

Resources

Recent Publications

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This column features brief abstracts of recent publications of interest to adult and continuing educators.

Merriam, Sharan B., & Caffarella, Rosemary S. (1991). *Learning in Adulthood.* Jossey-Bass, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94101; \$27.95; 376 pages.

Intended primarily for educators of adults, this book synthesizes current research and thinking on the topic of adult learning. Its 16 chapters are divided into four major sections that bring together significant research and theory in order to provide a comprehensive overview of what is known about adult learning, including the context in which it takes place, who participates, what they learn and why, the nature of the learning process, the development of theory in adult learning, and other issues relevant to the practice of adult learning. The authors state that they "have organized the material so that it will make sense to readers who are new to adult education and will at the same time challenge those who are already familiar with the knowledge base of the field." The book draws from psychology, and also from recent work in sociology and philosophy. In addition, social and ethical issues involved in providing learning opportunities for adults are considered.

Brockett, Ralph G., & Hiemstra, Roger. (1991). *Self-Direction in Adult Learning: Perspectives on Theory, Research and Practice.* Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 29 West 35th Street, New York, NY 10001; \$39.95; 276 pages.

This comprehensive synthesis of major developments, trends, issues, and practices related to self-direction in adult learning bridges theory and practice because it also offers a selection of strategies that have direct application to practice in adult education. Written for practitioners in settings concerned with developing programs for adult learners where self-direction is an essential part of the program, this book also useful for those who may be considering adopting self-directed approaches as well as those who merely wish to know more about the topic. The 13 chapters of the book are divided into five

sections as follows: Part I, "Introduction," consists of two chapters that set the stage for the book; Part II, "The Underlying Knowledge Base," includes three chapters that critically examine the research literature on self-direction; Part III, "Process and Personal Orientation," contains two chapters designed to bridge theory and practice; Part IV, "Fostering Opportunities for Self-Direction in Adult Learning," presents four chapters that address major issues for practice; and Part V, "A Glance at the Future," includes a scenario for the future and recommendations for creating growth in self-direction in adult learning.

Galbraith, Michael W. (Ed.). (1991). *Facilitating Adult Learning: A Transactional Process*. Krieger, Krieger Drive, Malabar, FL 32950; \$23.50 plus shipping; 216 pages.

Designed to present one specific approach to understanding the teaching and learning process and to view this process as a transaction, this book provides the reader with a tool for understanding the dynamics and complexity of the experience. Following Galbraith's introductory chapter, "The Adult Learning Transactional Process," a number of adult educators address aspects of the topic in the remaining seven chapters. In Chapter 2, Steven Brookfield explores the concept and approach of grounding teaching in learning. Burton Sisco and Roger Hiemstra describe the individualized instructional process in Chapter 3. Paradigms for critically reflecting teaching and learning are examined by Victoria Marsick and Karen Watkins in Chapter 4. In Chapter 5, Galbraith and Bonnie Zelenak describe adult learning methods and techniques that complement the adult learning transactional process. In Chapter 6, Constance Blackwood and Barbara White comment on the use of educational technology as an enhancement to the teaching and learning transaction. Paulette Beatty, Linda Benefield, and Lani Linhard focus on evaluating the teaching and learning process in Chapter 7. In the final chapter, Ralph Brockett provides various professional strategies and literature-based resources to help improve the instructional process. The audience for the book includes adult and continuing educators and human resource development personnel.

Sork, Thomas, J. (Ed.). (1991). *Mistakes Made and Lessons Learned: Overcoming Obstacles to Successful Program Planning*. Jossey-Bass, 350 Sansome Street, San Francisco, CA 94101; \$13.95; 98 pages.

Part of the New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education series, this publication focuses on understanding the most common planning and program mistakes made in the design and delivery of

educational programs and the lessons that can be learned from those mistakes. Emerging out of Sork's "unwavering belief in the utility of analyzing . . . educational failures to discover why they occurred and ultimately in inform . . . practice so that the proportion and frequency of failures can be reduced" (p. 1), it will be useful to anyone involved in planning and implementing programs for adults. In the first chapter, Sork identifies various types of failures in adult and continuing education. Next, Christine Lewis and Catherine Dunlap report the results of a research study on "successful" and "unsuccessful" programs. Chapter 3, by Alan Hanson, focuses on the challenge of getting those for whom a program is designed to attend. In Chapter 4, Robert Simerly discusses common negative reactions to programs and proposes a set of guidelines to improve the likelihood that a program will be satisfying. In Chapter 5, Bailey Allard shares her observations about what frequently prevents desired learning outcomes and what planners can do to increase the chances that programs will produce the intended changes. Chapter 6, by Richard Kemerer, treats factors that prevent the application of newly acquired knowledge in the learner's home context. In Chapter 7, Helen Mills examines the emotional impact of failure and suggests methods of coping with it. Sork, in the final chapter, discusses ways in which what is learned from an analysis of mistakes can be a tool for reducing the types of failures of greatest concern in adult and continuing education.

Gaber-Katz, Elaine, and Watson, Gladys S. (1991). *The Land that We Dream of . . . A Participatory Study of Community-Based Literacy*. Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Bookstore, 252 Bloor Street W., Toronto, Ontario, M5S 1V5; \$19.50 (Canadian) plus handling; 186 pages.

This is a handbook for literacy practitioners that explores the practice and theory of community-based literacy by offering an in-depth look at three different programs. Focusing on three programs in metropolitan Toronto, the authors gathered data from and about learners, volunteers, staff, and governing boards. Extensive quotations from all of these sources are included in the work. The text contains many questions with which the authors and the programs are struggling as the practice and theory of community-based literacy education evolves.

According to the authors, "It became clear . . . that programs were focusing their discussions on three areas of practice: the way in which learning is centred on the interests and life experiences of the learner; the programs' interpretation and understanding of literacy and illiteracy; and the interactive relationship between each program and its neighbouring community" (p. 3). These elements of learner centeredness, literacy from a critical perspective, and community building are described in Chapter 1. The three case studies comprise Chapter 2, which constitutes the bulk of the publication. A concluding chapter examines the future of community-based literacy. Appendices include fact sheets about the programs that were included in the case studies, a summary of the research process employed in conducting the study, and a workshop outline.

Taylor, Maurice C., Lewe, Glenda R., & Draper, James A. (Eds.). (1991). *Basic Skills for the Workplace. Culture Concepts, 5 Darlingbrook Crescent, Toronto, Ontario, M9A 3H4; \$29.00 (includes shipping); 514 pages.*

This book, a practitioner's guide to developing literacy training programs for workers, examines practical solutions, a wide range of program approaches, and instructional techniques as well as reliable resources. Over 35 experts and practitioners from Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom share their experiences and describe the major trends in the field of basic skills training in the workplace. The book consists of four sections. Each section contains 7 chapters. Part I, "Understanding the Need for Workplace Literacy," focuses on why basic skills training has become an issue in our society today, examining such topics as definitions and types of partnerships, as well as values inherent in workplace education. Part II, "Identifying Workplace Training Needs," discusses a number of approaches for focusing on specific types of needs in basic skills programs. Part III, "Examples of Practice in Workplace Basic Skills Training," includes descriptions of a number of programs that have moved from basic conceptual questions to actual design and delivery of service workers and trainees. In Part IV, "Discovering Approaches for Program Development," a framework for examining programs is presented through a discussion of resources, evaluation methods, and targeting programs for specific audiences.

Fingeret, Hanna Arlene, & Danin, Susan Tuck. (1991). *"They Really Put a Hurtin' on My Brain:" Learning in Literacy Volunteers of New York City.* Durham, NC: Literacy South. Available from Literacy Volunteers of New York City, 121 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013; \$17.00; 279 pages. (Executive Summary; \$5.00; 49 pages.)

The major question addressed in the evaluation study whose results are described in this report is: "What is the impact for students of participation in Literacy Volunteers of New York City"? The research team talked with students, their tutors, their friends, and their family members in order to try to understand how students have changed as a result of their participation. Three major areas were examined: (1) changes in students' literacy skills, (2) changes in attitudes and self-concept related to literacy development, and (3) changes in involvement in literacy tasks outside programs. The methods used in this evaluation were primarily qualitative and included open-ended focus group interviews, individual interviews, and observation as the main data collection techniques. The report is comprised of nine chapters. Following an introductory chapter and a chapter detailing the research design and methodology, the following topics are treated: schooling then and now, the instructional program, skill development inside the program, impact on life outside the program, student leadership, and quantitative findings. A final chapter contains conclusions and recommendations. Appendices include samples of data collection instruments and participant demographics. In reporting their findings, the authors frequently use the students' own words to convey meaning.