Week 2: Which strategy would you be most inclined to use with adult learners and why? (of the 7 strategies from "Sit and Get.")

After reading through each of the seven strategies for adult learners highlighted in *"Sit & Get" Won't Grow Dendrites*, the one I feel most inclined to use is the incorporation of metaphors, analogies, and similes.

There are a few reasons why this strategy struck me as most applicable to my work with adults. The first is the type of complex thinking developing metaphors, analogies, and similes invokes. As Tate (2012) posits, "people who think metaphorically think at very high levels" (p. 61). Activating higher order thinking amongst adults is critical. It requires full engagement with the topic to create metaphors, analogies, or similes, and learners sharing what they've developed also serves as a high quality formative assessment of how deeply the concept is understood.

Another reason I love this strategy is that it's entirely dependent on drawing upon previous knowledge and experiences. As Tate (2012) explains, the linking of new knowledge with existing knowledge creates the neural connections that result in greater retainment. This connects well with what we learned about Knowles' six assumptions of adult learners. Knowles argues that adults come to the table with a wide range of experiences on which to draw (Finlay, 2010). Given that, it seems to me the strategy of using metaphors, analogies, and similes makes perfect sense.

The last reason I am drawn to this strategy is because it is very conducive to incorporating kinesthetic opportunities. So often, adult learning is heavily anchored in linguistic representations or auditory experiences. Tate (2012) offers five separate examples of how one might incorporate movement into adult learning. As Russell (2006) highlights, kinesthetic learning styles are similarly present in adults despite the fact that we might typically associate the need for such strategies with younger students.

References

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Week 2: What stuck out about adult learning theories?

In reading about the three major learning theories outlined by the Berkeley GSI Teaching and Resource Center, a few key points struck me. First and foremost, I immediately began to consider the implications of behaviorism in adult learning when coupled with the learning we just engaged in around Knowles' six assumptions of adult learners. It seems to me that utilizing behaviorism with adults contradicts Knowles' findings. For example, the motivation behind behaviorism is anchored externally (GSI Teaching and Resource Center, 2018). However, as Knowles are argues, motivation in adult learning is much more likely to be tied to

internal motivators rather than external rewards and pressures (Finlay, 2010). For this reason, I would likely not rely heavily on behaviorism when engaging with adult learners.

Conversely, in reading more deeply about cognitive constructivism, this theory aligned much more with Knowles' assumptions as well as my own experiences in teaching adult learners. According to the Berkeley GSI Teaching and Resource Center, in a cognitive constructivist environment, learners rely on deep connections to their previous learning to explore and discover new learning and rely heavily on internal motivation to explore and learn (2018). Referring back to the six assumptions, this resonates with several of them, but in particular, assumptions 2 and 3. Assumption 2 expresses the self-conceptualization found in adults in which they are driven to own and direct their own learning (Pappas, 2013). Additionally, assumption 3 explores the vast experience most adults have and how they utilize that previous knowledge to push their learning even further (Finlay, 2010). Both of these would appear to be leverage points in cognitive constructivism.

Finally, in terms of social constructivism, I would have to believe this style of learning is somewhat dependent on the learner. The point around social constructivism that struck me is the idea that "all cognitive functions originate in (and must therefore be explained as products of) social interactions and that learning did not simply comprise the assimilation and accommodation of new knowledge by learners; it was the process by which learners were integrated into a knowledge community" (GSI Teaching and Resource Center, 2018). My first reaction is to assume there is a level of dependency upon how much the learner themselves thrives and integrates into collaborative situations and the knowledge community. That said, I am inclined to believe Vygotsky's assertion that all learning occurs within some element of social interaction and community. This may be particularly true in the case of adults, given that much of their learning is centered on relevant and applicable needs, thus increasing the likelihood they are learning alongside others who are interested in similar topics or areas of focus (Pappas, 2013).

<div align="center">References</div>

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