Resources

Recent Publications in Adult Education

Trenton R. Ferro

Elias, John L., and Merriam, Sharan B. (2005). *Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education* (3rd ed.). Malabar, FL: Krieger. xii + 286 pages; $39.50 (hardcover).

Unlike the second edition (Elias & Merriam, 1995), which updated the first edition of 1980 by adding a bibliographic essay, this third edition is a much more thoroughgoing revision of one of the standards in the field of adult education. To the original six schools or systems of philosophy discussed in the first two editions—liberal, progressive, behaviorist, humanistic, radical, and analytic—has been added a separate discussion on postmodernism and adult education, which offers a critique, from the postmodernist perspective, of each of the other six systems. Further, the discussion of each of the previous six schools has been revised in the light of developments, some major, over the last 25 years. The most noticeable revision expands the former radical school to include now the various forms of critical theory that have arisen. The discussion of each school or system still examines the roots and basic principles of each and how each is applied to, and finds expression in, the field of adult education. This volume belongs on the bookshelf, and demands to be read by, every educator of adults who is serious about understanding who we are as adult educators and why we do what we do the way that we do.

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MacKeracher, Dorothy. (2004). *Making Sense of Adult Learning* (2nd
ed.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press. xvi + 263 pages; $33.95
(softcover).

It is MacKeracher's hope that this volume will "provide those with
a limited background in adult education with some basic ideas about
how to work with adult learners in a variety of formal and informal
settings" (p. xi). To that end she discusses assumptions about learning
and adult learners; continues with cycles, styles, the roles of brain and
mind, emotions and motives, skilled performance, relationships, spirit
and soul, and environment and context in learning; and concludes with
strategies and styles in facilitating. The cycles that MacKeracher
explicates most thoroughly are those of Kolb and Taylor; she, in turn,
presents three modifications of the Kolb model. In this second edition
(her first was published in 1996) MacKeracher has reorganized and
revised the chapters and added a new one on contextual or situated
learning. There are 20 figures dispersed among the 11 chapters. Further,
keeping her promise to make this volume useful for those with limited
background, she incorporates on a regular basis boxes that contain
"Learning and Facilitating Principles." MacKeracher's command of
the subject is underscored by the inclusion of 20 pages of references.

Illeris, Knud. (2004; American reprint of 2002 English edition). *The
Three Dimensions of Learning* (Translated by Dorothy Reader and
Margaret Malone). Malabar, FL: Krieger. 272 pages; $39.50
(hardcover).

Illeris, Knud. (2004). *Adult Education and Adult Learning* (Translated
and Revised by Knud Illeris and Margaret Malone). Malabar, FL:
Krieger. 245 pages; $39.50 (hardcover).

The first of these two volumes is the American reprint of the English
translation of a 2002 Danish original; the second, which first appeared
in Danish in 2003, is here revised and translated into English for the
first time. In both cases the English in question is of the British
"persuasion," as evidenced by such spellings as "centres," "defence,"
"programmes," "rationalisations," and "socialisation." Consequently,

these two books provide American adult educators insight into how adult education is perceived in, generally, Europe and, more specifically, Scandinavia. Further, adult educators in America will recognize many of the names listed in the references and indices; they will also be introduced to a large number of educators and researchers whose writings have been published in Denmark and other European countries (a number of which are not available in English).

According to Illeris,

> The basic premise of [the first] book is that human learning is a highly complex matter that always comprises three different dimensions—the cognitive, the emotional and the social—occurring in two processes which, while different, are always integrated: the internal acquisition process and the external interaction process between the learner and the material and social environment. (p. 9)

He goes at this process by, first, examining, and presenting the salient features of, various existing learning theories; second, on the basis of this survey, "developing and describing a coherent and comprehensive understanding of learning" (p. 10); and, third, offering "viewpoints on learning and external/societal and internal/psychological conditions for learning" (p. 10). As a consequence of his efforts, Illeris hopes

> that in setting out the complexities of learning, the book will contribute to the refutation of the many over-simplified approaches to learning that are often the basis for administrative and political decisions taken in connection with the economically-oriented rationalisations [sic] that occur in the current educational system and adjacent political areas. (p. 10)

The culmination of his efforts results in the development of a triangular model that represents the tension field of learning and within which the cognitive, the emotional, and the social dimensions are located at each of the three angles, creating, in geometric terms, Angle C, Angle E, and Angle S. He then fills in the plane of this triangle by locating the various developmental psychological contributions along the C-E side, the activity theoretical contributions along the C-S side, the socialization theory contributions along the S-E side, and the socially and societally oriented contributions from the center down into Angle S. The completed

model incorporates over 30 learning theories across the face of the triangle. This book deserves to be read by all who have an interest in, and are concerned about, developing a comprehensive learning theory.

The second book, in which Illeris attempts "to summarize the general picture of adult education and adult learning that I have gradually developed in the course of over 30 years' engagement in research, development work, teaching, teacher training and debate about adult education and learning" (p. 9), is divided into three parts. The first, adult education as a societal function, considers such topics as the ideology of lifelong learning, the competence demands of modernity, current adult education policy, and adult education in the market society. The second, adult learning, discusses learning and competence development; mislearning, defense, and resistence; learning in adulthood; why and how different adults learn differently; and the contexts of learning. The third, the practice of adult education programming, includes basic principles, the organization of adult education programs, project work in adult education (a uniquely Scandinavian contribution), the implantation of adult education, and counseling. This volume, by providing useful and practical insight into the practice of adult education on the European, especially the Scandinavian, scene, allows and encourages readers to examine and (re)consider their own practices.

McKenzie, Leon, and Harton, R. Michael. (2002). *The Religious Education of Adults.* Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys. x + 275 pages; $24.00 (softcover).

Amid the small but growing list of books and articles dedicated to adult religious education, two have stood out over the past 20 years: *The Foundations and Practice of Adult Religious Education,* by John Elias (1982), and *The Religious Education of Adults,* by Leon McKenzie (1982, not 1984 as stated in the Foreword of the volume under review). At long last the latter has now been revised and updated by one of McKenzie's students at Indiana University-Purdue (spelled, strangely, "Perdue," in the Foreward) University Indianapolis. While Harton has followed McKenzie's outline, the reviser's hand is evident throughout. Following an introductory chapter, which contrasts "conventional wisdom" about adult religious education (stated as nine "beliefs") with

"a different perspective," the volume covers the range of topics that parallels those addressed regularly in programs of adult education: historical overview, problem areas, the post-twentieth century adult, program development, teaching, learning, and evaluation. In addition, reflecting this book's target topic, McKenzie and Harton work toward a theory of adult religious education and discuss the intersection of religious education and adult life. The utility of the book would be enhanced by a list of references (there are notes at the end of each chapter) and one or more indices. Nevertheless, this book would serve well as a text in colleges and seminaries that often have only a single course devoted to adult education.

Findsen, Brian. (2005). *Learning Later*. Malabar, FL: Krieger. xvi + 168 pages; $33.50 (hardcover).

In spite of the fact that our population is aging, full-length treatments of learning in what is becoming called "the third age" have been sparse, making this volume a welcome addition to the literature on the topic of educational gerontology. Findsen identifies as his target older adults, practicing professionals, and students in a variety of settings—health, adult education, social work, volunteering, management, and caring professions. "Although it is written using a theoretical and research base, it is intended for practitioners in search of constructive ways of conceptualizing their work with older adults and of pragmatic ways forward" (p. xiii). Following an introduction to lifelong learning and education in the third age, Findsen moves the reader through a broad range of topics: conceptions of educational gerontology, understanding aging, aging and social change, older adults and participation, the provision of older adult education, learning for older adults in social institutions, contemporary issues for older adults' learning, and critical educational gerontology. In addition to exploring the social context and dimensions of learning for older adults, Findsen, who hails from New Zealand, brings international perspectives to the content of this volume.

Beatty, Paulette T., and Visser, Roemer M. S. (Eds.). (2005). *Thriving in an Aging Workforce: Strategies for Organizational and Systemic Change*. Malabar, FL: Krieger. xii + 216 pages; $38.50 (hardcover).

Not only is the American workforce aging, it is also shrinking, making older workers even more indispensable. Further, personal interest and desire, as well financial need, often keep older persons working past the traditional retirement age of 65. This book, by addressing concerns and issues related to this growing cadre of workers, fills a current void in the literature base of adult education. Using the Delphi technique, the editors polled experts in the field of the aging workforce and identified seven critical issues: recruiting and retaining older workers, training older workers, career development for older workers, enhancing intergenerational relations, health and older workers, pensions and older workers, and redefining retirement. A total of 20 authors, split almost equally between academics and practitioners, were asked to write a total of 14 chapters, with two chapters treating each of the issues listed above, plus two chapters on the workforce of tomorrow that set the stage for the subsequent 14. The editors provide a synthesis for each issue as well as for the entire set of seven. A list of references, comprising 14, double-columned pages (the entire volume is printed in double columns on 8-1/2" by 11" pages) provides extensive resources for further reading and study. It should be noted that the lead editor, Paulette Beatty, who has established herself as an expert in the field of educational gerontology, is also co-author of a title published in Krieger's *Professional Practices in Adult Education and Lifelong Learning* series (Beatty & Wolf, 1996/2005).

King, Kathleen P. (2005). *Bringing Transformative Learning to Life*. Malabar, FL: Krieger. xviii + 205 pages; $27.50 (hardcover).

Although grounded in the theory of transformative learning, especially as developed by Jack Mezirow, this book is designed for, and geared to, practitioners. According to King,

The aim of this book is to bring transformative learning theory alive through the lives of adult learners and the many contexts in

which they grow and learn and to provide adult educators with a
basis to extend their own professional understanding and practice.
. . . This book seeks to answer the question with the adult educator
in mind—What does transformative learning mean for my learners
and me? (p. ix)

Using a two-layered model, King describes four stages of the learner's
experience in the learning setting—building safety and trust; determining
needs and expectations; creating learning experiences; and revisiting
needs, teaching, and learning—to which adult educators must devote
their attention and efforts. In the second layer she outlines three areas
of the educator's preparation—self-assessment, preplanning research,
and practice—that are accomplished through reflective practice and will
aid them in attending to their learners' expectations. These four stages
of the learner's experience and three areas of the educator's preparation
are then applied to five areas of practice: continuing higher education,
English for adult speakers of other languages, adult basic education,
workplace learning, and faculty development. Each of the points that
King discusses is illustrated throughout by actual vignettes garnered
from her research and her own experience as a teacher in a variety of
settings. A series of very helpful appendices gather together several
diagrams of the Transformative Learning Opportunities Model, materials
for use in each of the five learning settings described in the text, and
instructional strategies and resources. A list of references and an index
round out the volume.

Levine, S. Joseph. (2005). *Getting to the Core: Reflections on
Teaching and Learning*. Okemos, MI: LearnerAssociates.net (1962
Pawnee Trail; 48864). x + 164; $14.95 printed, $6.93 download
(softcover).

These 46 ruminations and suggestions of a seasoned adult and
extension educator provide extremely helpful, even if personal, insights
into the heart and soul of adult education—the personal commitment
and involvement of those who have dedicated themselves to the
wonderful, joyous, rewarding, yet sometimes exasperating, task of
helping adults learn, grow, and develop. More than being one person's

reflections that merely engage the readers, the readers must enter into their own self-examination—into the meta-cognitive processes we have come to refer to as "reflective practice." Such processes, whether undertaken individually or as members of a group in staff development settings, cannot but help the readers improve their own practice as they draw upon the wit and wisdom of one of our luminaries.

References

Beatty, P. T., & Wolf, M. A. (2005). *Connecting with older adults: Educational responses and approaches* (Rev. ed.). Malabar, FL: Krieger. (Original work published 1996)

Elias, J. (1982). *The foundations and practice of adult religious education*. Malabar, FL: Krieger.

Elias, J. L., & Merriam, S. B. (1995). *Philosophical foundations of adult education* (2nd ed.). Malabar, FL: Krieger.

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