

Philosophy of Adult Education

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With almost 20 years of experience in developing and training adults in workplace education, I have had an opportunity to train adults at all levels of employment, from the recent college graduate, to the experienced professional, to new partners/management within an organization. Throughout my employment years, I've always had an opportunity to develop training programs and deliver them to learners within workplaces. There is definitely a purpose for adult education. Within my frame of reference, this purpose is that the learning is needed for employment. This learning is often called continuing education or professional education. There are many adults who are required by their companies or professional licenses to continue with education.

Currently, I play a number of different roles in my current employment. In addition to my daily job processing engineering requests to produce new products, I also work at developing training and delivering that training to primarily engineers but everyone involved in the product life management process for the company. As the technology changes, I see myself as being the lead person who will learn the new technology and use my abilities of training others to develop the newest training for those who will have to use it every day. Because the people I will train are at different levels developmentally, even in adulthood, the training that I develop will be at the lowest level so everyone understands. At the same time, there are different groups of people who are required to know different pieces of the technology systems, so there will be different training developed based on those requirements.

I see myself in the future at this company becoming the company trainer, developing training for not only the engineers, but also for everyone, company-wide, to allow them to learn about all aspects of all the technology used within the company. I see myself developing and training Microsoft Office for the folks who work in the offices, to sales concepts for the sales force, to customer relationship management for our customer service folks. This will require me to learn about all aspects of our company, not just the engineering pieces. When learning this, I will be required to engage our employees who will become the stakeholders in deciding what they need to make their jobs easier.

To develop the training better, I need to also become an adult learner, helping in the process of developing training for others. I learn then use my skills to help others to learn what I have learned. There are many philosophies with regard to adult learning. Individuals wanting to understand how they develop training can use a philosophy test to help them understand how they develop training. This test is called the Philosophy of Adult Education Inventory, created by Lorraine Zinn, Ph D. The Web site,

http://www25.brinkster.com/educ605/paei_howtouse.htm will allow you to complete 15 statements based on different learning styles, allowing someone to learn more about them as the teacher, the individuals who will learn from them and their style of developing training. The results showed that I am primarily a Behaviorist Philosophy individual with a score of 92.

In my current and proposed future training opportunities, I help develop and train on the technology systems used to complete our jobs. This philosophy states that it “has inspired many of the current practices in e-learning...” (Roney). In past employment where I assisted in developing training, the main goal of the department, turned e-learning company was to take instructor-led, classroom-based learning and redesign it into Web based learnings. Presently, I have the task of not just training individuals who are physically in my present location, but also those employees who reside in other locations around the globe, from Romania to China to Brazil. Being able to develop and train individuals in such a way that everyone profits from the training. After they have completed the training, they are required to immediately use that training in their jobs. The training that has been designed needs to be precise and clear so that should the learner need to reference the training documentation again, it is available for them, whether that training be in electronic form (often in a PDF document) or through other electronic means like examples in a video on how to do a certain process.

Zinn talks about how, with this philosophy, my training should, “bring about behavior that will ensure survival of human species, societies, and individuals; to promote behavioral change.” At the end of my training sessions, each learner should be able to return to their desks and continue the training in their everyday life by recreating the examples shown in their tasks. “Learner takes an active role in learning, practicing new behavior, and receiving feedback; strong environmental influence. (Zinn)”

As part of our goal in developing and delivering this training, we are working to change the behaviors of the engineers who have been completing tasks one way that may or may not be the process the management wishes them to use, thereby teaching them a standard way to complete their tasks. Even though there could be a number of ways a certain task can be completed, we are working to standardize the processes so that should that engineer leave, the work can be continued by someone else.

In my employment experience, adult learning has come from the need to learn new topics, technologies, etc. Whether someone uses the training to be promoted, or just to keep their jobs, there are always new technologies and new ways to do the job better. In the soon future, the technology systems at my present company will undergo major changes. One of the technologies will be removed from the process and the others will be upgraded. Everyone within the company will have to learn how

to change the way they complete their jobs. With each of the changes, I know that I will assist with the development of training to assist all employees. There will definitely be resistance from individuals who have been employed by the company over a long period of time, and even from those who have recently been employed. Understand all five of the different philosophies better will help me to understand how each employee will accept or resist the needed training so that I can develop and deliver the training.

Works Cited

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