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Running head: PHILOSOPHY ON ADULT EDUCATION

Philosophy on Adult Education

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Course Prefix/Number

Instructor Name

Date

Philosophy on Adult Education

The practice of educating adults is centuries old. From the formalized practice of higher education, to an informal employee training session, the philosophy behind the education of adults is what drives the practice. Behind each program, regardless of formality, there is a purpose for adult education; adults have learning styles that affect how the program is structured, and adults have different reasons for learning. In order to develop and teach effective adult education programs it [To what does "it" refer? If a pronoun is used without first identifying for what it stands, the reader might be confused.] is important to be aware of the unique characteristics adult learners possess, the theories behind adult education, and the reasons students go back ["go back" is informal; try "return"] to school.

The primary purpose of adult education is the acquisition of knowledge. In actual reality, [Use "reality"] adult learners are faced with real-life situations that require additional skills. As cited in an article by Chris Lee (1998) regarding Malcolm Knowles, the father of adult learning, "...adults tend to have a problem centered orientation (to learning)... adults seek the skills or knowledge they need to apply to real-life problems they face." (p. 3). In today's fast-paced [Cliché -- your writing will be much better if you do not use this phrase] , ever changing [spelling -- (requires hyphen)] environment, many adults are overwhelmed by the great [The word "great" is considered informal for academic writing.] advances in technology. Today's adult learning programs address the need for training and instruction in the areas of technological advances. Tom Nesbit (1999) has found that adult education helps in equipping adults to react to the changes of our fast paced [spelling -- (requires hyphen)] world. Whether found on the job [spelling -- (requires hyphen)] or in the classroom, the purpose behind the education of adults is to provide opportunities for development and growth in knowledge and skills.

Adult education programs should be structured with the adult learning style in mind. The majority of adult learners are intrinsically motivated. The adult learner desires to obtain knowledge, and may resent being forced into a learning environment. As we all know, [\[This implies that the reader shares your background, and you are setting yourself up for miscommunication. Leave out "as we all know." \]](#) adult learners have a tank full of experiences that supply and fuel the learning experience. Susan Imel (1998) offers a few key points to keep in mind when designing adult education programs. Learners need to be involved in planning and implementing learning activities. Program developers need to utilize [\["utilize" is an over-used word and has become hackneyed and a cliché. Use it only to mean "make good use of," as in "Many teachers utilize computers for instruction." For all other cases, prefer "use." \]](#) the resources provided by the learner's previous experience. The facilitator of an adult education program should attempt to create an environment that is supportive to learning and collaboration. When designing adult education programs it [\[What is "it"? Avoid use of undefined pronouns. \]](#) is essential that the developer keep in mind the information given by Knowles (as cited by Lee, 1998), "Adults become ready to learn things that they need to know or to be able to do in order to fulfill their role in society." (p. 3). Adult education programs need to be structured in such a way that the learning is clearly evident [\[Redundancy, consider "evident" or "obvious." \]](#) and of relative importance to the adult learner.

Adults desire to learn for a multitude of reasons: intrinsic motivation, development of social relationships, job requirement, career advancement, desire for mental stimulation and the need to seek knowledge. According to Knowles assumption regarding adult learners (cited by Lee, 1998), "Adults are more motivated to learn by internal factor, such as increased self-esteem, than they are by external rewards like pay raises and promotions." (p. 3). While this is true,

some adults may learn grudgingly, especially if higher authority forces it upon the learner. Adults are self-directed and prefer to make individual choices. Some adults are motivated to learn in the interest of bringing about social change, and often refer back [Redundancy, consider "refer."] to previous social experiences when pursuing change. And the learner may desire to participate in community work and show an improved ability to serve mankind. [Sexist language. Use "people," "humankind," "men and women," etc.] According to Paulo Freire (as cited by Tisdell and Taylor, 2000), programs seeking to bring about social changes and modern activism use “education as a liberating force.” (p. 5). Overall adults desire to learn and be educated in order to reach personal fulfillment and gain knowledge.

Adult learners bring a vast amount of knowledge and experience to the learning environment. In order for an educational program to be effective, the learner must see the relevance and then [this is redundant, since "and" and "then" in this application have essentially the same meaning. Use one or the other] desire to grasp the offered information and skills. Internal motivation is the primary reason for adult learning. The path of life-long learning is wide and varied, and not to be confined to one theory or philosophy. Continually evaluating one’s educational philosophy is important being as [Use "because."] what we believe ultimately impacts what we develop and do in the arena of adult education.

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