Session 14 – Humanistic and Radical Philosophies of Adult Education

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Goals and Objectives

At the end of the session, the student will

- Describe humanistic and radical adult education
- Explain the purposes of humanistic and radical adult education
- Give the historical background of humanistic and radical philosophies
- Identify the components of humanistic and radical philosophies of adult education
- Describe the practices of humanistic and radical philosophies of adult education
Session Outline

• Introduction
• Humanistic Adult Education
  ➢ Key Authorities
  ➢ Components
  ➢ Practice
• Radical Adult Education
  ➢ Key Authorities
  ➢ Components
  ➢ Practice
• Conclusion
• References
Activities and Assignments

• This week, complete the following tasks:
• Log onto the UG Sakai LMS course site:
  http://sakai.ug.edu.gh/XXXXXXXXX
• Watch the Videos for Session 14 – Philosophies of Adult Education
• Review Lecture Slides: Session 14 – Philosophies of Adult Education
• Visit the Chat Room and discuss the Forum question for Session 14
• Complete the Individual Assignment for Session 14
Introduction

Humanistic Adult Education

• Humanistic adult education is concerned with the development of the whole person, with emphasis on the *emotional* and *affective* dimensions, of the learner.

• Programmes with a humanistic design are generally targeted to learners who are highly motivated and self-directed.

• High motivation and self-direction are hallmarks of humanistic programmes.

• Learners assume full responsibility for learning and in such programmes, instructors act as guides, organisers of learning and helpers.
What is humanistic Adult Education?

• Humanism is concerned with answering questions such as 'why' and 'how' with a view to understanding human needs and behaviour in the process of education.

• In dealing with these questions, humanistic philosophy is based on the assumption that humanity is naturally good and free.

• Human-being is filled with unique individuality and potential, and possesses positive creativity, leading to self-actualisation.

• It emphasises the importance of the self, self-concept and self-actualisation.
Two Great Humanistic Philosophers
(Carl Rogers & Abraham Maslow)
Humanistic Philosophy of Adult Education

• Humanistic philosophy is an alternative approach to education based on the work of humanistic psychologists.

• Notable amongst them are Abraham Maslow, who developed a famous *hierarchy of needs theory*, Carl Rogers, previous president of the American Psychology Association.

• Malcolm S. Knowles and Rudolf Steiner, the founder of Waldorf education, also contributed to that school of thought.

• Its goal is to provide young people the basis on which to develop into free, morally responsible and integrated individuals.
Humanistic Adult Education

• Humanistic adult educators believe that both *feelings* and *knowledge* are important to the learning process.
• Its curriculum is more centred on the learner not just rote memorization of concepts.
• Method in humanistic philosophy of adult education include the use of small group workshops, seminars, and forums.
• They are used to enhance participatory approach which results in a positive feeling by individuals.
• This is done by specialists who serve as facilitators of the learning process.
Humanistic Adult Education

- Humanistic adult educators place importance on students motivation as they engage in the material they are learning.
- This happens when the topic is something the students need and want to know.
- The lecturer tends to be more supportive than critical, more understanding than judgmental, more genuine than playing a role.
- To humanistic adult educators, grades are irrelevant and that only self-evaluation, is meaningful.
- Grading encourages students to work for a grade and not for *intrinsic* satisfaction which is not the best feedback to the teacher.
- The environment for the practice of humanistic adult education tends to be different in terms of setting than a traditional school.
- It consists of both indoor and outdoor environments with a majority of time being spent outdoors.
Humanistic Adult Education
(Contd.)

• The indoor setting may contain a few tables and chairs, bean bags for quiet reading and relaxation, book shelf's, hide-aways, kitchens, lots of colour and art posted on the walls.

• The outdoor environment is very engaging for learners as one may find tree houses, outdoor kitchens, sand boxes, play sets, natural materials, sporting activities etc. offering a range of activities for learners that allows for free choices of interest (Roney, 2007).
A Case of Humanistic Adult Education

• An illustration of philosophy of humanistic adult education could be an educational programme to promote food security.
• The Ministry of Agriculture and Health can send text messages or emails once a month to all extension workers and health inspectors to send out scenarios or case studies on food security.

One educational component of the scenarios could be questions like: What would you do? What is the correct action?
• These questions are intended to drive discussion and learning on the field.
• The goal of such programme is to increase extension workers understanding on how to apply regulations, policies, and standards for the inspection of meat, poultry, and egg products.
• This should be done by presenting them with realistic example.
• Success of the programme relies on motivated learners who initiate a dialogue with work groups at the regional and plant levels.
• The questions and answers generated by the programme can be archived for future students to review (Roney, 2007).
Components of Humanistic Adult Education

- The *purpose* is to develop people who are open to change and continued learning; to enhance personal growth and development; to facilitate self-actualization, to reform society.
- The *learner* is highly motivated and self-directed; assumes responsibility for learning and self-development.
- The *teacher* is facilitator; helper; partner; promotes, but does not direct learning, sets mood for learning, acts as a flexible resource for learners.
- *Source of Authority* is the self/learner.
- *Key Words/Concepts* - Experiential learning; freedom; feelings, individuality; self-directedness; interactive; openness; co-operation; authenticity; ambiguity; related to existentialism, group tasks; group discussion; team teaching; self-directed learning; discovery method.
Components of Humanistic Adult Education (Contd.)

- **People/Practices** include Erasmus, Rousseau, Rogers, Maslow, Knowles, May, Tough, McKenzie; encounter groups; group dynamics; self-directed learning projects; human relations training; Esalen Institute.

- **Time Frame** - roots go back to classical China, Greece, and Rome, but became a movement in the U.S. in 1950s-60s through the works of Maslow and Rogers.
Radical Philosophy of Adult Education

• The Radical Philosophy of adult education seeks to use education to bring about fundamental, social, cultural, political, and economic changes in society.
• In this philosophy, the adult learner and the facilitator are considered equal through the learning process.
• The learners are empowered with voluntary participation.
What is Radical Philosophy of Adult Education?

- Radical adult education has emerged in the past three centuries from anarchism, Marxism, socialism, and left wing Freudianism.
- Radical philosophy stresses the role of adult education as a means of bringing about major social change.
- In this philosophy, adult education is used to combat social, political, and economic oppression within society.
- The facilitator’s role is to suggest topics, but not to determine, the directions.
Key Words of Radical Adult Education

• Empowerment, social action, social justice, commitment and transformation.
• The process of radical adult education has been continuously changing from one activity to another.
• It contains manufactured, packaged, and consumable commodities that permits individual’s choice.
Practice of Radical Adult Education

• In practice, the radical facilitator seeks to promote the benefits of *health education*, *popular education* and *political liberation*.

• Radical facilitators would treat their learners as self-motivated learners who determine their learning structure.

• The facilitator use methods that emphasise open dialogue, group discussion, and problem-posing education.

• The radical adult educator will support educational programmes for the under-privileged.

• The facilitator guides adult learners to solve political and social problems rather than just identifying the problems.

• Thus, educational roles are emphasised, for a major social change.
Paulo Freire – A Radical Philosopher of Adult Education

• Some of the greatest influences of radical philosophy came from Paulo Freire and Antonio Gramsci.
• They were both major influencers and users of the radical philosophy.
• Some radical philosophers are concerned with issues such as community education and development, political education and woman's education.
• On your right hand side is Paulo Freire, a Brazilian multi-cultural educator who has greatly influenced education, and for matter, adult education globally.
Paulo Freire

- Paulo Freire was an educationalist, born in Brazil in 1921.
- He used adult education to champion the right of the oppressed in society of so-called third World.
- He used education for liberation through a book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.
- Freire’s book was the most quoted educational texts in Latin America.
- He made a number of important theoretical innovations which have had an enormous impact on practices of education as well as informational and popular education.
- He took this step due to his understanding of poverty during the Great Depression which made him identify with the poor and helped construct his radical educational worldview (Ewald, 2009 cited in Kwapong & Aggor, 2012).
Antonio Gramsci is tagged as a revolutionary Marxist leader, and political thinker, who was born on the island of Sardinia in 1891.

He did not accept the Marxist view on how the ruling class ruled.

He examined two different types of political control, domination and hegemony.

While domination was the complete control of all faculties of society, hegemony was the permeation throughout society’s values, attitudes, beliefs and morality that maintain the status quo in power relations.

Gramsci’s emphasis on critical awareness, the importance of intellectuals being part of everyday life, and on the part played by common sense in maintaining the status quo, have helped to open up the transformational possibilities of education.
Antonio Gramsci

• He thought that the only way schools will achieve success, are the ones that are active, in participation.

• He valued critical self awareness, critical social awareness, the intellectual part maintaining the status quo and the transformational possibilities of education (Ewald, 2009 cited in Kwapong & Aggor, 2012).
Components of Radical Adult Education

• *Purpose* is to bring about fundamental, social, political, economic changes in society through education; to change culture and its structure.

• *Learner* is equal with teacher in learning process.

• He/she has personal autonomy.

• This is because, people create history and culture, by combining reflection with action.

• *Teacher* is provocateur; suggests but does not determine direction for learning; equality between teacher and learner.

• Source of Authority – Socio-economic and socio-political imbalances.

• *Key Words/Concepts* - Consciousness-raising; praxis; non-compulsory learning; autonomy; critical thinking; social action; de-institutionalization; literacy training.
Components of Radical Adult Education (Contd.)

- **Methods** - Dialogue; problem-posing; maximum interaction; discussion groups.

- **People/Practices** - Brameld, Holt, Kozol, Reich, Neill, Freire, Goodman, Illich, Ohliger; Freedom Schools; Summerhill, Freire's literacy training; free schools.

- **Time Frame** - Origins are found in the 18th century anarchist tradition, Marxist thought, and the Freudian Left. Modern movement began in early 1960s in Brazil with Freire.
Conclusion

• Humanistic and radical philosophies of adult education if properly practiced in learning settings, be it classroom, community or workplace, many adult learners as possible would learn to master courage and confidence to undertake independent studies.

• That in itself will make as many adult learners as to possible develop independent and critical thinking skills in addressing personal and societal problems.

• It will also create avenue, and equally energise many people as well, to develop entrepreneurial skills to create jobs for themselves and many others.

