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Adult Education - Part 1
Foundation of Adult Education
Question 1

Define what is meant by adult learning. List and explain the six assumptions of andragogy as stated by Knowles. Prepare an argument that supports the need for each of these principles when facilitating adult learning.

Defining Adult Learning

Adult learning is, at least in part defined according to the six assumptions of andragogy as stated by Knowles. Further, the definition of adult learning includes formal, non-formal, and informal lifelong learning activities, which are frequently repeated by adults as related to specific

education and training activities designed to acquire or expand basic knowledge or skill (Hansman & Mott, 2015).

Knowles' Six Assumptions

Knowles (1984), a well-respected American educational expert, generated a system for understanding and explaining adult education, according to his own definition of the term "Androgyny." Androgyny is, according to Knowles (1984) the art of adult learning, or any form of learning. It is defined by six specific principles or assumptions: self-concept, adult learning experiences, learning readiness, orientation toward learning, motivation and need. Each of these assumptions is directly connected to the greater questions of how and why adult learners invest in their own education.

Self-Concept

According to Knowles (1984) an adult learner's understanding of their "self" is essentially tied to their ability to choose what, when, and where, and how they learn. According to Hanson and Mott (2010) this is significant because those who are not independent, or do not have a strong sense of self, will need support from educators, or educational support staff in developing a connection to the material they are learning. In other words, it is key for adults to have a clear understanding of how learning something new will connect to who they are or who they want to become.

In connection with concept, McCleod (2007) explains that self-esteem and self-actualization, which are both also part of Maslow's (1968) hierarchy of needs, are major components of adult educational investment. Adult students must be learning to full fill a need, in direct connection with their vision of their self, or their life as a whole.

When facilitating adult education, teachers can leverage this need to increase student attention and retention but specifically helping them discover who they are and how the material

covered can be tied to the bigger picture, or the desired outcome as it relates to that individual's self-concept.

Experience

Experience, as one of the key components of Androgyny, has to do with the life and work related experiences that adult learners bring to the table, which youth do not. Understanding and capitalizing on this assumption is one of the major differences between teaching children, and teaching adult learners. The wealth of knowledge adult learners bring to conversations, based on previous knowledge, makes them a valuable resource for exemplifying the conversation in the classroom, carefully monitored for correct information and identifying any biases (Hanson & Mott, 2015). It is also a platform for helping them increase understanding and material retention, but connecting new learning to previous knowledge for a more sound, and interconnected schema. As an educator, it is essential to use this in facilitation to both supplement the classroom with enriched conversation, and solidifying learning through real-life, deepened, connections.

Conditions of Readiness to Learn

Conditions of readiness refer to whether or not an adult is motivated and prepared to dedicate themselves to study. Primarily it remains a case of whether they assess their need to know something allowing them to better deal with life circumstances. The point is, it is up to the individual adult the depth of their readiness to learn, based on their understanding of the importance, and their dedication to study (Tight, 2003).

Problem Centered Focus

Knowles (1980) views adults having self-directed and problem centered focus as learners. This means that they will commit to learning, of their own will, if they can directly connect the learning objectives to a problem they are facing. When they can understand that prior knowledge is connected directly to a new skill, or learned information, and that that information meets a need, or solves a problem in the social or personal construct, then they are motivated to

learn. (Bass, 2012). As such, facilitators should note that adult learners will act from a self-motivated point, if they are engaged in problem solving.

Internal Motivation

The internal motivation of an adult learner as one of Knowles' (1980) six assumptions connected to andragogy, is the personal drive to learn, which is not motivated by others but from the self. There is a definite pattern emerging as review of the above and continuing discourse on these six assumptions emerges and that they connect one to the other. Internal learning motivation is stronger than external motivation because again it is about self-actualization, about creating a better quality of life and about self-esteem (Burns, 2002).

Need to Know Why They Need to Know

Burns (2002) explains Knowles' (2008) need to know why they need to know as a process that drives adult learner motivation. Adults, as previously noted, invest more energy in something they feel they need to know, than something that is abstractly connected to their own life. This is a factor of relevancy according to how the adult learner sees the "relative utility of what they are learning. This is derived from their understanding of self- concept and the problem centered approach previously discussed.

The Argument Supporting the Six Principles

Knowles (1980) himself provides the best argument that supports the need for each of these principles when facilitating adult learning. His view that adults need to engage in the planning and evaluation of their instruction aligns to self-concept as connected to self-directed consciousness including needing to know why they need to know. This kind of focus also links with the independent nature of the adult learner wanting to choose what, when, and how the learning has immediate relevance for impacting their life personally or on the job. This prompts the conditions of the readiness to learn aspect of the adult learner also framed around internal motivation in developing the lifelong learning connection to self-actualization. The experience

characteristic that includes what is learned from mistakes frames the basis for creating learning activities in conjunction with preferring problem-centered learning tasks.

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Methods in Adult Education

Question 2

Qualitative Research in Adult Education

Assessment and Evaluation in Adult Education

The following answers the question of what do scholars in the field of adult education see as the key barriers to constituting a conventional professional identity. How do they reframe the questions whether adult education is or is not a professional and whether it should be seeking greater professionalization?

Barriers to Professional Identity

Scholars in the field of adult education see the key barriers in having a professional identity attributed to compartmental thinking demanding the one individual must have the ability to teach, work, and do research according to Hiekkinen et al (2012). The authors further see needing to break barriers for improving relations between educational researchers and

practitioners. The responsibility for creating these necessary bridges amid these barriers for developing new practicing collaboration, which connects directly to the needs and previous knowledge of both involved individuals.

Childs (2001) reminds adult educators giving attention to the andragogy adult education theory and practice is in part providing a contribution to society that some in the educational field continue failing to recognize. The fundamental underpinnings of the adult education field where barriers emerge to professional identity aligns with worker education and community development programs. This is because such programs were initially established by part-time enlightened volunteers working with limited funding and framed in self-interest. The sanctity of the traditional educational community proved the most problematic among the barriers.

Another perspective offered by Brookfield (2005) is about the suspicion held “how learning can become objectified and experienced by adults as irrelevant to their real needs and inner yearnings that so many adult educators have stressed and continue to insist on the voluntary underpinnings of genuine adult education (p. 156).” Further, Brookfield (2005) describes identity barriers connected to the adult educator linked to ideas about “authority and identity ... viewed as residing in the collective, not the individual, and decision making becomes a community process.” Aligned to an adult educational interpretation of such values as these and compounded by the difficulties/barriers arising within hierarchical structures according to traditional concepts of the role/identity of educators then sees the fundamental identity issue.

Reframing the Question

Addressing question two and how scholars in the field of adult education reframe the questions whether adult education is or is not a professional and whether it should be seeking greater professionalization considers the validity of adult education in looking at the changing landscape connected to the adult educator identity commitment. The 21st century finds scholars looking beyond the postwar (WWII) adult education tenets according to liberal humanist values

constituted by such as Mezirow (1995) as the central focus of adult educators work assuming the commitment of adult educators is about public institutions, social justice, and about fighting for democracy by empowering the citizenry. This is an idealistic approach indeed (cited by Childs, 2009, p. 290).

Further according to Childs (2009), “Policy and funding decisions, training packages, national regulations, changing practices, and the values and beliefs of the enterprise culture are now influenced by such ideology (p. 290).” It is practices and theories involving adult educators that challenges interpretation within the transformative context of postindustrial economies and creates the need for achieving more than making moral judgments about this inevitable change. “The challenge for academics as well as practitioners is to engage with this present, and to resist the temptation to fall backwards into a romanticized view of a heroic and radical past (p. 207)” because as adult educators a clear identity evolves with the world having the largest aging population in the history of the human race and they are a group that demands their place in society as contributors and as lifelong learners (Hansman & Mott, 2015; Burns, 2002; Levine, 1998; Feller & Schenck, 2006)

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Adult Education – Part 2
Adult Development and Learning
Principles of College Teaching
Question 3

You have been tasked to facilitate adult learning in a subject within your expertise. How would you design it? What types of methods would you use and why? Be sure to support your answer with evidence from Galbraith's text.

Designing a Class

As an adult educator it remains critical to consider the six assumptions as described in the earlier question/answers about the adult learner in designing a class. This means the learning tasks, activities, discussions, objectives, and outcomes of the class remains focused on the adult learner characteristics (Hansman & Mott, 2015).

Methodologies and Reason for their Use

Review of the adult learner characteristics considers specific methodologies in designing the class with the rationale that facilitation of the class entails both collaborative and peer-group endeavors in learning tasks according to Gailbraith (2008). This engenders creativity for generating the most effective manner of instructing a course directed for adult learners while creating many benefits for this target group of students (Holyoke, 2007). Further, "Collaborative relationships induce opportunities for creativity" and "allows for honest sharing of new ideas with people whose learning perspectives may be dissimilar (p. 51)." Gailbraith (2008) describes how greater effectiveness occurs in learning when using discussions, lectures and demonstrations in the class. The decision for using a specific method in the classroom according to Galbraith

(2008) is based on deciding the context that leads the process for both designing and perfecting the instruction technique..

Holyoke (2007) adds how flexibility and differentiating are frameworks needed in class design as assessment methods provide the feedback about the learning. This is accomplished through direct and individual adult student assessment of their own work, the learning material, and the facilitation on a regular basis. As a matter of course Kennedy (2003) advises creating an effective adult learning course means clearly outlining to the students “what they expect of them, the material they will be learning, and the standards by which their performance will be evaluated.” This provides direction as well as goals for the outcomes of the course learning. Further, creating a classroom with an atmosphere where it is psychologically safe by means of mutual respect between all stakeholders and remembering that fundamentally, according to “the adult education philosophy espouses that everyone has something to teach and to learn from each other (p. 1).” Consequently, designing an adult education class means adhering to this and the other five characteristics of the adult learner.

An academic practitioner of adult education designing learning experiences in a course means creating relationships with professionals aligned to the course such as accountants with an accounting course or a professional graphic artists in a graphics class. This is in line with the six characteristics defining the andragogy concept of the adult learner across the board as a work-based learning experience (Gonczi, 2004; Gailbraith, 2008). In addition as outlined by Foley (2004) creating a learning environment for adults using specific methods means incorporating the pragmatic along with the theoretical advising, “One cannot exist without the other.” Staying away from an all too common practice among adult educators adhering to their own set values about teaching and as well as their specific techniques never subjected to evaluation is a good rule of thumb. As an adult educator/trainer it remains critical to examine the applied practice and theory in developing course work for adult learners (p. 8).”

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Question 4

Please compare the developmental and apprenticeship teaching perspectives in adult education according to Pratt (1998). The following should be included as you discuss the two teaching perspectives

- The purposes and contexts of the teaching perspectives in adult education
- The roles of the learner related to the teaching perspectives
- The roles of the facilitator related to the teaching perspectives
- The sources of authority related to the teaching perspectives
- The appropriate facilitation methods related to the teaching perspectives

Developmental

Pratt (1998) views the developmental perspective as holding how an adult learner has significant prior knowledge thus supporting the purposes and contexts of the teaching perspective in adult education and vice versa. As a result the prior knowledge of the adult learner is an essential framework of the design of learning tasks engaging collaborative interchanges between the adult students. As Pratt (1998) explains it this is essential to the process of what

determines the learning context of the adult learner. This is related to the andragogy characteristics of the adult learner having prior knowledge as a lifelong learner in contributing to ways of thinking as essential determinants of peoples' subsequent learning (Evans, 2003; Hansman & Mott, 2015).

There is an essential nurturing perspective involved in developmental learning according to Pratt (1998) and adheres to an understanding how learning remains most affected by the adult learner proactive involvement in both his/her concept of self as well as self-efficacy in the learning process. In other words, this is about motivation according to an adult learner's sense of self having confidence in their ability to learn and as much a part of the facilitator recognizing this in the teaching process and conveying this to the student. Again, combined with the ability to learn is the adult characteristic that learning the material has a significant use or purpose and again, this is as much a part of the success of the enterprise connected to the facilitator in the teaching adhering to this understanding. This is a fundamental matter of the relationship having an effective connection between the facilitator, the teaching, and the learner.

Apprenticeship

Review of Pratt's (1998) perspective on apprenticeship compared to the developmental concept the process means viewing the adult learner from the facilitator perspective as having the values and knowledge of those they teach. What the facilitator knows and desires teaching has to be from the context of where the learning is applied. Apprenticeship is a more focused process of learning and instruction. An example is a community of specialized workers that produce finely hand-made guitars. An apprenticeship instruction means the facilitator is an expert in producing finely hand-made guitars and that process is what the learner engages for the sole purpose of becoming a part of that community.

Pratt (1998) gives the example of practicing a sport like soccer drills in no way is the same as playing in a soccer game. Apprenticeship learning is full of textures that exist within

specific contexts so there is a process of having the ability to retrieve that context and use the knowledge. Again, using the idea of the hand-made guitar. The process has specific steps and these steps are always the same. Therefore, the texture of the process exists within specific contexts that provide access to the desired context as a reference.

According the United States Department of Labor (2025) in an apprenticeship – depending on the model of instruction the adult learner connects the educational process with the hands on experience of creating or doing a specific. It is a learning process executed through hands-on learning combined with specific instruction times set aside for theoretical aspects of the learning.

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