Dimensions**

It is important to note that as part of this synergetic formula, OGS also integrates faith-based ideology, which provides a moral and ethical framework for transformative learning. This aligns with Mezirow’s view that learning encompasses intellectual, emotional, and ethical growth (Kruszelnicki, 2019). By connecting critical reflection, dialogue, and action with spiritual values, OGS ensures that learners address societal challenges with integrity and compassion.

**Conclusion**

The integration of transformative learning theory and OGS’s adult learning model is best demonstrated through critical reflection, dialogue, and action, as these elements enable learners to achieve personal growth and impactful social change. By embedding reflective practices, promoting meaningful dialogue, and emphasizing actionable insights, OGS exemplifies the transformative power of Mezirow’s framework. As learners engage with these principles, they not only develop the capacity for critical thinking and empathy but also contribute to needful societal change.

What are some barriers to transformative learning that might exist in our current contexts, and how could these be overcome to create greater personal and social growth? How does the interplay of reflection, dialogue, and action equip us to address the complexities of today’s interconnected world? As society continues to evolve, the synergy of critical reflection, dialogue, and action remains indispensable for equipping individuals to navigate complexity and create lasting impact. Transformative learning, as practiced at OGS, offers a necessary roadmap for cultivating adaptive and socially responsible scholar-practitioners and adult learners.

**References**

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