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Understanding Andragogy: A Discussion on Adult Learning

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PHI 800 Transformative Learning and Adult Education

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Assignment #1 – Course Essential Elements

1. Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:

a. Weekend Residency: 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).

Understanding Andragogy: A Discussion on Adult Learning

Definition of Andragogy

Andragogy, introduced by Malcolm Knowles, refers to the art and science of helping adults learn, distinct from Pedagogy, which focuses on child education (Knowles & Holton, 2020). Knowles' pivotal work, including "The Modern Practice of Adult Education," emphasized self-directed learning and the unique needs of adult learners (Knowles & Holton, 2020).

Principles of Adult Learning

Adult learning principles revolve around self-direction, the utilization of prior experiences, and relevance to life context. Adults prefer to take responsibility for learning, drawing on their rich life experiences as a resource (Knowles & Holton, 2020). Learning must also apply to their immediate personal and professional situations, making it inherently practical (Knowles & Holton, 2020).

Characteristics of Adult Learners

Adult learners are often intrinsically motivated, valuing education for personal satisfaction or career advancement rather than external rewards. They bring diverse experiences that enhance the learning environment, and they seek knowledge that can be directly applied to solve real-world problems (Knowles & Holton, 2020). These characteristics set them apart from younger learners, who might be more extrinsically motivated.

Learning Environment

A supportive and flexible learning environment is crucial in Andragogy. It respects the autonomy of adults, promotes collaboration, and adapts to their needs. Creating such an environment fosters trust and openness, essential for effective adult education.

Implications for Educators

Drawing from my experience as an elementary school teacher, Andragogy principles can inform practices even for younger learners. Encouraging self-direction and practical application can foster independence and critical thinking. Adapting strategies to engage adult learners involves recognizing their need for relevance and autonomy, which can also be beneficial in a Pre-K to 6th-grade setting.

Broader Perspective

Engaging in adult learning myself broadens my perspective as an educator. It underscores the importance of lifelong learning, and enhancing personal and professional growth. Conveying the value of lifelong learning to my students and demonstrating this through my actions can inspire them to embrace continuous education.

Conclusion

Understanding Andragogy is essential in both adult education and elementary teaching. The interconnectedness of learning across different age groups highlights the importance of adaptive teaching methods catering to all learners. By embracing these principles, educators can create more engaging and effective learning experiences.

References

Knowles, M. S., & Holton, E. F. (2020). Andragogy. Retrieved from

<https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Andragogy-Knowles-Holton/806b42093a6d6b1ee22f3693543bdad731e4e045>