

My name is lori Nicole clark. I am a doctoral student at Northcentral university. This presentation is going to explore the use of adult leaning theory in the e-learning environment, compare two learning theories, and identify which of the two would be most reflective of adult learning. Capacities in which the identified framework could be used to develop course content will be identified.

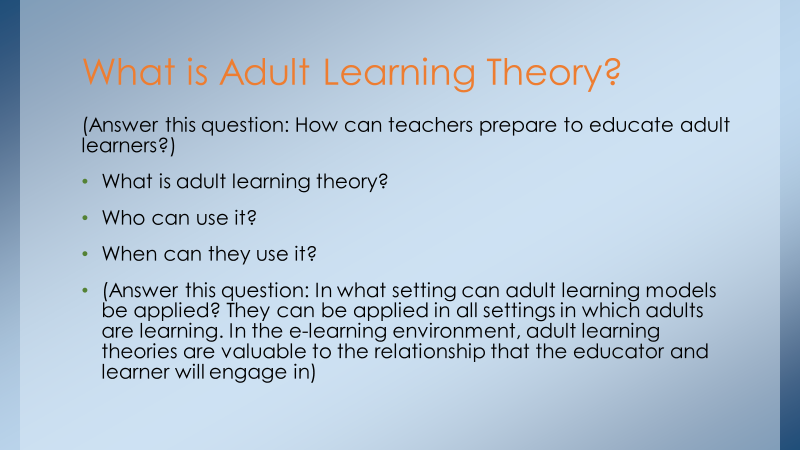


Adult learners come back to school for various reasons. It can be for job requirements; to maintain their current position or obtain a new one. It can be to change their field of work all together. Adult learners can also be in school as their first time in college.

For whatever reason the adult comes back to school, one thing they are bringing with them is a wealth of experience. All adults have experience that contributes to their perspectives and way of viewing the learning experience. They are very proud of their experiences and their relatedness to course content will determine how meaningful the learning experience is for them. According to (Goddu, 2012), the adult leaner must be able to equate content with an experience in order for it to have value. In the diverse setting of online learning, not every learner will have the same experience, nor the same perspective; not the same reasoning, nor value for content within the learning environment. The experiences of the adult learner, will, in either case, contribute to their interactions in the learning environment.

The value that adult learners equate to course content contributes to their motivation in learning. Motivation goes a long way in learning for the adult, and probably children as well in most contexts. The fire that drives adults to come back to school and pursue their learning endeavor contributes to their participation in course work. For the adult learner, motivation stems from value. According to (Ross-Gordon, 2011), adult learners demonstrate a high internal-motivation. Adults are motivated from within and find personal success in learning.

The educator must be aware of their role in facilitating learning to these students. According to (Goddu, 2012) the role of the educator is to help the learner organize and draw out relevant information that will lead them to achieving their goals; or what brought them to the learning environment. So this keeps the learner active; they are constantly seeking value in content by reflecting upon their experiences. By providing this kind of assistance, the instructor is demonstrating their awareness of the needs of adult learners, would encourage them to draw on their experiences to understand how course content is relevant to them in achieving their goals. In understanding the critical relationship between adult learner’s personal experience and their motivation in learning, the need for adequately prepared instructors becomes evident.



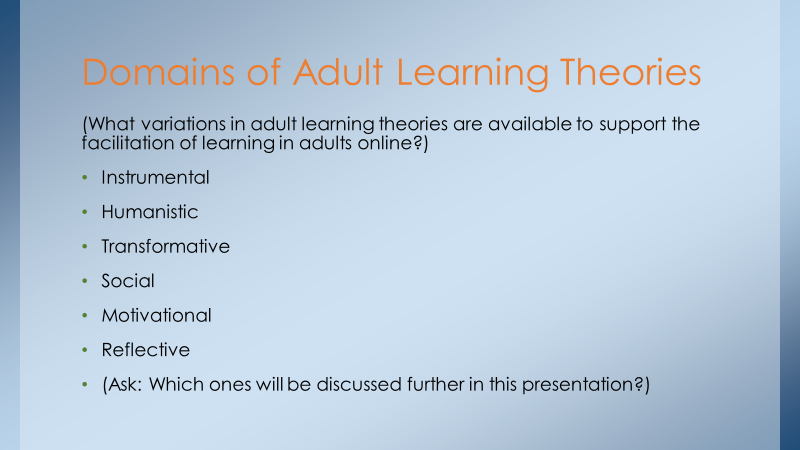
Teachers can prepare to educate adult learners by using adult learning theory. Adult learning theory prepares the educator by informing them of their role in delivering education to adults. adult learning theory is necessary in education to transform the instructor to a coach and supports their learning along with their students’ (Goddu, 2012). These frameworks, when applied correctly, enrich opportunities for students to acquire knowledge. Adult learning theories can be used in combination with teaching strategies (Goddu, 2012) to maximize learning (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013).

Adult learning theory is the scientific account for purposeful cognitive growth within adults. Within its construct is a description of this process in the form of key concepts, that inform the educator what should be considered when delivering education to adults. Adult learning theories describe learning s a complex cognitive process in which experience contributes to evolved thought (Goddu, 2012). Within the theoretical perspective of adult learning theory, is the recommendation for its inclusion in the learning environment to yield positive learning outcomes.

Adult learning theory can be used by online instructors to develop learning content and establish the foundation of the relationship between the learner and educator. In developing content, adult learning theory guides the instructor’s selection of modalities that allow the learner to demonstrate knowledge synthesis by applying learned content to the main ideas within identified within the domain of the theoretical framework. This means that, for example, adult learning theories that come from the social domain will recommend the development of content that calls for the learner to apply social behaviors to demonstrate knowledge synthesis and use of tools with which the educator with evaluate the social behavior to determine knowledge synthesis.

Adult learning is facilitated by the learner’s independence and personal desire to participate in learning. This allows the instructor to function as a facilitator of learning experience, unique to adults, as opposed to a provider of learning experience necessary for children, lacking experience.

Adult learning theory can be applied in all settings in which adults are learning. In the e-learning environment, adult learning theories ensure value-added content and active learning.



There are six domains that categorize adult learning theories.

Behavioral and cognitive theories comprise instrumental adult learning theories. These focus on the individual’s experience in learning and hold no regard for the need for social interactions (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013). From a behavioral perspective, instrumental adult learning theories support the need to develop individual skills. In the same regard, cognitive theories of adult learning theories favor the individual’s knowledge synthesis. In nursing, for example, behavioral instrumental adult learning theories would focus on the student’s ability to insert a urinary catheter and, cognitively, their ability to understand the rational, nursing considerations, and necessary patient teaching that relates to the catheter.

Humanistic theories promote independence and self in learning. This theory excludes any reference to social or context in learning. Being a very important element to the construction of meaning and knowledge, there is an obvious underestimation of collaboration and lack of social context of learning in this theory.

Transformative adult learning theories identify reflection and the self-awareness of deficiencies as the catalyst that starts formal learning. Transformational learning occurs when a person questions their long-standing beliefs against newly acquired information (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013). A revised understanding of the learning context is ultimately through this in-depth analysis. Transformational learning shares context across domains, meaning that it considers learning as a cohesive occurrence of individual frameworks. In this regard, it is also knows as a holistic theory for learning.

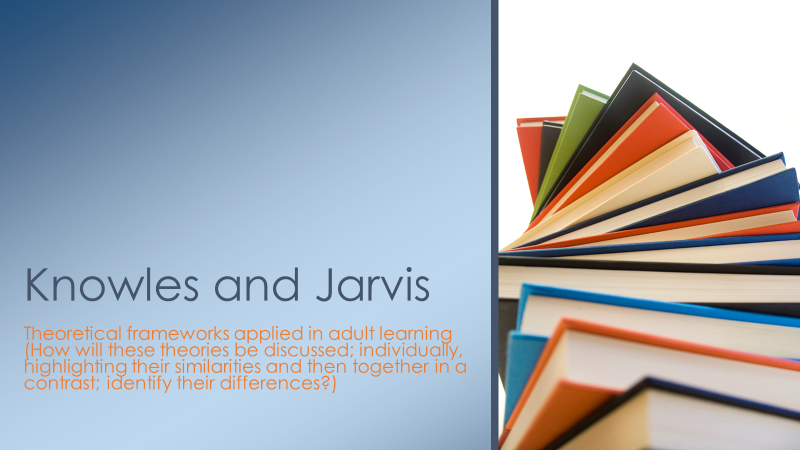
Learning facilitated by the presence of peers is the premise of social learning theories. An example of this would be students sharing experiences on a topic. The variation in experiences can influence the perspective and contribute to learning within others in the setting.

Motivational learning theories are variably affected by the learners perceived likeliness to be successful. This means that if a leaner does not think they will be successful in learning, their motivation decreases. According to Taylor and Handy (2013), a person will remain motivated in this case if their value for success supersedes their motivation. Within motivational learning theories, consideration is given to variables that can impact motivation. These include life events and barriers to obtaining or learning information (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013). The death of a parent, for example, a life experience that most adults will experience, can lead to decreased motivation in the online environment.

Reflective learning theory describes learning that takes place when feedback is received in response to the learners’ demonstration of a skill or knowledge synthesis. It is similar in value to transformative theory but its reflection is to a more recent task. For example, submitting a written assignment and using the instructors feedback to develop further writings. This type of learning takes place more often in the online learning environment. In reflective learning theory, feedback is used to develop understanding or ability to perform a skill.

The adult learning theories of Malcolm Knowles and Jack Mezirow will be discussed further.

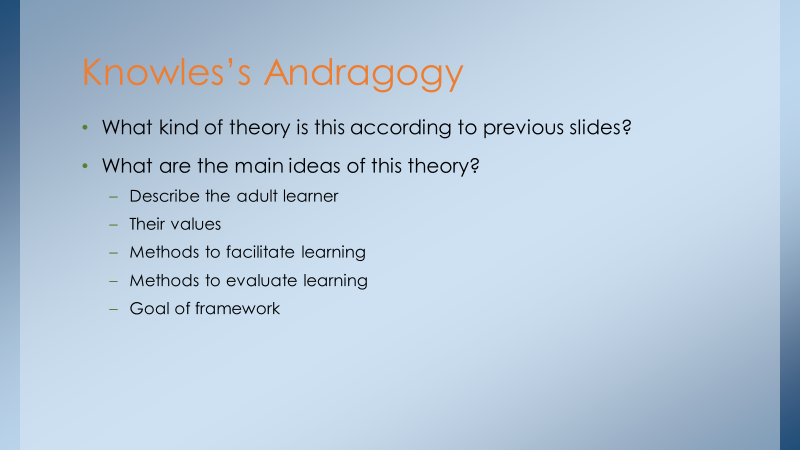
Images: (Adults learn best, 2016)



How will these theories be discussed?

These theories will be discussed individually, highlighting their similarities

and then identify their differences



**Theoretical overview**

Andragogy is a humanistic theory that focuses on self, with no regard to the social processes or necessity in learning. This means that these learners are driven to learn by their internal desires, and are less concern with socialization. Andragogous adults prefer self-direction in learning and are highly self-moitivated (Kenner & Weinerman, 2011).

**Learner Description**

Andragogy identifies adulthood as a period of change; an individual goes from being dependent to self-directed. Learning becomes something that is internatized and lacks reliance on social behaviors. In learning, Andragogy described learners as self-directed, full of experience, ready to learn, and motivated to complete tasks. These learners will demonstrate the ability to manage time effectively and gain and independent understanding of course concepts. They will use their experience to demonstrate knowledge synthesis of course concepts. These learners are orientated to tasks and problems, and may view the resulting socialization as an encounter that easily facilitated having the conceptualization to support the engagement.

**Instructor’s Theoretical Role**

The Knowles-subscribing instructor is alert to signs of distress in students (Giannoukos, Besas, Galiropoulos, & Hictour, 2015). Instructors should approach students by encouraging them and avoid intense teaching. As a coach, he or she will reach out to the student and offer encouragement and guidance as learners discover their role in the educational process.

**Learning Activities and evaluation**

Instructors should facilitate opportunities for adult learners to incorporate their experience in activities. The instructor will encourage the independent application of perspective to demonstrate an understanding and value for course content in the manner intended. In evaluating learning, the instructor assesses the work in it’s relationship to the objectives. Feedback is essential to learning outcomes and the leaner’s development. the learner should be given feedback that will help them consolidate their knowledge or skill (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013).

**Goal**

The goal of this framework is to support self-direction in all aspects of learning. This means that adult learner will demonstrate knowledge synthesis when they have engaged in self-directed, self-oriented activities to apply course content and articulate their understanding the method selected by the instructor.

This framework encourages self-directed learning of adults in content and in the leaner-educator relationship. This means that the leaner is allowed and encouraged to take responsibility in their learning, demonstrating an active role, while the instructor functions as a consultant, providing direction and, most importantly, feedback that supports the learner’s growth.

Image: (Knowles' 4 principles of andragogy, 2016)



**Overview**

As a transformative learning theory, Mezirow’s framework combines characteristics from multiple dimensions. In that way, it is called a holistic learning theory. Made up of constructivist, humanist, and social assumptions (Taylor & Cranton, 2012), the Mezirow’s theory describes learning as a complex process, beginning with experience, existing in a constant state, and changing as the learner’s experiences changes. There are five areas in which content is derived from.

**Learner Description**

The transformation theory describes the learner as being active in both social and cognitive contexts of learning. This means that they are engage in social interactions and value their contributions to learning. These learners integrate socialization into a cognitive context of learning and vice verse. They are *autonomous* and capable of making personal choices. They perceive their experience to be different from others, and their interpretations of those experiences to be distinguished as well. They maintain their own perspective and apply their own concepts in learning. The take extreme value in education and its application to life experiences and understanding them, autonomously. These learners place no limits on growth and seek to foster change in social contexts as opposed to simply understanding. The premise of the transformative learning experience is to facilitate learning as an individual experience, in which the learner realizes their need for knowledge, questions their existing knowledge, which leads to a change in their view and an increase in knowing.

**Instructors role**

The instructor’s role in transformative learning is to facilitate opportunities to learn through questioning beliefs. In doing so, the instructor will be aware of the personal and professional ethical dilemmas that would support this type of experience. In sharing thoughts, the instructor explores with the learner the process of bring the implicit to explicit (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013). the instructor will share their thought process in arriving to conclusions.

**Course Content**

*Activities*

An instructor that subscribes to Mezirow’s will develop situations that require students to critically reflect on their assumptions. Transformative learning is a process of examining, questioning, and revising personal perceptions (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). In these interactions students relax their personal opinions and perspectives, to engage in an objective process of learning. The learner gains a better understanding of themselves by understanding others.

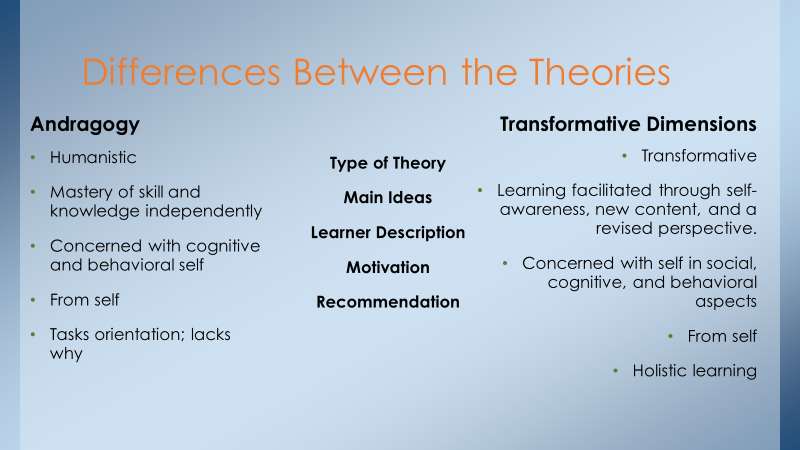
*Evaluation*

When evaluating learning that takes place from transformative perspective, the instructor will evaluate the change in perspective that the student claims to have. In doing so, the evaluator is looking for the students application of new knowledge that goes against their initial belief. In either case the students is exposed to new information that contributes to their evaluation, and support or disapproval of personal beliefs.

**Goal of framework**

The goal of the transformative theory is to produce a profound learning experience in which the outcome is directly correlated to the learner’s analysis of content and reflection upon current knowledge, consideration of goals and applicability, and reconstruction of a perspective that is based on new information.

Image: (Jack Mezirow: Transformative learning, 2016)



**In contrasting Knowles and Mezirow’s theories, we will look at the type of theory, main ideas of the theory, learner description, motivation, and its recommended use.**

**Type of theory**

Andragogy is a humanistic theory, whereas transformative dimensions is a transformative learning theory.

**Main ideas**

In andragogy, learning takes place in behavioral and cognitive dimensions. The leaner values their own learning; mastery of skills and conceptualization as an individual process.

In ***transformative*** dimensions, learning is facilitated across many dimensions and begins with the reevaluation of existing knowledge and experience, requires the presentation of new information, and concludes with a revised perspective.

**Learner Description**

Knowles describes learners as focused on self. In the online environment, these individuals view problems as things to be conquered and not fully understood.

Mezirow describes learners are being actively engaged in learning. They value education and seek to go beyond the simple understanding of content to gather an endowed perspective with which to foster change.

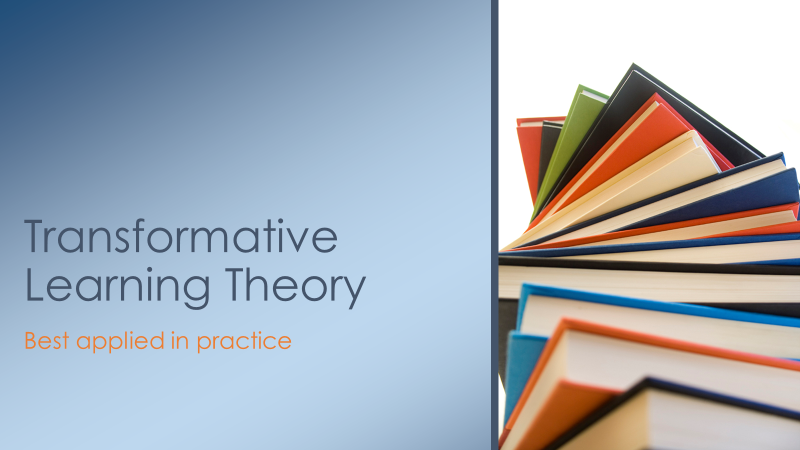
**Motivation/Orientation**

In ***andragogy*** learners are self-orientated to tasks. The ***transformative*** learner is self-motivated to gain a better understanding of knowledge and its application in life.

**Recommendation**

Andragogy is more useful in explaining to instructors how to teach than in explaining the process of learning (Taylor & Cranton, 2012). Andragogy does not consider the implications for socialization in learning. Because of this, the andragogy theory does not function in all learning contexts.

This framework contributes substance to the process of learning and teaching. This theory explains the process of learning in a nonbiased, complex, and relational perspective. The transformative framework seeks build upon existing knowledge through a series of active, cognitive, and social processes.



I am now going to explain why Mezirow’s framework would be best applied in online learning.



This framework describes experience as the basis for learning. The framework and the actions of the learner impact the leaner’s learning experience; knowing or having the knowledge, planning to revise their knowledge, evaluating the knowledge, and understanding what has been learned.

**Knowing**

The framework requires a disorientating dilemma, or catalyst, in order to start the process of knowing. The dilemma presents an alternative perspective; with new or unconsidered information being introduced.

The learner begins to examine their current knowledge and perspective, becoming aware of themselves. They then go through a series of emotions when they realize that their current understanding needs to be explored in lieu of this new information.

**Planning**

This theory plans to revise the learning process to unify education. As a holistic theory, transformative learning seeks to encourage an open-minded method to accounting for adult learning. In this manner, Mezirow found it important to highlight the fact that learning is a complex process that crosses over into other domains; such complexity is inadequately explored when viewed from one domain.

The learner, in their desire to learn and obtain information, takes responsibility in the process of planning. During this period, the learner begins to rationalize the difference in perspectives and considers how they can restore their confidence.

**Evaluating**

This framework seeks to evaluate learning by examining the learners experience. In its profound ability to bring the unconscious to conscious, the transformative learning theory values the learners purposeful reflection upon their own views and application of new content to revise their perception. Even if the new perception is in further support their initial view, the inclusion of the new content, demonstrates the learner’s ability to apply new information and define learning.

The learner takes responsibility in evaluating in the way that their perspective was changed or made stronger with the new information. The learner has gained new knowledge and conceptualized its application to the real-world.

**Understanding**

This framework demonstrates an understanding of adult learning process by explaining its occurrence. Transformational learning theory explains the diversity in learning (Goddu, 2012). This holistic theory brings a collective and comprehensive perspective to the learning process.

The learner demonstrates an understanding of learning by presenting their new perspective. Having synthesized new information learners in this framework take an active role in reconstructing their perspective; building their foundation of knowledge to a new level.



Responsibility

The use of adult learning theory in developing content makes the learner accountable for the outcomes in the environment. Through frameworks, the learner is empowered to gain an awareness and understanding of their needs, their goals, and the ways in which course content is relevant to those areas. Adult learning frameworks identify the need value in course content and recommend that it be integrated into learning opportunities. Adult learners demonstrate value for course content when they associate it with their experience.

Learning

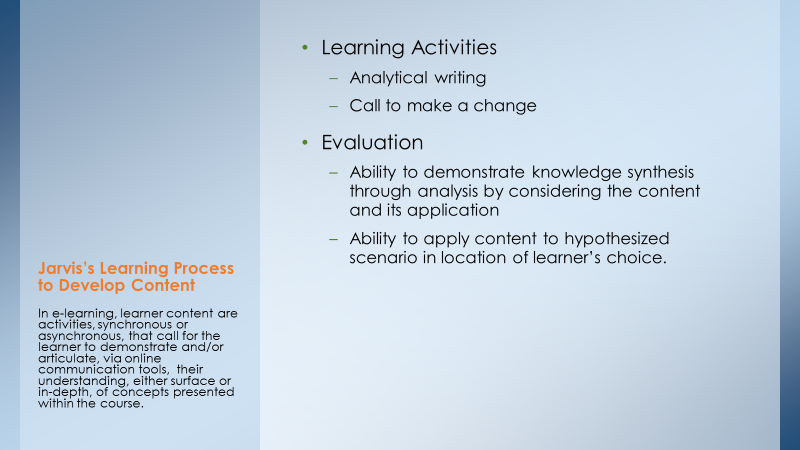
Learning theory defines the purpose of developing course content for adults. In these frameworks, course content is developed to stimulate active thought processes. Active engagement is required in order to facilitate knowledge synthesis and is identified as an essential component in adult learning theory.

Educator’s Role

Learning theory defines the educator’s role in facilitating learning. Adult learning theory requires that the educator take on a role that is less involved in active teaching, allowing the adult learner be actively engaged in the learning process (Goddu, 2012). It is the educator’s responsibility to facilitate learning opportunities and allow the learner to seek value in course content. Learner’s will rely on the instructor to help them discover how course content is relevant to their goals.

Awareness of adult learning theories is needed to develop and select evaluation systems and instruments that can measure the expected competencies and outcomes (Taylor & Hamdy, 2013, p. 1570). Adult learning theories ensure that the learning activities and evaluation tools are synchronous with one another. This means that the tools are appropriate in both facilitating learning and evaluating that same learning activity. Learning theories for the instructor establish an environment that is conducive to learning.

Image: (Nelson, 2016)



Let’s look at some of the ways the transformative theory can be used to develop course content. Self-directed learning activities allow the learner to freely-apply their experiences to an assignment (Goddu, 2012).

**Sharing personal experiences** in a discussion board allows the student, students, and instructor learn simultaneously. The students demonstrates their ability to compose their thoughts and articulate their ideas, and the students and instructor, become enlightened and informed by the experience and the student’s perspective.

**Disorientating dilemmas** identify areas of uncertainty or conflict on controversial issues. Disorientating dilemmas can cause changes in beliefs or attitudes (Christie, Carey, Robertson, & Grainger, 2015). In using a disorientating dilemma in online learning, learners will participate in the opportunity evaluate their current perspective, gain new information, and use that information to either construct a new belief, that goes against their former belief, or further support their existing perspective. Disorientating dilemmas demonstrate the propensity of differences in the learning environment and their ability to impact that setting, causing learners to question the validity of their perspectives and assumptions.

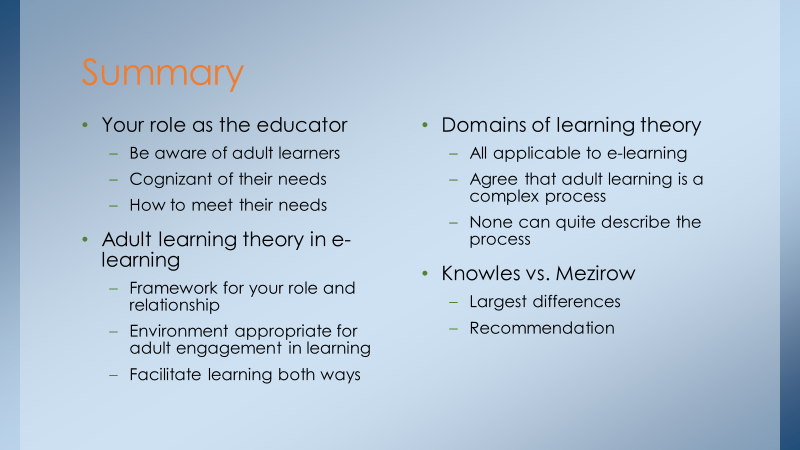
**Situational learning** takes place through role play (Goddu, 2012). The learner makes practical use of a course concept. This can be facilitated through formal writing, discussions, and power presentations. These experiences being with the instruction “Imagine that…” In considering how course concepts are applied in real-life, the learner is able to contribute their personal experiences. This allows them to demonstrate their understanding of the material and its value for use. Situational learning can also take place when an instructor creases a situation for students interpret the underlying meaning. In this case, learners will determine their personal belief on the topic and provide their rationalized perspective on the topic.

Evaluating

In evaluating these learning activities, the educator is determining the students application of new content to the real world and their identified new perspective or strong support for their existing perspective.

The return on these learning activities is that learners receive feedback that aids in their ability to understand and utilize new content, and develop their active efforts in learning.

Image: (2016)



Educators need to demonstrate awareness of the unique learning experience brought to education by adult learners. Their learning style and learning needs require an equally unique approach to teaching and facilitating learning experiences. The best way to meet their needs is through utilizing adult learning theory.

These frameworks make sure that the instructor is on the correct pat; in context and teaching style that will ensure that learning takes place. In using adult learning theory, the instructor is able to bring personal value to the content by allowing the learner to function autonomously and responsibly in the learning environment and learning process. The instructor, through their unique role in adult learning theory, stands to gain new knowledge as well.

All adult learning theories are applicable to e-learning. Theoretical frameworks that acknowledge the complexity of adult learning, include multiple domains. The existence of combined learning theories, which this presentation did not explore, is recognized as an occurrence in adult learning. According to Taylor and Cranton (2012) people may choose, either intuitively or emotionally, to utilize theories depending on the education endeavor being pursued. This idea even further adds to the complexities associated with the task of conceptualizing the adult learning process.

Mezirow’s transformational learning theory supports adult learning in the complex manner that it occurs. Adults choose how to learn in various settings. In these multidimensional experiences, the ability to explore the context, and gather a more endowed understanding of its meaning is facilitated through a multidimensional framework. Mezirow’s framework is reflective of the expectations of true learning; it is holistic and bears no bias to a particular domain; instead seeks to facilitate learning to all parties that are engaged in such a setting.

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