PHI 800: Transformative Learning and Adult Education

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Professor

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***Assignment #1 – Core Essential Elements***

1. Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:
   1. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the first week of the term. Post this document in DIAL.
   2. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements. Grade assigned will be Credit or No Credit (CR/NC).

**Course Essential Elements**

1. Andragogy
2. Transformative Learning Theory
3. Educational Taxonomies
4. Multiple Intelligences Theory

It is often argued by behavioralist psychological theory that all learning is a result of one’s change in behavior as an observable phenomenon (Merriam et al., 2007). While behavioral theory has its roots in more observable concrete scientific methods than other areas of psychology, it must be shared that since learning involves cognition, it is not possible to observe one’s thoughts and learned schemes as learning is developed within the mind. Thus, the concept of learning can be viewed in more holistic and varying theoretical frameworks, involving cognitive viewpoints, phenomenological psychological frameworks, humanistic psychology, and Gestalt psychology (Knowles, 2005). Ultimately, the epistemology of learning stems from more than just one psychological perspective.

Since learning is more than just a behavioral change, it can be viewed as a phenomenological process, where a whole-person perspective incorporates an individual’s past experience, assumptions, and motivation for learning. One such viewpoint that involves a holistic approach to learning is the focus of Andragogy, which involves adult learning. In this short paper, a brief understanding of the framework of Andragogy will be discussed.

**Andragogy**

Originally coined by Malcome Knowles (1968), the concept of Andragogy ignited a focus on adult learning and greatly differed in the framework perspective from its original counterpart of Pedagogy, which is the practice of child learning (Merriam et al., 2007). This distinction upon adult learning initially set upon four different assumptions for the adult learner. According to Knowles (1980), adult learners are (1) mature and self-directed in their learning; (2) adults have a wide variety of experience that is used in the learning process; (3) adults learning is often related to time-bound motivations of “readiness,” meaning that there is a need to learn due to one’s relevant life goals an objectives; and (4) adult learners are focused on the process of solving problems with learning. Knowles (1984) later added two more assumptions, making 6 total attributes of adult learners. These two are: (5) adults are driven by an intrinsic motivation to learn, and (6) adults are best taught when there is an explanation for the need to learn knowledge. In essence, want to know why the knowledge is meaningful and having a contextual insight as to why it is important for them to know is a fundamental need for the average adult learner.

It is important to address that andragogy is viewed as a theory of adult learning, but is often associated as more of a framework for adult learning. There are critics of andragogy that emphasizes the notion that andragogy often overemphasizes these six assumptions of adult learning, without considering societal and cultural influences on learning (Merriam et al., 2007). For example, often with individuals who associate in collectivistic cultural upbringing emphasize learning much differently that focus on the family unit and generational cultural insights that is pass from generation to generation. In addition, Non-Western cultural ways of learning may not often fit in the andragogy and assumptions (Merriam, 2007). These are just a few areas where andragogy and the assumptions may not fit according to the assumption model proposed.

**Conclusion**

While adults may learn for a number of reasons, it is important that scholar-practitioners to consider that there are varying theories of human learning and development. For adults, Knowles’s framework and assumptions for andragogy seem promising, especially since the focus of study has been around for over half a century. While there are likely many more approaches to adult learning and development, it is important to consider how Knowles’s viewpoint and contribution to the current research has led the way for emerging thoughts and theories of adult learning frameworks.

**References**

Knowles, M. S. (1968). Andragogy, not pedagogy*. Adult Leadership, 16*(10), 350-352, 386.

Knowles, M. S. (1980). *The modern practice of adult education: From pedagogy to andragogy* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

Knowles, M. S. (1984). *The adult learner: A neglected species.* (3rd ed.). Gulf Publishing Co.

Knowles, M. S. (2005). *The adult learner* (6th ed). Elsevier.

Merriam, S. B. (2007). *Non-Western perspectives on learning and knowing: Perspectives from around the world.* Krieger Publishing Co.

Merriam, S. B., Caffarella, R. S., & Baumgartner, L. M. (2007). *Learning in adulthood* (3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.