Feature Articles

Understanding Multiculturalism

Henry G. Cisneros

A new era in the United States is struggling to be born. Population shifts, a constant influx of immigrants, and a high birth rate among Hispanics and Asians are reshaping America's character. America is becoming a city of groups, distinct in their ethnic identities and loyalties.

Already, 28% of Americans belong to a minority group. By the year 2000, most of the people entering our country's workforce will be non-white, female, or immigrants—not young Anglo men who grew up in the suburbs and earned college degrees financed by their parents. The average worker will be African-American, Asian, or Latino, likely to have grown up in poverty, and lucky to have graduated from high school. Contributing to the problem will be disenfranchisement from the education system.

What is ahead for our country is completely unlike anything our parents could have imagined. Nationwide, Anglo males make up 47% of our labor force. Within 10 years, only 15% of new workers will be young white men. Project that picture onto a city like Houston and you can begin to see the kinds of problems we will face in the next decade: Hispanics experienced a 100% growth rate between 1970 and 1980 and now make up 28% of the Houston population. Almost half of Houston Independent School District students are Hispanic, and almost half of those students drop out of high school before they graduate. If current trends continue, Houston will become a city with a vast, undereducated, unemployable population. Houston is not alone. Sheer numbers dictate that whatever the future holds for minorities will profoundly affect the futures of all Americans in all cities. As we move into the greatest demographic shift this nation has ever seen, minority issues are no longer issues of right or wrong. They are issues of survival.

What's more, at the very time when America is in this major transition, we are suffering from a case of "white flight" as many people retreat from our cities. With this kind of exodus comes a false sense of security. Over and over again as I talk with upper and middle income Americans, I find that they are so focused on their own worlds that they miss the big picture. While I enjoy hearing proud parents describe how well their children are doing in school, the fact is that when it comes to our country's future, it doesn't matter how many accelerated courses their children take or how high they score on their

SATs. No matter how exemplary these students are, these children do not make up a large enough percentage of our population to insure that we will have the kind of educated, technologically literate workforce crucial to our economic survival in the next decade. It is no longer enough to "do the right thing by those people" out of a sense of charity or because the federal government is looking back over everyone's shoulders. Our educational systems now need to pay closer attention to "minority" issues and needs, as current minorities will make up the bulk of our workforce.

Whenever I make this point in a speech, invariably there are those in the audience whose knee-jerk reaction is: "Close the borders. The solution is to stop those people from coming in." Because the United States has been in a recession and many regions of the country are undergoing hard times, our new immigrants have become a lightning rod for the wrath of the economically distressed. But the fact is, we need immigrants. Our growing elderly population combined with lower Anglo birthrates means we will have more and more senior citizens and fewer people in the workplace to support them. In the years ahead, while Europe is uniting into a single, strong economic power, the American population—and with it the American work force—will be shrinking.

We are a country of immigrants anxious about immigration. Yet we need immigrants for more than just their numbers; we need the infusion of the immigrant spirit. One of our country's greatest strengths has been that it was created and continues to be defined by voluntary immigration. The majority of our immigrants are people of strength--steel-willed individuals with dreams. There are Hispanics who want to be in America so desperately that they allow themselves to be stuffed into railway cars knowing, as others knew before them, that they risk death by asphyxiation before they arrive. There are Asians who allow themselves to become human cargo on ships, enduring cramped, dark, unsanitary quarters for weeks at a time. There are people who swim the Rio Grande or walk across the hot border carrying everything they own in a shoe box. Some of these new immigrants live along the Texas-Mexico border in houses built from cardboard and scraps of metal. Others live with relatives in city apartments so crowded that they are lined with mattresses and people must live shoulder to shoulder. All of these people are full of hope when they come to Texas, California, and other parts of the United States from Asia, Mexico, and Central and South America. Once here, they start to build new lives, often accepting the menial jobs that no one else will take: they pick crops, dig ditches, take in other people's laundry and sewing. They expect to work hard.

It's pointless to turn away "those people," because they are here and their numbers are growing. So the question is not: "How do we stop more of 'them' from coming?" but: "How can we do a better job of ensuring that our immigrants have the opportunities in life—like education—that will help them reach their full potential?" I believe our country is courting disaster in its unwillingness to make an investment, particularly with regard to education, in minority populations. As I see it, if the social fabric of America is to remain intact, we must develop the vast human capital that is our ethnic population—develop, not culturally recast.

The "browning" of many cities is a certainty. What that means for the future is yet to be determined. When the European immigrants arrived, they found a country that expected them to "melt" together into a cultural conglomerate. The world that ethnic groups are living in today is one in which the momentum is not toward assimilation, but toward acculturalization. Today's immigrants enter a country where, when they look at other minority groups, they see cultural pride and celebration of heritage. And, whereas an ocean separated our earlier immigrants from their roots, basic geography keeps some immigrants, especially Mexican-Americans, close to their homelands. Tucson, Arizona, is less than 100 miles from the border of Mexico. San Antonio is only 150 miles from the border, Houston 350, and El Paso just a shallow ribbon of river away. Look at the fervor with which many ethnic groups of earlier immigration waves celebrate St. Patrick's Day or Greek Festivals, and then imagine how ingrained the traditions of those ethnic groups would be if U.S. citizens of Greek and Irish descent could drive to Greece or Ireland and back in a few hours. For immigrants from earlier times, a trip back to the homeland might happen once in a lifetime. For many new Americans, it is a weekly event. Their task is to find a balance between living and functioning in the greater society and their culture of origin without committing cultural betrayal.

There are those traditionalists who compare cultural differences and can only see a future of chaos where the collision of values and principles will result in cultural tension and confusion. They foresee a battle of wills over which culture authentically represents the new America. What I see for our minorities is neither cultural separateness nor cultural recasting into the mainstream, but something more complex. For Hispanics, as an example, I see an identity that embraces both the sense of community of Latin America and the "rugged individualism" of the United States. I see a very complete human being, a person with Latin roots that foster an ability to cope with the essence of life and are matched with the imperative to succeed. This same kind of cultural synthesis can occur for all minority children growing up in America. Their self-images and senses of identity will evolve from the power-pull of American culture—schools, friendships, work relationships, television—combined with their own cultural traditions, passed on by parents and church.

At a time when we are seeking to strengthen our economic and diplomatic relationships with the Orient, Latin America, Eastern Europe and other regions, it is to our benefit to have part of our population—an educated part—closely in touch with those cultures. It seems very likely that as common-market Europe becomes a reality, the United States will be more marginalized on the European scene; it simply won't need us--not our military and not our money. Our survival as a major world power will hinge on forming new alliances. One alliance unfolding at present is an alliance of the Americas, uniting Canada with the United States and all of Latin America. Our Hispanic population is a critical building block in what may become the largest alliance in the world. Instead of seeking to blunt our differences, we must learn to respect them and realize the broad power base which can result from Americans with varied backgrounds all playing to their strengths.

Such a power base can evolve only through an education system which is inclusive of the largest number of children possible. At one time there were plenty of jobs that required little more than strong hands and a strong back, but the children who will be adults in the year 2000 must be able to understand the complex underpinnings of a high-tech world. A consistent and productive bilingual education program is a good place to start moving toward this goal.

Every time we relegate a Spanish-speaking student, for instance, to a remedial program or a regular class where he or she will probably learn just enough to get a factory job, we cheat that child and we cheat ourselves. Sound and culturally sensitive bilingual education programs are crucial to resolving the dropout problem among Hispanic youth. In my hometown of San Antonio over 30 percent of students drop out before finishing high school. Statewide, one year's class of dropouts results in a loss of billions in earnings, much of which would otherwise be paid to the government in taxes. One dropout prevention program I supported had a price tag of $1.9 billion, which sounds like a huge expenditure to most taxpayers. In reality, it saves billions down the road through a more productive workforce. Bilingual education programs are an example of solid and sound investment in our nation's future.

Yes, it costs money, but we can pay now--or pay more later. The need is to teach, to make productive as much of the population as we can. The return is a sustainable workforce that is able to contribute to the local community.

No matter how you feel about multiculturalism, the practical thing to do is embrace it. We live in a multi-ethnic society, and that is how it is going to be for the rest of our lives and the lives of our children and their children. Because of today's demographic realities, we must understand multiculturalism, recognize diversity, and employ it to our advantage.

Feature Articles

Basketmaking, Politics, and Education: A Success Story from the Micmac Community

Bunny McBride

A dozen years ago, after finishing an MA in anthropology at Columbia, I moved from New York City to southern Maine. My plan was to continue my career as a writer, focusing on Third World communities, particularly various cultural niches in Africa, where I'd already done a considerable amount of writing. However, I got side-tracked--by an old friend and a band of Indians.

My friend, an educator, was doing community development work with an off-reservation band of 450 Micmac Indians who lived in scattered enclaves across the vast hinterlands of northern Maine. They eked out a living as seasonal laborers—harvesting blueberries and potatoes, cutting pulpwood, and making baskets. According to my friend, this band desperately needed an anthropologist. They had just been excluded from the landmark Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement, which compensated Maine's three other tribes for historical land losses by providing money to buy back some land and gave them the recognition needed for health, education, and housing assistance eligibility through the Bureau of Indian Affairs. The Micmacs had been excluded from the settlement simply because no one had done the ethnohistorical research necessary to substantiate their claim.

So, would I move to the cold wilds of northern Maine and work as an anthropologist for the Micmacs? I said no. After all, I'd gotten my degree to bring new cross-cultural insight and research methodology to my writing, not to actually *do* anthropology. I suggested that Harald Prins, a Dutch anthropologist who had just retreated to Maine to do some writing, might be interested in the work. Harald's response was very tentative, but he agreed to an interview and invited me to go along. We made the 4-hour drive north and arrived at council headquarters located in a delapidated former schoolhouse. I sat in on Harald's meeting with the tribal council, and heard in detail the challenges faced by their community.

After the meeting, a Micmac grandmother named Tilly pulled me aside and announced, "We may look and sound defeated, but we're not." Then she said, "You know, the day my daughter was born, I took her tiny little hand, pressed it into a fist, and told her, 'You must fight for your rights.' My daughter has given up--but I'm still fighting."

Tilly's determination was tough to ignore. On the way home Herald and I talked. Concerned that the work would consume the time he needed to write, he proposed we share the job—spending 2-3 days a week up north working with the Micmacs, and the other days down south writing. I said yes. We proposed it to the Micmacs. They said yes. That was the beginning of a real education for us all.

In the years that followed, Harald's exhaustive archival research and, to a more modest degree, my oral history research revealed that Micmac claims for land and federal recognition were, indeed, valid. But winning the support of the public and of state and federal politicians proved to be a formidable challenge, for this Indian community was comprised of several generations of uneducated laborers uncomfortable with and unprepared for stepping onto a public platform to define their cause.

It quickly became clear that federal recognition would not be won without self-recognition and a sense of self-worth. These were sorely lacking in this poverty-struck community clinging to remnants of its traditional culture. The majority of Micmac families survived on less than $5000 a year. Many lived in houses with dirt floors, tarpaper walls, and no indoor plumbing. The highschool dropout rate was a stunning 95%. Only one Micmac had a college education—she served as director of the tribal council.

The Maine education system had failed this particular group of people, whose reasons for quitting school ranged from pressure to take menial jobs to help support the family to embarrassment over poor clothing to traumas caused by racial slurs. All of them had stories of being victimized by discrimination and misinformed stereotypes. This fact was driven home by a story told to me by a sociologist who had spent the previous year working with the Micmacs and a neighboring tribe, the Maliseets. One Saturday night he went to see an old cowboy and Indian movie at the local theater. Midway through the film he realized that his Indian companions were cheering for the cowboys. After the show, he asked one of the fellows why. The answer? "Even we get tired of cheering for losers."

The immediate task at hand was to challenge this notion of being "losers" by finding a position of strength on which the Micmac community could build. To our surprise, the position of strength, the starting point identified by the Micmacs, was basketmaking. For generations Micmacs had made wood splint basket for harvest, storage, and various household uses. Although they were very poorly paid, Micmacs took pride in these beautiful, sturdy containers, and in the skill it takes to find and fell the right tree and to transform a trunk into smooth pliable strips for weaving. Best of all, they felt comfortable talking about baskets to anyone.

So baskets literally became the containers in which they took their cause to the public. We encouraged them to participate in major craft fairs around the state—doing basketry demonstrations alongside a finished basket that held flyers describing their political effort. Talks with onlookers about basketry gradually turned into talks about social injustice and federal recognition. When they attended meetings with local and state political leaders, Micmacs went with a basket in hand, presented it as a gift, talked about their traditional ways of making a living from the woods, and eventually got around to their struggle to gain federal recognition and reclaim lost land. Harald produced a film about Micmac basketmakers. After it appeared on public television, print and broadcast journalists began interviewing community members. Ultimately, many Micmacs became very comfortable speaking on behalf of themselves and their community. Some who were interviewed couldn't read, and would tap their children or other Micmacs to read the articles to them. Gradually, reading became relevant to their lives.

Alongside the political effort was an economic one to turn basketry into a viable livelihood. Ten years ago many Micmacs were trading their baskets for food, as their ancestors had done. Those who sold them for cash received meager sums. Indian baskets were little appreciated in rural, northern Maine where they were seen first and foremost as a harvest tool used to bring in the potato crop (about 15 percent of the crop is still brought in by hand, using Indian baskets). Few Micmacs owned cars to transport their wares to the better paying markets of New England.

After extensive discussions with basketmakers about their marketing challenges, we worked with the council to establish a *Basket Bank*--a tailor-made, tribal-owned marketing and distribution center where they could sell their work for fair prices. The basketmaker elected to head up the Bank was a bright, common-sense man who had quit school after the 4th grade to help his family make a living. He soon discovered that his enthusiasm and basketry knowhow were not enough to make the Basket Bank succeed. But they were a starting point on which he could build--they were his position of strength. Suddenly, education had a tangible purpose in his life. Of his own volition, he went for his GED and then took accounting and business courses at the local college. Today, the Basket Bank operates without the federal subsidy that helped launch it. Several other Micmacs who came to work in the Bank's office and store have gone back to school to get the skills needed to do their jobs well.

Last year, the day before Thanksgiving, President Bush signed legalization granting the band federal recognition and money to buy back native land. In the years leading up to this, several adult Micmac dropouts returned to school, seeking skills that they determined were needed to help them reach their goals—and beyond.

Not long after the Basket Bank was on its feet, I attended a meeting of Micmac elders who were lamenting the fact that museums owned all surviving examples of the crafts of their ancestors. We decided to approach the Maine Arts Commission and another local foundation to remedy this off-kilter situation. We won funding which went toward securing a tribal-owned collection of the works of contemporary Micmac basketmakers, along with photographic and biographical documentation of the artisans. I had the honor of writing the biographies, the profiled Micmacs edited them, and Micmac basketmaker-photographer Donald Sanipass took the photos. The work resulted in a book and an exhibit that has been touring New England museums since winter 1991--along with tribal members who demonstrate their craft and talk to onlookers about it and other aspects of Micmac culture.

There have been quite a few stories of individual and collective gain within the Micmac community during the last decade--some of them modest, all of them meaningful. The point is that growth has taken place by tapping into the unique cultural strengths of this community; leaders and mentors have emerged within the band; education, made relevant, has been sought, found, and applied; and dialog with the mainstream community has begun to happen on a more equal footing. Nagging stereotypes of Indians are being chipped away, and a measure of appreciation of positive diversity is evident as Micmacs are increasingly invited by schools and other institutions to speak of their culture, tell tribal legends, demonstrate their crafts, or discuss small business strategies.

Surely, there are many ways to close the gap between our academic institutions and cultural niches outside the mainstream, be they Indian reservations, migrant labor communities, or immigrant ghettos. Whether the gap is closed by attracting members of these communities to the institutions by making the institutions offerings relevant to community members' lives or better preparing adult education and other practitioners who will go out and work in these communities, it's clear that an awareness, understanding, and respect of diversity is essential—not because it's politically correct, but because every culture holds a unique set of keys to open up answers to life's challenges.

It has almost become cliche to say that we live in a shrinking, ever more interactive world where cross-cultural understanding and cooperation are vital, but it's true. And it is vital that our institutes of higher learning better prepare practitioners for such a world by awakening and sensitizing them to cultural differences and commonalities and by weaving respect for national and international diversity into the fabric of education.

One basketmaking friend of mine, a grand hulk of a man known as Talking Moose, is a philosopher of sorts. He often uses basketry metaphores when talking about life. One night, as we sat in his workshop surrounded by wood strips and shavings, he spoke of how important it is to understand the distinct nature of one's own culture and those of others.

He held up a stick of the ashwood he uses to make his basket—a cross-section of a tree trunk that had been squared off and pounded with the butt of an axe until it split along its year rings into strips used for weaving. Showing me where he had overpounded the stick and caused it to smash rather than separate into clean strips, he said, "Culture is like this piece of ash; if you don't understand its nature, you can easily smash it."

Feature Articles

Multiculturalism: A Native American Perspective

Nate St. Pierre

> I firmly believe that America will never be a great nation until it learns to deal with its indigenous people. It is never too late to correct the wrongs of the past. The greatest sin of all is to pretend there is no problem. The greatest truth is to face the problems head on and begin to solve them. Isn't that the legacy of America?"
>
> Tim Giago, Publisher, Lakota Times

The year 1992 commemorated the 500th anniversary of Columbus' arrival—for some, this represented a time to celebrate the discovery of the new world, but for Native Americans, it represented 500 years of loss, suffering, and survival. Since Columbus' landing, Native Americans have experienced disease, cultural genocide, domination, and the destruction of their traditional ways of life. Native Americans continue to face tremendous challenges today; health problems, unemployment, poverty, poor educational performance and participation, job training, and illiteracy plague the population. The quincentennial observance is a reminder that rather than ignoring, trivializing, or romanticizing Native Americans we are challenged to overcome stereotypes, myths, and misconceptions, and to take actions necessary to restore the rights and opportunities of this group of people. American Indians continue to struggle to find a way to honor their traditional ways while living in an increasingly diverse society; their experience is laden with a long history of events and relationships with non-Indians and a multitude of issues that affect their status in a multicultural society.

The term "multicultural" implies cultural diversity and pluralism within a nation of nations. In order to better understand what multiculturalism actually means to a pluralistic society, examination of particular ethnic groups of people and individual cultures by themselves and then collectively must be taken into account. Dupris (1979) states that "multicultural education is a rather ambiguous term as it relates to knowledgeable practitioners and

Native American tribes and communities" (p. 44). Forbes (1979) suggests that the term must be understood to mean "many paths, many roads" (p. 4). For the purposes of this paper, multicultural education will refer to the "many paths or roads to education."

Adult educators must be aware that the future will bring many challenges. Accorking to Hodgkinson (1985):

- Only three workers provide the funds for each retiree and one of the three workers is minority.
- Half of all college students are over 25 and 20% are over 35.
- By the year 2000 one out of every three Americans will be non-white, and they will cover a broader socioeconomic range that ever before.
- By the year 2000 nearly 42% of all public school students will be minority children or children in poverty.
- In the year 2025, 40% of all 18-24 year-olds will be minority.
- The next few years will witness a continued drop in the number of minority high school graduates who apply for college.

The Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life (1988) provides the following information: By 1988 one-third of the U.S. population consisted of Blacks, Hispanics, Native Americans, and Asian Americans, and 20% of children under 17 today are members of these groups. The Native American population consists of about 2 million people. There are over 300 Federal Indian reservations in the United States (Bureau of Indian Affairs, 1987). There are over 500 federally recognized tribes that speak at least 250 different languages and comprise various cultural groups; this includes 197 Alaska Native village groups. It is important to note that interchangeable terms such as "American Indians," "Indians," and "indigenous peoples" are used to describe Native Americans, but refer to that sector of the American population who can trace their ancestry to the native inhabitants of what is now known as the United States of America. In addition, "accurately assessing Indian population is complicated by the fact that blood quantum is the criteria for official recognition" (Russell, 1992). Although this is clearly a diverse population, they share some of the same basic values such as respect for elders, cooperative learning environments, extended family, nonmaterialism, the concept that time is relative, and reliance on the spoken word.

Historically, Native American people have been burdened by various oppressive and discriminatory forces in the United States; they are often romanticized, stereotyped, and/or forgotten. Indians have been studied as subjects, exploited as people, and labeled as sub-human. John F. Kennedy stated in his Native American Proclamation that "for a subject worked and reworked so often in novels, motion pictures, and television, American Indians remain probably the least understood and most misunderstood Americans of us all" (cited in Russell, 1992). Most Americans are ignorant of Native American history, spirituality, and current Native American political issues.

Many effects of oppression and discrimination are visible when past systems of higher education and policies implemented by the non-Indian educators upon the Native Americans are examined. Past attempts to provide post-secondary education to Native American adults can be summarized as a pattern of dominance, paternalism, religious evangelism, and neglect (Olivas, 1981); before the late 1960s, educational institutions for American Indians were dominated by the federal government or by religious organizations, and inherent in both efforts was a missionary zeal for assimilation (Boyer, 1989).

It is a frequent observation that Native American students, like other ethnic minorities, "have developed an insecurity and ambivalence about the value of their own cultural identity as a result of their interactions with the dominant [society]" (Cummins, 1989, p. 112). For many years, participation of Native American adults in mainstream post-secondary education was very limited or nonexistent. Most Native Americans were not satisfied with educational institutions provided by the states, federal government, and private agencies. Native Americans were the most underrepresented in higher education and had the highest attrition rate of all minorities in the United states (Astin, 1982). "The basic premise of white education—all persons were to be assimilated into white middle class values and behaviors—was antithetical to tribal desires to preserve some of their culture... [t]his long standing conflict of educational objectives was the primary impetus for the significant changes in Indian higher education" (Szasz, 1974, p. 156). In the 1960s, social conditions prompted major changes in Native American post-secondary education.

Current federal government policy for American Indians is underpinned by the concept of self-determination. "The United States government and other institutions in both the public and private sectors have begun to recognize the expressed needs set forth by Indian people as a legitimate basis for Indian social, educational, cultural, and economic self-determination in this multidimensional, multicultural nation" (Peregoy, 1981, p. 35). Native American adults who participate in modern post-secondary education bring with them a whole host of experiences which reflect current trends taking place in educational and federal policy for all Native Americans. Those Native Americans students who have chosen to pursue and complete a post-secondary education and those who continue to attend institutions of higher learning represent the changing status of Native American people in the attempt to gain control of their lives and thus exercise the right for self-determination. "Education, in general, and post-secondary/higher education, specifically, have been identified by Indian people as a key vehicle to individual and tribal self-sufficiency" (Peregoy, 1981, p. 35). "Today's era of Indian self-determination reveals that constructive change in Indian society can occur when it is self-directed" (Boyer, 1989, p. 40). Conventional adult education practices can enhance the ability of practitioners to be responsive to Native American adult learners in most situations, but adult educators are challenged to build practical services and programs that recognize Native American languages and cultures.

In addition, the adult educator must recognize that the educational attainment of American Indians in general is much lower than that of the majority population. High school graduation and college attendance rates remain the lowest for any minority group (Commission on Minority Participation in education and American Life, 1988). While assessing further information about the problem of high attrition rates at the post-secondary level for Native American students, McDonald (1978, p. 73) listed financial hardships, cultural conflicts, the nature and quality of previous education, discrimination, and the lack of role models. Also, when Native Americans try to participate in any formal education setting, they often face stereotypical views such as Indians are slow learners, Indians are good with their hands, or Indians tend to be more right-brained. Obviously, these types of generalizations leave serious implications for the adult educator to address.

The National Education Association (1991) has collected other data on Native Americans that reveal a wide range of both problems and successes to challenge the adult education practitioner:

- American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN) have been either ignored or placed in the "other" category for most national education data.
- Three of four AI/AN students who enter college drop out without earning a degree. (Despite their high dropout rates, a higher proportion of AI/AN youth are preparing to go to college than of any other ethnic minority group.)
- Thousands of AI/AN are enrolled in colleges and will move to a professional life.
- AI/AN students represent the only ethnic group in which females drop out of school more often than males.

Possible methods for practitioners to consider when working with Native Americans include humanistic, affective principles; Native Americans tend to support educational systems which are in harmony with their cultural practices. Decreasing stereotypes and breaking down ignorance are also keys to success in working with Native Americans. Being culturally sensitive and truly responsive to the Native American adult learner as an individual within a larger society will encourage effectiveness. In this setting, practitioners who can help foster and promote understanding and appreciation of the diversity and the traditions of various cultures will be valuable.

The increasingly diverse nature of the many minority groups in our country, which include the diverse Native American peoples, indicates that further accountability within the post-secondary education system is necessary; it is no longer desired that educators attempt "mainstreaming" culturally different students into the "melting pot." Rather, practitioners should recognize and appreciate the various cultural groups with which they most often interact. Adult educators should focus on a wide variety of teaching techniques since "there will be barriers of color, language, culture, attitude that will be greater than any we have faced before. . . the task will be not to lower the standards but to increase the effort. To do so will be to the direct benefit of all Americans, as a new generation of people become a part of our fabric, adding the high level of energy and creativity that has always been characteristic of groups who are making their way in America" (Hodgkinson, 1985, p. 22). Students themselves will be the ultimate measure of accountability and responsiveness.

Chavers (1979) maintains that it will be some time before Native American people have an equal educational opportunity with the majority population. In the meantime, it should be realized that gaining knowledge about their students' ethnicity and culture will facilitate adult education practitioners' ability to adjust their own teaching style and effectiveness to meet the needs of all learners in a multicultural society.

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Feature Articles

Cultural Diversity: Fracture Lines In Adult Education Practice

Larry G. Martin

The field of practice in adult and continuing education is poised to undergo a tremendous metamorphosis which will be defined largely by the increase in culturally diverse populations in the United States. Given the demographic changes that have already occurred in society, the pools from which we hire teachers, program planners, counselors, and administrators will increasingly represent significant numbers of people of color. Also, the client populations that are served by our adult education agencies and organizations will be derived from populations that differ significantly from the mainstream in language usage and in culturally-derived beliefs and values. As the populations of people of color continue to increase, issues of race and ethnicity and the politics of inclusion/exclusion will become even more important to adult education than to the country as a whole. While these populations are not necessarily new to adult and continuing education, their increasing numbers will likely mandate a rethinking of how our organizations relate to them.

Historically, adult education organizations have taken either a "Golden Rule" perspective or an assimilationist stance toward the learning needs of people of color. Those who profess the Golden Rule approach argue that, practitioners should treat individuals with civility; it recognizes that the only important differences are individual differences and concludes that since everyone is special and different, everyone should be treated the same, regardless of their ethnicity or socioeconomic standing (Morrison, 1992). Those who profess the assimilationist approach call for shaping people to the dominant mainstream culture; people with divergent cultures must abandon their preferred styles, companions, dress, or values in order to gain access to either adult education programs or job positions (Morrison, 1992). People in both groups assume that people of color do not differ from the norm in regards to their learning goals, subject matter content needs, learning style preferences, barriers to learning, motivations for participation, financial status, and other concerns. Looking at these concerns from the Golden Rule perspective creates an illusion of "color blindness" in the educator, prompting him or her to ignore prejudice and systematic oppression as barriers to participation; the assumption is that individual responsibility and morality are essential ingredients to diversity. Approaching diversity from an assimilationist perspective is equally problematic for the educator because from this perspective people of color are forced to reject the culture of their ethnic heritage and to accept a dominant culture that might be perceived to be a threat to their cultural identity. The policies and practices of adult education organizations that have evolved from these two perspectives may account in part for the dismal level of participation in adult and continuing education programs by people of color.

In 1986 people of color made up only 26.3% of school noncompleters, yet in 1988-89 they accounted for 60.8% (Martin, 1990). In the area of workplace training, people of color tend to be tremendously under-represented. In 1987 African-American adults constituted 9.5% of the workforce, but received only 5.1% of formal workplace training. Hispanics constituted 5.5% of the workforce, but received only 2.7% of the training (Carnevale, 1989). Findings from other studies (Hill, 1987) document the under-representation of people of color in other areas of adult education practice: extension, continuing higher education, enrichment education, continuing professional education, and others. Adult literacy is the only area within the field of adult education practice in which people of color are over-represented.

There are numerous hypotheses and theories which could explain both the conspicuous participation of people of color in adult literacy education and their paucity of participation in other areas of adult education practice. To explain some of the factors that I believe account for the lack of participation and how these may be changing, I will present six "fracture lines" that I believe are unfreezing some of the dominant socioeconomic conditions and underlying assumptions of practitioners that have in the past inhibited the participation of people of color in adult education programs.

1. Promotion of Schooling in the Workplace

Market-oriented programming demands an acute focus on delivering services to those populations with access to both the information and monetary resources to identify and acquire adult education services. This focus has resulted from a major socioeconomic trend in which parent agencies have reduced their financial support to continuing education programs (Matkin, 1985). The net effect is a type of elitism in continuing education; people of color, who tend to be among the information and resource poor, are systematically excluded from participation. President Clinton proposes that every company with more than 50 employees would have to spend 1.5% of its payroll on training a skilled workforce (Dentzer, 1992). Increasing the funds available for workers suggests a countervailing trend to market-oriented adult education programming which could result in increased funding for the education of resource-poor working adults.

2. Stigma Transference vs. Career Enhancement

As an Assistant Professor at a predominantly white university, I was personally advised by well-meaning African-American professors that in order to obtain tenure at my university I should avoid conducting research on African-Americans or publishing in journals that focus on their educational needs and interests. Both non-minorities and many people of color who are adult education professionals fear that the devaluation associated with the "stigma" of poor people of color will limit their career options. Although Ervin Goffman's (1963) seminal text, *Stigma*, suggests that stigma transference is a common occurrence among non-stigmatized others who become associated with stigmatized groups in our society, there is evidence that such a stigma may serve as a mark of distinction and advance careers rather than limit them. For example, Myles Horton's reputation as a compassionate advocate for the impoverished was enhanced by his significant involvement with the oppressed from a variety of ethnic backgrounds.

3. Challenges to Ethnic Type-casting

Both Darkenwald (1975) and Podeschi (1990) argue that people of color should teach their own. They suggest that potential conflicts in teaching and learning caused by contrasting cultural patterns will be diminished if the instructors are from the same cultural backgrounds as the students. Podeschi makes a compelling case for this argument in his discussion of educational programs for Hmong adults. Both authors capture the substance of the assumption that non-minorities cannot (and perhaps should not) design and teach in programs in which significant numbers of people of color are expected to enroll. However, in a field in which people of color are tremendously under-represented among practitioners, this argument is tantamount to professional neglect. I believe that if programmers and instructors are careful to recognize and respect the cultural values and perspectives of the people of color served in their programs, then instructor race (or ethnicity) should be of no consequence. From an ethical perspective, to charge all professional people of color with the role of "minority educator" is equivalent to "type casting," which is an unethical limitation of their professional options.

4. Cultural Assimilation vs. Cultural Diversity

The "melting-pot" theory, that there is really only one mainstream culture and people of color must adjust to that culture to be socioeconomically successful, is largely a false hypothesis held by assimilationists who do not yet recognize or appreciate the magnitude of the changes gripping this country. As people of color become more numerous, they can be expected to resist giving up their defining values and, in fact, to insist that their values be accepted as equal to those of others in society. As a result, various social institutions like elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, businesses, and others are attempting to prepare both their existing staffs and clients for major changes in the structures and cultures of their organizations. For example, many schools are seeking to implement multicultural curricula for students and workshops for teachers and administrators. By providing leadership in such efforts, adult education practitioners help both themselves and others to identify and value the defining attributes of people of color.

5. Renunciation of Hopeless Attitudes toward Inner-City Problems

The 1992 Los Angeles Riots provided a gauge for measuring the intensity and depth of the socioeconomic problems like poverty, single parenthood, unemployment, drug abuse, and high dropout rates experienced by inner-city people of color. These brutal social problems are no longer being viewed as impervious to effective adult education programming. As the new Clinton presidency takes shape, hopes run high for an administration that will provide the funding to rebuild the inner cities. Through the development of interdisciplinary programs that promote job training and education, and by fostering collaborative efforts among diverse agencies to implement programs, adult education practitioners can play a vital role in this resurgence.

6. Diminishing Belief in "Instrumental Individualism"

Those who believe in the theory of instrumental individualism argue that the individual who is intelligent and works hard will always obtain high levels of formal education, obtain equitable employment, and successfully find his or her way to needed adult and continuing education programs. Those who espouse this philosophy ignore other factors, such as stigmatization, economic conditions, and opportunity structures, that contribute to the economic and educational success (or failure) of individuals.

Interdisciplinary groups of professionals and other citizens who are concerned about the negative effects of instrumental individualism have begun to organize into a national "communitarian" movement. At the forefront of this movement is the not-for-profit Center for Policy Research, Inc. On January 10, 1991, the center launched a new journal, *The Responsive Community*, as a means to promote communication and contact between those interested in restoring commitment to a sense of community as a defining social value. Those in the movement seek to restore commitments to shared values and to encourage people to act ethically and civilly without relying on coercion. Progress is defined via the changes that occur in both the habits of the heart and mindsets of the public, and the public policies of our national government.

Conclusion

Cultural diversity in adult education is a conspicuous phenomenon that no one wants to acknowledge publically. Adult education practitioners can no longer remain silent on this issue. As the fracture lines above suggest, however, the practice paradigm in adult education is evolving and adult education practitioners will play a substantial role in directing its evolution.

Making a commitment to meaningful diversity involves sharing control with people who are "different." It also involves considerable risks, including emotional pain, political vulnerability, and personal alienation. However, a more equitable, compassionate, and hopeful society is worth those risks. We should support diversity not only because of a potential gain of market share but because, by helping people to value diversity, we advance the mission of human civilization.

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PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning, Vol. 2, 1993, 27-32.

Refereed Articles

An Institutional Evaluation of Perceptions and Expectations for a Portfolio Assessment Program

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Abstract

The use and assessment of the portfolio option in an accelerated degree program was examined in this study. Methods include literature review, document analysis, interviews, and telephone surveys. Findings indicate that administrators and faculty question the academic integrity of the portfolio option yet have little knowledge of portfolio development and assessment; students utilizing the option report significant learning experiences. Recommendations based on the findings of this study and resulting changes in the college's portfolio program are included for practitioners wishing to implement similar programs.

In the 1990s the higher education community continues to search for ways to accelerate degree programs for the adult learner. Because portfolio assessment has a twenty-year history (programs had their greatest impetus for growth during the 1970s and 1980s) as an option for accelerating the time needed to complete a degree, a revisit to and an evaluation of this method of degree acceleration seemed timely. For the purpose of this study, portfolio assessment was defined as an option to receive credit for college-level learning by demonstrating the learning in narrative description and documentation. The portfolio assessment program of an institution with a history of using this process was the focus of this study.

The institution used in this study has taken steps to attract the adult student by developing an accelerated evening program that includes various options to shorten the time needed to complete a degree. One such option, portfolio assessment, was identified in a Middle States Institutional Self-Study Report and in a self-evaluation of the accelerated degree program as being underutilized by the population it was designed to serve.

Both studies indicate that the percentage of adults participating in this credit option was unusually small as compared to the total number of adult students in the accelerated degree program. Utilization of the portfolio assessment program was guided by the college's institutional membership in the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL), the guidelines of a position paper issued by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Higher Education (MSHE), and the availability of portfolio courses in portfolio development. Because the institutions had the sanction of CAEL and MSHE in addition to courses to aid the students in the development of a portfolio, this study focused on the meaning of knowledge within the higher education context and the more practical hands on and how to of portfolio assessment.

Methodologies

The methodologies used in collecting the data include a review of the literature, analysis of documents of the College and Department of Continuing Education, intensive interviews, and telephone surveys.

Review of the Literature

The review of literature was divided into three topical areas: 1) learning and participation 2) organization and administration and 3) participation patterns.

Learning, knowledge, and post-learning experience were studied to seek for interrelationships that would relate to portfolio assessment. While the literature was rich with opinions about the meaning of all three when they are considered as separate entities, the literature was ambiguous or nearly silent about their interrelatedness. Little information was found in the literature that could help conceptualize an answer to the chicken/egg question: Which came first in portfolio assessment—knowledge, learning, or experience?

A review of participation patterns in portfolio assessment primarily focused on information available through CAEL resources. In her history of CAEL, Gamson (1989) reported that there had been an increase in institutional participation in portfolio assessment. While this report is accurate, it should be recognized that this participation had been primarily in small to mid-size, tuition-dependent institutions.

Marketing, financing, staffing, and programming were isolated as the components of the organization and administration framework needed for developing a portfolio assessment model. When the literature was reviewed in the context of these separate entities, strong evidence that each entity crossed over into another was discovered.

The interrelatedness was evidenced in two views of marketing: One view spoke of program development as a primary consideration, while the other view eliminated mention of marketing costs. Finance literature covered costs for programs in place, but did not include program development costs. While administrators and faculty were mentioned in the staffing component, auxiliary areas of program development such as admissions personnel, advisers, or registration were not included.

As many questions were posed as were answered during the review of the literature. The puzzle of the interrelatedness of knowledge, learning, and experience as it pertains to portfolio assessment remains. Information on participation patterns by individuals and institutions lacks detail. Organizational and administrative issues have yet to be developed to a degree of refinement that is particular to portfolio assessment.

Document Analysis

A document analysis was conducted to insure that the study would include a historical perspective and to search for themes to be included in the development of the interview guide. These data were important to the study because they were stable information that already existed and could not be affected by outside influences. Merriam (1988) proposes this philosophy on document analysis: she states that such data "can ground an investigation in the context of the problem being investigated" and that they are "unaffected by the research process" (pp.108-9).

Interviews

Patton (1980) describes the purpose of interviewing: "The purpose of interviewing... is to allow us to enter the other person's perspective." The interview was selected as the primary method for data collection for this reason and because it both provides rich descriptions for analysis and gives the opportunity to probe for further information and clarification. The perspectives of policymakers, administrators, faculty, and students were included in the study.

Telephone Survey

After the analysis of the interview data was completed, a telephone survey was conducted to confirm the major findings and to see if any additional insights emerged. The survey was administered to students and faculty who had not participated in the interviews. Fifty students and ten full-time and ten part-time faculty were chosen by random sample.

Findings

All college constituencies questioned the academic integrity of the portfolio assessment process. This was confirmed by responses both to questions designed to elicit opinions about academic integrity and to unrelated questions. Responses such as, "While it has legitimacy, you know, you have to be very, very able to quantify and justify," and "It can be very, very weak—giving away credits," were typical. The conclusion to be drawn is that this college-wide reservation about academic integrity affected the utilization of portfolio assessment as a credit option.

Another finding, that there is a lack of understanding among academicians about the meaning of a college degree and the criteria to support that meaning, may be related to the question of academic integrity. While the interviewees did recognize that persons with a college degree shared a common body of knowledge, they did not elaborate on how this knowledge was acquired or how this knowledge was assessed; it is reasonable that they would be skeptical about how a nontraditional option like portfolio assessment would fit into a schema that is not clearly conceptualized.

Another significant finding was that all college constituencies lacked sufficient information about portfolio assessment; therefore, they did not develop informed perceptions on issues and processes related to the portfolio option, including the issue of academic integrity. Interviewees offered opinions about a concept they knew little about. Faculty, for instance, needed to know issues related to advising and assessing portfolios. Students needed more information about the option, while policymakers and administrators needed more information to use in the promotion of portfolio assessment.

It was also concluded that leadership in promoting the portfolio assessment option had been held by the institutional advocate of portfolio assessment. These leaders were, in most cases, also the teachers of portfolio development course and, in that capacity, acted as the academic watch dogs for portfolio assessment. As leaders, they instituted practices related to portfolio development that then became accepted as quasi policies. None of these leaders made an attempt to institutionalize portfolio assessment through formal policies or to open the option to majors other than the accelerated liberal studies degree programs. Whether the leaders promoted control of portfolio assessment or it was thrust upon them, they were perceived to be the source of all information about portfolio assessment.

One other important finding was the personal benefit derived from portfolio assessment for students. In their interviews students gave moving examples of how they felt when they were going through the portfolio assessment process and when the college recognized that they indeed had acquired college-level learning. Students remarked: "It gave me a new perspective on what I already knew" and "You want to be able to put that down and prove to yourself that you do have college-level learning." Such remarks showed that these students had been through a critically reflective process. Like others experiencing this type of process, they did not realize what had taken place until the experience was over.

The following actions were initiated based on these findings: detailed portfolio policies were developed and passed the college's academic review process; students and prospective students now have the opportunity to attend workshops on portfolio assessment; the researcher has been invited to present a workshop on portfolio assessment to the full-time faculty; and publications are planned that describe the portfolio assessment option.

Recommendations

The following six steps are recommended to practitioners attempting to implement a portfolio assessment program:

1. Develop strong institutional policies about portfolio assessment that pass through the institutional academic review process to help ensure the academic integrity of portfolio assessment.
2. Gain the support of the institution's highest academic officer before establishing a portfolio assessment program. This academic defender should oversee the academic integrity of the process.
3. Designate one person to have the academic and administrative responsibility for the portfolio assessment program to ensure across-program maintenance of integrity and quality.
4. Institute information sessions for various constituencies within the institution to familiarize them with the concept of portfolio assessment; faculty, administration, and students need different types

of information about portfolio assessment.

5. Establish training sessions for faculty who will be assessing portfolios.
6. Develop literature that describes the requirements for receiving credit through portfolio assessment.

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PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning, Vol. 2, 1993, 33-42.

Refereed Articles

A Legacy of Cultural, Social, and Linguistic Hegemony in Education: Understanding the Adult Learner's Educational Past

Jaclyn Fowler Frey

Abstract

A significant number of Adult Education classes in the United States are designed to correct deficiencies resulting from the adult learner's earlier educational endeavors. In order to teach effectively, the adult educator must understand the reasons why the educational system—specifically, the public school system—failed to adequately instruct these students. Research shows that students from minority groups are the least successful in the public school system. This is due to a silent discrimination pervading the American classroom in the form of cultural, linguistic, and social stereotyping that leads to the failure of large numbers of students who represent minority groups.

For approximately two decades America has watched the decline of its public school system; the institutions touted as the vehicle to equality and economic advancement have now become ineffective and overburdened holding places for students. Often-cited evidence of how the educational system is failing Americans includes declining SAT scores and subject mastery, the inability of Americans to speak a foreign language, skyrocketing illiteracy rates, increasing dropout rates, and the inability of American employees to keep up intellectually in the job market. As a result, Americans are unable to compete economically and intellectually on an international scale, and, therefore, federal, workplace, and community expenditures for vocational and literacy training, Adult Basic Education, and workplace skills education are necessary to compensate for the earlier failings of the educational system.

Adult educators are faced with the dilemma of how to correct the damage to adult learners caused by their past experience in the classroom;

essential prerequisites to this process are attending to learner comfort in the classroom, providing vehicles for heightening self-esteem, and minimizing the threat of failure for the student (Rogers, 1951). In order to meet these prerequisites, adult educators must understand their adult learners and why the public school is failing them.

Who are the Victims of Public Education?

Not all students in the public schools are doing poorly. In fact, Burciago (1983) suggests that public education today is successful in reaching a good deal of the population—the white, middle to upper socioeconomic classes. However, it is failing to provide an equal education to several overlapping groups: people in the lower socioeconomic strata in the United States and people who represent linguistic minorities (Bourdieu, 1977; Fine, 1989).

In most states minority dropout rates reach a staggering fifty percent or more (Williams & Snipper, 1990). Levitan (1990) and Fine (1989) state that since poverty directly correlates with lack of education, students who drop out are doomed to a life of social and economic inequality. For instance, because they are not prepared intellectually to participate competently in the workplace, their earning potential and their means for advancement in society are limited. A lack of self-esteem caused by failures in school promotes reluctance for further educational endeavors and results in a cycle of little education and high poverty for future generations (Briscoe & Ross, 1989; Kozol, 1985; Rubenson, 1989). Daniels and Kitano (1970) contend that the cost to the failed student and society in general is enormous in terms of lost potential earnings throughout the student's lifetime. They add: "The waste of talent and manpower through unfulfilled lives is a cost that goes far beyond mere dollars and cents" (pp. 21-22).

Monoculturalism in the Classroom

The victims of public education—students of color, women, the poor, and students of linguistic minorites—are enrolled in programs which are constructed in a way that excludes their cultural perspectives and fails to consider linguistic and socioeconomic differences. Students are unable to fully participate in the learning process of these types of programs because they do not possess the background knowledge, or schemata, of the dominant society in America. In fact, what teachers include in their curriculum "is not the culture of the majority of students . . . or the culture of blacks or American Indians or Hispanics. It is the culture of teachers, who quite naturally advocate the supremacy of their own beliefs to the exclusion of others" (Williams & Snipper, 1990, pp. 8-9). The misunderstanding that results from cultural hegemony in the curriculum and the lack of educator sensitivity to differences in linguistic styles and socioeconomic schemata results in general underachievement for many in minority groups (Briscoe & Ross, 1989; Rist, 1970).

Cultural Chauvinism in the Schools

Steele (1992) states that "deep in the psyche of American educators is a presumption that black students need academic remediation or extra time . . . to overcome background deficits" (p. 77). Such preconceived notions held by educators and administrators concerning the intellectual abilities of people of color or recent immigrants constitute a kind of cultural chauvinism or stereotyping of expected student behavior. Negative expectations by the instructors are mirrored by the students who, in turn, take on the expected attributes. It is a self-fulfilling prophecy that the instructor imposes on the students. Levitan (1990) contends that "when children . . . are told by well-meaning people that they cannot be expected to succeed like other children because of the deficiencies of their environment, then they fail" (p. 179). Often students mark their discontent with the institution's lowered standards by refusing to attend classes or by dropping out altogether. Thus, "rather than provid[ing] the children . . . with the means to escape, . . . [teachers] add to the suffocating pressure to fail" (Butler & Kondratas, 1987, p. 162).

Research has proven that the self-fulfilling prophecy also works in reverse. In other words, "superior expectations have led to superior performance" (Levitan, 1990, p. 179). In fact, "when they are told that their intellectual abilities are no different from anyone else's, that they are expected to succeed and encouraged to do so . . . then they do succeed" (Levitan, 1990, p. 179). However, positive stereotypes are oftentimes as harmful as negative stereotypes. Tatum (1992) suggests that preconceived ideas like, "Orientals will do well in math," and, "Women are good in languages, while men are good in math and science," have "negative effects because they deny a person's individuality" (p. 3).

These misconceptions are more prevalent than is expected and are infinitely more harmful to the student than is believed. For instance, when

African-Americans enter the classroom (especially in the inner-city), both the teacher and the students expect them to be intellectually slower and a great deal more violent and dangerous than other students (Rist, 1970). In fact, "society is preconditioned to see the worst in them" (Steele, 1992, p. 74). This focus on racial preconceptions leads African-American students to act defensively.

Linguistic Chauvinism in the Schools

Linguistic stereotyping occurs when instructors and students develop preconceived notions about people based upon how they speak. Chaika (1989) states that "if subjects are asked to check off the character traits of speakers they hear on tape, clear pictures of stereotypes often emerge" (p. 248). Generally, people assign the attribute of intelligence to speakers of standard American English. Conversely, they assign a lack of intelligence to speakers of other dialects of English, even though the dialect may be as comprehensive a language (Labov, 1969).

Thus, through linguistic chauvinism (privileging standard English) on the part of educators, speakers of non-standard English—African-Americans, non-native speakers, Native Americans, women, the deaf, and others—often are relegated to special education or remedial classes. In fact, "members of minority groups in American schools have been labeled as learning-disabled or even retarded based on testing done entirely in standard English" (McGroarty, 1991, p. 379).

Researchers such as Bereiter and Engelman (1966), Jensen (1968) and Chaika (1989) contend that some speakers of non-standard English are so deprived linguistically in a school setting that privileges standard English (one form of teacher culture) that they are not able to learn how to succeed in school. This handicap is most often magnified, rather than lessened, in the poorly financed inner-city schools which these minority students are likely to attend.

Kozol (1985) suggests that this no-win situation "in any land as well-informed and wealthy as the U.S.A. . . . is not an error. It is not an accident" (p. 89). If this assertion is correct, it is at this point that linguistic chauvinism becomes linguistic discrimination.

Social Class Discrimination in the Schools

Educators impose many stereotypes on lower socioeconomic classes, including those that suggest that the poor are apathetic and indifferent to educational and vocational opportunities. They often suggest that "given an increase in opportunities for success,... those who remained in poverty must be there through lack of effort" (Higgins, 1978, p. 110).

Often these stereotypes combine with those related to race and language to create teacher expectations that considerably weaken the educational opportunities for the poor. Kozol (1985) suggests that rather than lack of effort or apathy, low achievement levels "among the poorest people in our populations [are] a logical consequence of the kinds of schools we run, the cities that starve them, the demagogues who segregate them, and the wealthy people who escape them" (p. 90). The poor are greatly disadvantaged because they are often subjected to the very worst school facilities in the country; poor nutrition and health care, which has been proven to substantially affect learning; and the inability because of financial restraints to express their disapproval with the public school system by leaving and enrolling in a private institution.

Moreover, the children of the poor are unable to draw upon the educational experiences of their parents or older siblings as a back-up to their deficient public education because the public schools have failed the older generations as well. This promotes a cycle of poverty and low education levels (Kozol, 1985). Levitan (1990) offers a description of the make-up of the lower socioeconomic class as being "related to age, race, household type, and educational attainment.... Blacks are three times as likely as whites to be poor. Families headed by women are five and a half times as likely to be poor as all other families.... Adults with less than 12 years of schooling experience an incidence of poverty five times that of those with some college education" (p. 7).

Is There a Conspiracy in the Public Schools?

Social reproduction theory is one tool used by sociologists to grapple with the combined effects of cultural, linguistic, and social class stereotyping in the educational system. It is suggested by proponents of this theory that public institutions act as assigners of societal roles. These roles are introduced early in the educational experience of the student, thus forging a bond between the student and the assigned role--making the role part of his or her identity. Daniels and Daniels (1990) suggest that instructors, as graduates of the institutions of culture (schools), "function as translators of cultural conditions" (p. 160) by assigning to students roles based on cultural and linguistic chauvinism and social class stereotyping. For instance, through increased positive interactions with the educational system (including a good school environment, abundant resources, and the most qualified educators), white Anglo-Saxon males are assigned the roles of achiever, college-bound, manager, Congressman, President, etc., while children from linguistic and cultural minorities and/or the lower socio-economic strata, generally exposed to inadequate school structures and, often, the least qualified instructors, will be assigned the roles of dropout, underachiever, remedial student, welfare dependent, garbage collector, shop employee, etc. Thus, in explaining the social reproduction theory, Briscoe and Ross (1989) suggest that "schools . . . function as a part of state apparatus, protecting the hegemony of the dominant class" (p. 585). In fact, there is a theory among a population of researchers including Apple and King (1983), Bourdieu (1977), Giroux and Penna (1983), Illich (1983), and Nasaw (1979) that the public school plays a role aimed at proliferating this type of silent segregation in order to maintain the status quo: in effect, by conspiring to hold back access to educational opportunities or equity in educational endeavors from the population most unlike it, the government guarantees its continued supremacy. Higgins (1978) suggests that "social policy [and, by extension, educational policy] [does] not evolve out of humanitarianism or compassion but as a response by ruling elites to threats to social stability" (p. 15).

Although the arguments for a government-inspired educational conspiracy are compelling, most researchers believe that the inequity in education and in society at large is unintentional. Kozol (1992) contends, in fact, that people in government and education just "don't identify with the poorest . . . the blacks and Hispanics, because they don't see them. They never know them. They live in a separate universe" (p. 58).

The Adult Educator's Role

How can educators of adults, who in general have traversed successfully the public educational system, bridge the gap between the disparate universes of culture and discourse that exist between themselves and that portion of students who have not successfully transversed this system? First, adult educators must be sure that they are not perpetuating cultural stereotyping; they must understand the differences within the adult learner population. Pai (1990) suggests that an increase in the amount of culturally diverse experiences, including personal encounters and relationships with minority students; exposure to non-mainstream literature, music, and lectures; and a variety of other experiences can increase the adult educator's awareness of, sensitivity to, and familiarity with diverse cultures now found in American society.

Ross (1989) suggests also that adult educators can increase their cultural and linguistic sensitivity by using "consultants or mentors who have experience working with particular racial/ethnic groups . . . [and] making bibliographies and inventories . . . to help instructors start shaping the curriculum to represent . . . traditionally neglected populations" (p. 101). Lupo-Anderson (1992) agrees with Ross and further contends that the curriculum should be shaped around the students' backgrounds, cultural traditions, and preferences; students should not be asked to adapt to the instructor's or school's choices, preferences, and cultural orientations. "A [school] that exposes its students to only one vision of culture places its students at excessive risk of accepting or even perpetuating intolerance, distortion, injustice, and prejudice" (Plante & Atwell, 1992, p. 34).

Educators of adults can become better interpreters of their students' needs by valuing and using the variety of cultural and linguistic life experiences and traditions of our students as building blocks to successful learning (Fraser & Kysilko, 1991). Moreover, we can encourage students of color or from cultural and linguistic minorities, or from the lower socioeconomic levels to get involved in education as a profession by offering academic support (as an academic mentor, for instance) and by helping to find financial support for these students (Fraser & Kysilko, 1991).

Griffith (1976) contends that adult educators must also become politically active in the fight against the inequity in financing, staffing, and physical surroundings of the public schools, especially those schools that deal primarily with minority student groups; political activity can also include lobbying government officials (Quigley, 1989; Rachal, 1990). The problems of the public schools are the problems of the educators of adults as well as of educators at all levels; the separation of educational disciplines is antithetical to the goals of education.

In addition, adult educators should learn to see the harm to linguistic minorities of English-only regulations and fight to defeat them. They should voice our approval for school choice to give the poorest members of society a means to disapprove local school conditions.

Finally, they must get involved in changing the preconceptions of educators on all levels by investigating practical and applicable solutions through research, in-service training and follow-up, and changes in teacher training. Data must also be collected on the multicultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic make-up of American classrooms—rural, urban, and suburban schools alike. Only through an increase in research into cultural diversity in America and its effect on equity in education will the American public school system finally reach its aim of an equal education for all Americans.

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PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning, Vol. 2, 1993, 43-48.

Refereed Articles

Critical Reflectivity Learning Theory: Implications for the Workplace

Frederick Prayer

Abstract

In this article the reader's attention is drawn to several concepts that have relevant implications for workplace educators and that parallel the three types of learning described by Mezirow. Briefly, these can be identified as: 1) reflection on experience, 2) the linkage between personal meaning and the socially created and contextual meanings that are found in organizational culture, and 3) the transformation of personal frames of meaning and reference.

Marsick (1988) has indicated that, as we move toward the twenty-first century, the workplace is increasingly being recognized as a setting in which significant learning can occur. The problem today, however, with many workplace training programs is that they are only partially successful in solving learning problems because training is often separated from context; even when steps are taken to help transfer training skills to the job, workers are left on their own to assess how these training skills connect to real world situations and workplace problems.

The most used model for training in business is the behaviorist (Marsick, 1988). This sequenced process of learning is based on the ability of learners to attain clearly defined learning objectives specified by observable outcomes. Although this approach is necessary and even valuable in some instances, such as in technical training, Brookfield (1989) argues that this viewpoint is ill-suited to contexts in which learners are trying to develop self-insight or interpret and find meaning in their past experiences. The behaviorist perspective may be the safest method of training in organizations, but in many cases it may hinder rather than enhance learning. Behaviorist training that emphasizes acquiring and demonstrating previously defined skills, knowledge, and behaviors focuses on what trainers do to employees. In contrast, learning involves employees as active participants in expanding their own skills.

Training programs need to provide employees with a conceptual foundation for analyzing problems, making decisions, and learning independently. Workers today need to be able to analyze situations, determine the nature of the problem, and define their own solutions to these problems, often on the job. The central goal of this article is to examine the critical reflectivity perspective and analyze its potential contributions to facilitating learning in the workplace. The critical reflectivity theory addressed in this article attempts to capture what is unique about adult learning; the unique qualities of adult learning, suggests Merriam (1987), are the qualities upon which adult learning theory should be based.

Mezirow (1981, 1985) has identified a theory of learning based on the theories of Jurgen Habermas that simultaneously accounts for the need to develop job skills and the fact that this learning is intertwined with learning about the self and the workplace organization. In an effort to describe and understand learning, Mezirow differentiates three interrelated, but distinctive functions of adult learning: instrumental, dialogic and self-reflective.

1. The instrumental focus is described as task- oriented problem solving that generally occurs in the workplace when workers learn how to improve job performance. It is central to prescriptive technical training, which concentrates not on the why, but on the how.

2. In contrast, dialogic learning occurs in the workplace when workers learn about the organization's culture, goals, and policies. Dialogic learning is the means by which we attempt to understand what others mean in communicating with us through speech and the written word.

3. Self-reflective learning concerns workers learning to understand themselves. Self-reflective learning means becoming critically aware of what has been taken for granted about one's learning and the assumptions underlying one's values and behaviors. In this meaning transformation process the learners are presented with a different way of interpreting thoughts and patterns of action, and the previous meaning schemes are reconstructed to incorporate alternate views of themselves and their world. In this manner, learners can better understand themselves and the role they play within their organization.

Mezirow (1985) writes that learners, to become critically reflective, must bring their "assumptions, premises, criteria and schemata into consciousness and vigorously critique them" (p. 25). Mezirow (1981) also identifies this perspective transformation as the central role of adult learning. Becoming aware of "why we attach the meanings we do to reality, especially to our roles and relationships . . . may be the most distinguishing characteristic of adult learning" (p. 11). Change in the way a person interprets the meaning of experience results from reassessing presuppositions and reformulating assumptions "to permit a more inclusive, discriminating and integrative perspective" (Mezirow, 1990, p. 18). Marsick (1988) notes that while it is difficult to separate instrumental, dialogic, and self-reflective learning in a given situation, learners can become aware of the connections among the three domains when they become critically reflective. In this view, learning in the workplace is not just adding to what we already know, but transforming what is already known and, in so doing, emancipating the learner.

A New Focus

Critical reflection is important to business because as the focus of business becomes more customer-service oriented, workers must be able to conceptualize products, services, and the consequences of their own role in the product-service process. More and more, employees at all levels are challenged to deal with uncertainty, to revise tasks, and to anticipate unfamiliar problems. In addition, as "work" in our information-centered culture becomes more abstract, workers need to develop a higher level of both conceptual and communications skills. Developing these skills requires critical thinking. Brookfield (1987) has identified several important elements central to fostering critical thinking in the workplace. He notes that the essential aspects are: 1) identifying and challenging assumptions; and 2) exploring alternate ways of thinking and acting.

Identifying and Challenging

There are a number of helpful strategies that adult education practitioners in workplace settings can implement to help workers identify and challenge their assumptions. These strategies include: use of role play, critical questioning, critical incidents, case studies, and development of theories-in-use. The overarching purpose of these strategies is the active involvement of participants in dialogue. Learners engage in dialogue with each other to see and benefit from multiple perspectives on a problem and to challenge one another's assumptions about a workplace situation.

Learners may question: Could it be this way? Could it be that way? Or could it be many ways? Participants can develop new insight and awareness as well as utilize their past and present experience. The result of using the techniques discussed above often is a redefinition of the problem situation. The strategies also focus on a central element of critical thinking—the ability to take on a perspective of others.

According to Brookfield (1987), developing theories-in-use is one of the most important ways critical thinking can be practiced in the workplace. Argyris and Schon (1974, 1978) offer a useful way to understand this process. They suggest that when people are asked how they would react under certain circumstances, the answer they usually give is an espoused theory of action for that situation. However, the theory that actually governs their actions is a theory-in-use, which may or may not be compatible with this espoused theory. It is not possible to learn what someone's theory-in-use is simply by asking; the adult education practitioner and the learner must construct the theory-in-use by observing the learner's actions and behavior. When there is a clear difference between the espoused theory and the theory-in-use (workplace reality), workers must begin to reevaluate their practice.

Explaining Alternate Ways of Thinking and Acting

Workplace problem solving is the ability to bridge the gap between what is and what ought to be, to imagine alternatives. Problem solving skills involve the ability to recognize and define problems, invent and implement solutions, and track and evaluate results. The ability to solve unfamiliar problems also includes a significant measure of creativity. Once the creative capacity to imagine alternatives has been realized, it is only a short step to considering how this activity can be implemented in the workplace. The more connections that can be made by insights gained through exercises and the work setting, the more effective and useful that learning will be. Strategies to help learners imagine alternatives include: creative problem solving, brainstorming, role play, games and simulations, journal writing, peer learning groups, and reflection on experience.

As critical thinking is a context-embedded skill, it would have a better chance at being used in affecting how people think and act in real life if it is developed in the context in which it is to be applied; perhaps the most promising strategy to foster critical reflection in the workplace is to model critical thinking. When facilitators are critically reflective about their own work, values and relationships, they model critical thinking. In addition, employees who think critically can be used as mentors to other employees in the workplace. Brookfield (1987) notes that when a particular worker is skilled at critical thinking, the probability of transferring learning to others increases markedly.

Implications for Adult Educators

While it is tempting to present a list of dos and don'ts, teaching and modeling critical reflection cannot be reduced to a prescription because approaches of educators involved in facilitating the process vary. In addition, any models or tools that are utilized cannot be easily standardized and are substantially affected by context (Brookfield, 1987). As Mezirow (1990) writes, critical reflection "is not concerned with the how or how to of action, but with the why, the reasons for and the consequences of what we do" (p. 13).

What can be prescribed, however, is the need for workplace educators to encourage learners to critically scrutinize their values, beliefs and assumptions. Workers need to understand problems, to work with other people in process, and to challenge each other's thinking about related problems. As learners become aware of underlying workplace assumptions, policies, and objectives and view them as determined by context, they can gain self-insight and become actively involved in their own learning process.

Organizations know that they need an educated workforce of employees, but for years have discouraged thinking and have even organized jobs so that workers didn't need thinking skills. In today's turbulent economy, workers at all levels are called upon to think differently and more deeply about themselves, their work, and their relationship to the organization. A theory of learning in the workplace should include provisions for helping adults understand and interpret the meaning of the full range of events that occur in that setting. The choice to foster critical reflection involves more than accepting a theory of how adults learn—it also involves examining the values and assumptions underlying the appropriate function of workplace learning.

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PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning, Vol. 2, 1993, 49-56.

Forum

Multicultural Issues in Adult Education: Where We've Come from, Where We Are Now, Where We're Going

Jovita M. Ross-Gordon

Where We've Come From

If you will accompany me on a brief personal tour of the landscape of multicultural adult education as it relates to racial and ethnic minorities during the last five years or so, I think you will be impressed, as I am, with the change that is underway. You also may sense, as I do, that we still have a long way to go.

In 1987, as a participant in the Kellogg Faculty Development program sponsored by University of Wisconsin, I arrived eager to plan a research project focusing on faculty attitudes toward adult students in higher education. That topic fit one of my two major research interests, provided for an extension of work begun through my dissertation, and followed up a recently completed research project. It was also the kind of topic I perceived as reasonably "safe" for a minority woman on tenure track. Instead, after discussions with two colleagues there, Diane Briscoe and Larry Martin, I turned the thrust of my interests to a different course. As I talked with Diane about the research interest on underrepresentation of minority adults in formal education programs that she brought to the seminar, I realized that concerns I had carried at a latent level of consciousness since beginning graduate school several years earlier were indeed important concerns—and important concerns not only for those with a personal investment through our membership in that rare group of professors of adult education who are also people of color, but concerns that should be critical to the field.

Shortly after the seminar, the call for proposals went out for authors to contribute to the *Handbook of Adult and Continuing Education.* Recalling a recent lunch-on-the-run discussion with a mentor about the importance of doing research that really matters to you, I called Diane Briscoe and suggested we submit a proposal to write a chapter on minorities. After all, some of the earliest handbooks had chapters devoted to the adult education of African-Americans. It seemed about time for some attention to these issues again. Sensing that the time and the editors were right, Diane and I submitted a proposal for a chapter to be titled "Racial and Ethnic Minorities." I recall both elation that the chapter proposal was accepted and surprise that I was accepted as an author for this topic to which Diane and I were novice authors and not for either of two other proposed topics in which I had already established my mark.

While doing the research for that book chapter and developing simultaneously a syllabus for a "special topics" course on Women and Minorities in Adult Education, I was struck by several thoughts: 1) How little information there was in adult education literature about the contributions and programs of adult education developed by and for people of color; 2) How much relevant information existed, particularly regarding African-Americans, in literature from related fields including education, history, and the social sciences, as well as in unpublished sources such as ERIC and newsletters; 3) How essential it was to examine rich traditions of nonformal education which often arose in spite of, rather than due to, efforts of those involved with formal adult education; 4) How difficult it became to maintain strict lines of separation between adult education and education of youth in considering these issues; and 5) How challenging it was to find information on racial/ethnic groups other than African-Americans, perhaps in part because of my own limited knowledge of the trails to such information.

I remember feeling a bit imposed upon and particularly challenged as we were encouraged by our editor to be more inclusive and work harder to find examples not specific to African American adult education. This encouragement led me to the realization that information was scarce—we found a scant bit of information in the underground literature trenches about Latino and Native American adult education efforts. It also fostered a transformation in my thinking about cultural diversity as related to race and ethnicity in American society and in adult education within that social context. Despite my self-proclaimed identity with other persons of color, I knew little about groups other than my own. My educational experience, mono-cultural or, at best, bi-cultural professional networks, and ingrained habits of "good" scholarship perpetuated in me the same ignorance I criticized in others.

This is the lens through which I observe and interpret the multicultural adult education landscape. I hope you will read farther as I discuss some of the changes I have observed over the past five years. As someone deeply committed to multicultural adult education, I am heartened by what I see today when I assess our progress in several areas. At the same time, I think our journey has only just begun.

A literature review in 1988 revealed a small number of articles related to diverse populations appearing in mainstream journals such as *Adult Education Quarterly* (formerly *Adult Education*) and *Lifelong Learning* (formerly *Adult Leadership*) during the preceding decade. Notable among these were Pai's (1984) discussion of cultural diversity and multicultural education, Korzenny's (1983) discussion of intercultural communication training for adult educators, and several articles focusing on African-American adult education (Heisel, 1985; Heisel & Larson, 1984; McGee, 1984; Muraskin, 1976; Spaights, Dixon, & Bridges, 1985). To find out more about minority adult education one had to search beyond these mainstream adult education publications. For instance, in the *Journal of American Indian Education* one could find Brod and McQuiston's (1983) report of a national survey on Indian adult education; in the *Sociology of Education*, Darkenwald's (1975) research on effects of teacher race on the retention of Black students; in the *Western Journal of Black Studies*, Hayden and Dubois' (1977) tribute to Alain Locke, "A Drum Major for Black Adult Education"; and in the *Journal of Negro Education* Neverdon-Morton's (1982) description of self-help programs as educative activities of Black women. Books on the subject were few, but notable from within the field was McGee and Neufeldt's (1985) annotated bibliography, *Education of the Black Adult in the United States*, and, from beyond the field, Franklin's (1979) *Education of Black Philadelphia: The Social and Educational History of a Minority Community.*

Where We Are

Progress can be seen in the burgeoning literature on minorities. Three edited books on topics related to adult education of racial/ethnic minorities were published in 1990 alone and bring a wide variety of knowledge and viewpoints to the fore. These included Cassara's (1990) *Adult Education in a Multicultural Society*; Ross-Gordon, Martin, and Briscoe's (1990) *Serving Culturally Diverse Populations*; and Neufeldt and McGee's (1990) *Education of the African American Adult.* Given the nearly complete lack in our field of the voices of minority groups other than African-American, Cassara's book was particularly useful for bringing us contributions on and by Asian-Americans, American Indians, and Hispanic-Americans.

At around the same time, the attention of the continuing higher education community to minorities was heightened with articles by Moe (1989) and O'Brien (1991), and *Adult Education Quarterly* published my recent call for an expanded research program to focus on cultural diversity (Ross-Gordon, 1991). In addition, AAACE has provided support through its Publications Standing Service Unit for a book, *Freedom Road*, focusing on histories of African-American adult educators who have operated both within and outside the mainstream field of adult education.

Within the state of Pennsylvania, this issue of the *PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning* shows the recognition of the emerging importance of the topic of diversity, as did an article in a recent issue of *What's the Buzz?* (Manzo 1991), questioning the limits of cultural pluralism in American society.

This tour of the literature landscape from 1989 to1991 suggests that Adult Education has moved into the present with its recognition that diversity is an issue here to stay in American society at the turn of the 21st century.

Where We're Going

We still have some distance to go in 1) documenting the adult education histories of marginalized racial/ethnic groups, 2) conducting and publishing research that is inclusive rather than exclusive, 3) understanding the meaning of race and ethnicity in American society and their influence on educational equity, 4) assessing adult education's historical role in preserving or challenging status relationships rooted inextricably in race and class, 5) examining cross-group relationships in an increasingly diverse society, 6) studying participation and retention of "minorities" in a variety of adult education contexts, and 7) increasing intercultural understanding and resolving cross-cultural conflict. These deficits are especially noticeable if we examine texts not devoted to some aspect of cultural diversity. In "Needed: A Multicultural Perspective for Adult Education Research" (1991), I have outlined a number of possible areas for research, so I will not review them here. However, I would stress the urgency of becoming dedicated to the tripartite tasks of conducting research in this area, publishing research in mainstream adult education outlets, and utilizing the findings of such research.

We must begin to ask a number of general questions as we examine the research and literature that emerges in this area. Some questions relate to the sources and inclusiveness of our knowledge: Who speaks and who remains silent in the discourse? To what extent are we disadvantaged as a field when it comes to producing knowledge regarding some racial/ethnic groups due to the absence of adult education scholars representing those groups? While broadening opportunities for members of underrepresented groups to engage in graduate education and research careers in adult education is vital, what can we do to incorporate the knowledge generated by professionals and students who hold first-hand experience as minority individuals? Can participatory research enable us to overcome some of our limitations in this regard?

Another set of questions applies to our need for group-specific knowledge and the need to interpret knowledge about groups in light of our awareness of individual difference. Mixing all underrepresented racial/ethnic groups into some category like "minorities" has limited value except for bureaucratic convenience. While many groups share in the subordinate social status and selective discrimination that "minorities" often implies, each cultural group has its own history, values, and customs. Ogbu (1988) has already pointed to important differences that may exist between immigrant minorities and nonimmigrant minorities who have come to be a part of a society through a history of conquest, slavery, or colonialism. He notes that school failure is more common for the latter, even when the same ethnic group's performance is examined in two different contexts. This would suggest that long-existing minority groups in the United States., including Native Americans, African-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and Mexican-Americans, have a set of experiences and expectations that is different from those of more recent, voluntary immigrants.

We must be aware also of differences within groups often thought of as homogeneous. While Hispanic or Latino are terms of convenience used to refer to many groups of Spanish-speaking peoples, important cultural and educational differences exist among these groups. The Puerto Rican experience of U.S. citizens engaged in fluid migration back and forth from the island to cities on the mainland is quite different from the experience of first-generation Mexicans who may have entered as illegal immigrants, for instance, or first-generation Salvadorians who entered as political exiles. Similarly, we see obvious differences in the culture and experiences of Hmong refugees from those of third-generation Japanese-Americans. It is important to avoid monolithic categorization of diverse groups, like Black groups that include slave-descended African-Americans, first-generation African immigrants from many different countries, and Blacks who have migrated from the Caribbean Islands. As we look more carefully at the full range of peoples, we see that the only thing of which we can be certain is difference.

Other questions we must ask include: To what extent does the discourse on diversity inform actual adult education practice? Does the emerging knowledge make any difference where "the rubber meets the road," in the day-to-day interactions of instructors with students or in program administrators' strategic program development choices? How do we stimulate change in practice, especially when deeply ingrained and unexamined ethnocentric attitudes provide the basis for behavior—when overt discrimination is not the culprit? To what extent does our failure to stimulate such change within our programs contribute to continuing inequities in participation and retention of culturally diverse groups? How do we overcome disincentives to change, including the less lucrative nature of programs aimed at underrepresented groups who are disproportionately unable to pay their own tuition fees?

As we struggle to answer these difficult questions, we will move on to the next phase in our progress as adult educators equipped for a multicultural society. Given the history of intergroup relations in the United States over the past several centuries, change will not come quickly or easily. Yet changing social relations are made necessary by the changing complexion of American society, as is clearly demonstrated in states like California, Florida, and Texas. Adult education as a field of practice can either be pulled passively into the 21st century or contribute to these changes in a proactive way. We can replay the early 20th century Americanization movement (Carlson, 1987), or we can help speed up the broadening of the consensus regarding what constitutes American social values.

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Forum

Multiculturalism and Adult Education: Questions to Guide our Research

Sharan B. Merriam

Adult education both as a field of practice and as an area of research has not kept pace with the dramatic social and demographic changes taking place in America today. We know relatively little about the educational needs and interests or learning style preferences of people with diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences. Research on minority populations that could inform our practice is woefully lacking for a number of reasons (Ross-Gordon, 1991). It seems to me that while concerned, some who might otherwise consider doing research in this area are simply overwhelmed by the philosophical and logistical issues involved. Let me suggest three key questions encompassing these issues that might help to get us started doing research on culturally diverse populations.

How Do We Know What to Ask?

Multiculturalism is like adult education in that both terms are broad and can be interpreted to mean different things by different people. There are also a myriad of other terms and concepts used to refer to multiculturalism or related phenomenon; "diversity," "global awareness," "cultural pluralism," "multi-ethnic," "cross cultural," "transcultural," and "minority" are but some of the common terms used interchangeably with multiculturalism. One wouldn't study "adult education" without first defining the term; multiculturalism, too, must be defined and a focus on some manageable aspect of the phenomenon developed.

So where does this meaningful, significant focus come from? It can come from the literature, from previous research, or, more commonly, from our daily lives. Look around you. Your daily life, your work, your town or community are microcosms of the rest of the world! What do you wonder about? What puzzles you? What do you observe about your work, your relationships, your own person that you could investigate further? What answerable questions might have implications for being a better educator, citizen, or family member? The following are some examples of how to take advantage of your immediate surroundings to generate good research questions.

Dekalb, Illinois, is a small, midwestern university town. Its residents are nearly all middle class and white, as is the university community. What opportunities would be here for doing multicultural research? Richard Orem, a professor in the adult education program, noticed that the Asian students in the program exhibited learning behaviors at odds with North American adult learning strategies. These students relied on rote memorization, were reluctant to participate in class discussions, and viewed "the teacher and the textbook as primary and indisputable sources of knowledge" (Orem, 1991, p. 36). These observations have led him to begin a study of the influence of culture on learning.

In Athens, Georgia, where most diversity issues center on race, a small salvage company employs Mexican workers along with local blacks and whites. Management greatly favors the Mexican workers, raising salaries and accommodating them in other ways. However, management obstructs the training director's efforts to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) or basic education instruction for these workers. This situation raises all sorts of questions about power and control, about human resource development in a culturally diverse work environment.

A third example comes from my own experience as a female professor. By virtue of the inherent power of my instructor role and my status in the field of adult education, one set of power dynamics operates in the classroom setting. However, as the token female professor on certain university committees, I am definitely a minority person in a relatively powerless role.

Two points are worth making with regard to the above examples. First, we need only look around us at our own practice and our own lives for a starting point in raising good research questions. Second, we can uncover these questions as we broaden our understanding of multiculturalism to include the issues of power that are inherent in cultural diversity, whether that diversity is based on nationality, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, disability, or some other factor.

How Do We Do This Kind of Research?

A number of issues unique to multicultural research might thwart an effort in this area. First is whether or not you should be a member of the group being studied. Do you need to be an African-American woman to study

African-American women? An immigrant to study immigrants? Much has been written, in anthropology and sociology in particular, about the advantages and disadvantages of being a member of the group, an insider versus an outsider. There is no single answer. There are tradeoffs in either role. An outsider can raise questions that don't occur to the insider, for example, yet the insider might be able to more accurately interpret what is going on.

The best advice I have is to decide which stance you are most comfortable with, then do what you can to maximize the advantages of that stance and minimize the disadvantages. For instance, an outsider can use key informants to help interpret participant behavior. Collaboration is another alternative—a white staff member and a black staff member in the Student Affairs office at my university are studying black students' experiences on campus; both are present at individual and group interviews. Of course, your role as a researcher may not be that obvious. Surface similarities are often obscured by interlocking systems of power and oppression. A well-educated, middle class professional, such as I, is very much an "outsider" to the experience of poor teen-age mothers, even though we share the designation white female.

Gaining access to culturally diverse groups, whether one is an insider or an outsider, is another logistical problem. Sometimes it just takes time to build enough trust to be allowed "in." Sometimes you have to work through an intermediary who will present your case. Sometimes you won't be able to get access. This difficulty may mean refocusing the research question.

Tied into the problems of status and access is concern over accurate representation of the life-worlds and perspectives of the group being studied. These are validity and reliability concerns of central importance to all research. Familiarizing yourself with the strategies you can employ to insure validity and reliability in your study should alleviate this concern (see, for example, Merriam, 1988).

How Can We Assure That Our Research Will Have Impact?

For our research to have an impact on the field, we need to adopt a perspective that goes beyond our immediate environment. If, once we answer our research question, we simply go on with our lives as before, the knowledge gained from a research study is all but lost to the field as a whole. Ross-Gordon (1991) concludes that the paucity of published research on minority populations does not represent the amount of research being conducted; some 62 dissertations on multicultural issues were completed between 1985 and 1989. However, only 1.6% of the studies have been published.

To ensure that multicultural research will have an impact on the field, those who conduct these studies must be committed to disseminating the findings in some form. Conference presentations, newsletters, workshops, and journals are but some of the ways the field can learn of the research. There are numerous publication outlets in adult education and many resources available to assist researchers in preparing their study findings for dissemination. The key factor here is not how to do it, but commitment to contributing to the knowledge base in this area by disseminating what you have learned.

I have posed three questions and identified some answers that can help guide our research on culturally diverse populations. First, I suggest that we don't have to move to ethnically diverse neighborhoods or change our practice. What we can do is to look closely at our own sphere of life; the questions are there, waiting to be asked. Second, I suggest that we don't need a graduate degree in research methodology to undertake this kind of research. We can use our common sense, we can start modestly, we can collaborate. Third, I suggest that we need to be committed to informing others about what we've learned. It seems to me that research that holds the potential for making an impact on practice is research driven by the very questions of power and social inequality inherent in diversity and multicultural issues. We thus come full circle in the consideration of multicultural research.

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PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning, Vol.2, 1993, 61-70.

Theory to Practice

Practical Strategies for Adult Educators

Patricia Lawler

Abstract

Adult educators come from as many and as diverse backgrounds as the adults they teach. Many educators committed to providing programs and instruction to adults have little or no training in the foundations and practice of adult learning. For this article, Six Keys based on theoretical constructs and research have been formulated to facilitate the learning process for both the educator and the participant. These keys are: 1) Understand and reduce anxiety; 2) Elicit and incorporate expectations; 3) Acknowledge and utilize experience; 4) Provide and encourage active participation; 5) Identify and incorporate relevant content; 6) Facilitate change and growth. Each key is explained and practical strategies for implementation are provided.

Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering (1989) point out that organizations andinstitutions that deliver adult education often are "out of synchrony with the character of the adult experience" (p.1) and frequently do not recognize adult education programs as central to their missions. Deliverers d training seldom see themselves as adult educators, and they come to their work without formal education in the theory and practice of adult learning. Training is largely dependent upon the occupation or "the role that the practitioner plays" (Galbraith & Zelenak, 1989, p. 130), which may not be defined as adult education.

How can we as adult educators gain a better understanding of adult learning in order to deliver the best and most effective programming and instruction? Many of us come to adult education from backgrounds as diverse as our students' backgrounds. Learning as we go in our profession is the norm. What can be done to gain a better understanding of adult

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Part of this article is an edited excerpt from *The Keys to Adult Learning: Theory and Practical Strategies* by P. Lawler, 1991, Philadelphia: Research for Better Schools. Copyright 1991 by Research for Better Schools. Adapted by permission.

learning and then to deliver the best and most effective programming and instruction?

Following are six guidelines designed to help adult educators develop and implement practical strategies for success. I call these guidelines "Keys" because the use of them has the potential both to remove pedagogical constraints many trained teachers bring with them to adult education practice and to unlock the facilitative abilities of all adult educators. Formulated from previous research and based on theoretical foundations (Freire, 1970; Knowles, 1980; Lawler, 1988; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Mezirow, 1981), these Keys are useful to the formally educated practitioner as well as the professional whose background is in another discipline. All keys presented here are based on the premise that adults learn more effectively and efficiently when they actively participate in the educational activity.

Key 1— Understand and Reduce Anxiety

Adults may feel anxious and insecure as they enter a classroom or begin a training program. An unfamiliar or new setting and negative memories of education are possible causes of anxiety; we tend to remember our negative educational experiences. It is important to be aware of the tension that many adults bring to the classroom, defuse the anxiety, and help them to have realistic expectations. Remember that you are interested in having adults be active participants (see Key 4); include opportunities for information sharing and discussion.

These three strategies can help to reduce anxiety:

1. Present the overall agenda at the beginning of the program, and the class agenda at the beginning of each class.
2. Describe both the activities and the content that will be covered.
3. State clearly your expectations of the participants.

An adult educator's goals should be to help participants feel comfortable and welcome, respected as adults, and confident in their capabilities. Incorporating the strategies above into the introduction and opening comments will help reduce anxiety in those crucial first minutes of a seminar or class, and a successful start will enable students to engage in the activity and participate to their fullest potential.

Key 2 — Elicit and Incorporate Expectations

As Knowles (1980) suggests, adults are oriented to relating their educational endeavors to developmental tasks for immediate application and thus bring their own expectations to an educational activity. They take a class, seminar, or training program to satisfy immediate needs in their lives. Participant expectations and needs can act as a starting point in the design of a program.

Conducting a needs assessment with potential participants is the foremost strategy required to facilitate this Key. Whether it is formal and takes place prior to program development, or whether it is informal and during the class, the needs assessment is crucial to the success of the program; it is during this process that who our participants are and what they want is discovered.

Useful strategies for informally eliciting and incorporating participants' expectations during class are:

1. Provide an opportunity at the beginning of the program for participants to share their expectations with each other and with you. Listing expectations on a flip chart and sharing goals are examples of such introductory exercises.
2. Refer back to these expectations throughout the program to reinforce the immediacy of what is being learned. Be flexible enough in content and process to allow a few minutes to relate information to their needs, and ask the participants to share an example of how the content will relate to their world.
3. Give the participants an opportunity, at or near the conclusion of the program, to compare their expectations and the objectives with what they actually have experienced and gained. This can be done in several different ways. Evaluation forms listing the course objectives and goals as well as the objectives and expectations elicited from the participants at the beginning can be useful. This information can also be discussed in small groups or with the entire group by reviewing the list of their expectations formulated at the beginning of the class. Taking this step is especially important if some of the participants' expectations are unrealistic because the process helps participants to realize what can be accomplished and helps to promote a more positive feeling, even when some of the participants' expectations are not met.

Working with adults means being flexible. This is particularly true when incorporating their needs and expectations into a program and instructional method.

Key 3 — Acknowledge and Utilize Experience

Adults bring a rich reservoir of experience to our classroom (Knowles, 1980). This is one of the primary things that makes an adult student different from a child. Therefore it is important to ask participants what they know and have them contribute their ideas to the topic at hand. Information presented by the participants contributes a different point of view, a broader perspective. Also, their participation in the class illustrates the fact that the student-teacher relationship in an adult class is very different; both are adults with expertise and knowledge.

It is important to remember that adult students never should be seen as empty vessels that teachers fill up with facts and information. That attitude is not very successful with adults. Adult students want information and knowledge when they come to a class, but that information and knowledge can come from many sources, including the participants themselves.

Education can be a sharing experience, a dialogical relationship (Shor, 1987); this is especially true of adult education. Involving the participants can give them a sense of empowerment and can enliven the educational experience. Adult educators can also be learners in these situations by learning new techniques to broaden their repertoire. Participants' expertise in various areas of their lives should not be theatening to adult educators; these participants probably are enrolled in the class or seminar because they see a need to increase their expertise or to expand their knowledge in a new area.

Strategies which can be used to acknowledge and utilize participants' rich reservoir of experience are:

1. Let the participants share their own experiences with the topic as an introductory exercise.
2. Use group exercises to provide good opportunities to share experiences with varied topics.
3. Use case studies to allow the participants to draw on their own experiences to solve problems and present solutions.

When adults can see that they have a wealth of information, that they are capable of sharing this expertise, and that they can adapt skills from other areas of their lives to the problem at hand, then they are engaging in confidence-building activities. Such activities help adult educators expedite participants' change from dependent learners to more independent, autonomous learners. These opportunities, which also help the participants become actively involved in the learning process, provide another important key to facilitating adult learning.

Key 4 — Provide and Encourage Active Participation

Brookfield (1989) states: "Facilitators must be alert to those teachable moments when learners' attentions are engaged in some unanticipated way and, being alert to these moments, facilitators build on them" (p. 203). When working with adults, it is important to create a learning atmosphere that encourages the active involvement of the participants; adults have work and family responsibilities and are used to taking an active role in their daily lives.

Active participation not only enhances learning but maintains interest. We have all been put to sleep in the afternoon by a long lecture during a seminar. Interspersing active participation with other methods helps keep people involved and interested. Also, a variety of learning activities helps us meet the different learning styles of adults that we would see in a classroom.

Research has shown that "adult education is best facilitated in a participative environment" (Lawler, 1988. p. 49). This means having a learning climate which encourages and facilitates the active interchange of ideas, content, and experience, and the active involvement of each participant. Active participation can be fostered by the following strategies:

1. Design the overall program with numerous opportunities for participant involvement.
2. Use group exercises, role playing, case studies, group discussion, and practice.
3. Provide opportunities for participant feedback throughout the program, and encourage participants to discuss how they feel about the learning process.

Key 5 — Identify and Incorporate Relevant Content

We have seen that adults plan their educational activities in relation to their developmental tasks, as responses to particular events in their lives, and to help them solve problems related to their roles in life. Adults want to put their learning to use right away. In fact, they may not be interested in what you are presenting unless the information is meaningful to something immediate in their lives. When preparing programs, adult educators should ask themselves: Is the content related to the goals of the educational activity? Is the content appropriate to the participants' level of experience? Is the instructional methodology applicable to the content and to the learner's level of expertise? Can the information be utilized by the participants in the time frame they are expecting? With these questions in mind, we can make sure the information we have identified and incorporated into our programs is on target for our participants.

Helpful strategies for implementing this important key are:

1. Take participants' needs into consideration when planning and designing program and instructional methodology.
2. Have participants list their expectations and objectives at the beginning of the educational activity. This is a way to stay on target while adjusting to the needs and expectations of adult learners.
3. Provide participants with models of how to put the information to work immediately by using real examples and referring to real problems and issues from the participants' own experiences.
4. Use exercises for small group work that reflect real life situations. Information from the needs assessment and profiles of participants can be helpful in incorporating real life situations.
5. Have the participants work on an action plan at the end of the semester, class, or training period. What will they do next? How will they take what they have learned and put it to immediate use? What goals will they set for themselves in implementing their learning experiences? Constructing this plan can help the participants focus on the content of the educational activity and assess their learning.

Adults attempt to make sense of their learning, to fit it into their world. There are many settings in which adult educators do and can take advantage of this fact. In literacy training, for example, it is effective to have adults practice on examples from their own lives — the newspaper, the church hymnal, their children's homework, the prices in a supermarket, their telephone bill. In a graduate course in decision making, the class can contribute incidents from their professional lives which represent various dilemmas. In staff development for high school teachers, an adult educator can present strategies which will fit the socio-economic culture of the school.

Being responsive to the needs and experience of adult learners does not mean that adult educators forsake theory. It does mean that educators make the principles and theory relevant to learners' needs by presenting the information in a way that helps learners make a relationship. Establishing a relationship to learner needs creates a climate conducive to growth and change.

Key 6 — Facilitate Change and Growth

Several of the philosophical traditions of adult education, concerned with personal development and personal and social improvement, seek to promote individual growth and involvement in society. Following this tradition acknowledges that education can have a powerful effect on the learner. It is our responsibility to understand that process and to be aware of our role in our participants' educational lives.

Recognizing that adults do change and grow throughout their life span is vital to successful adult education. "As we learn to see people in the context of their potential for growth, the possibilities for enriching their educational experience expand rapidly" (Daloz, 1986, p. 45). Adults seek out education as a response to the change they experience and to help them cope with life tasks and effectively negotiate life transitions. It is also during an educational activity that adults experience growth by expanding their worlds and their thinking. Daloz (1986) points out: "We must be concerned not simply with how much knowledge our students have acquired but also with how they are making meaning of that knowledge and how it is affecting their capacity to go on learning, framing the world in ever more inclusive and comprehensive ways" (p. 237).

Education can be empowering. However, in order to promote and facilitate growth and development of adult learners, adult educators first need to respect their learners and understand who they are and what their needs are. "The adult educator who demonstrates respect is unwilling to use his or her position to coerce others to act or believe in a given way or to exploit those who are oppressed" (Brockett, 1988, p. 13). Many of the techniques discussed here, such as role plays, group exercises, and case studies, can be opportunities for abuse and disrespect if careful consideration for participants is not taken by the teacher or program developer in the designing and implementing these methodologies. Such consideration is vital for the participants' well being and the success of our programs.

If education is to help adults change and grow, adult educators must remember that the adult learner is an autonomous person, deserving of respect. Establishing a climate where the participants feel comfortable sharing and learning can be the key to making education work for them. Some useful strategies are:

1. Remember that adults are experts in many other areas of their lives. Building on that confidence and illustrating ways in which their abilities can be newly applied will enhance the educational experience for them.
2. Use positive reinforcement and encouragement throughout the educational event. This is especially important during group discussions and question and answer periods; these are periods in which the adult may be taking a risk.
3. Be open to participants' ideas, suggestions, and feedback. Adult education moves away from a teacher-centered orientation toward a dialogical encounter between instructor and participant. The instructor, too, needs to take risks.
4. Be aware that adult students are uniquely different and varied. This diversity and variety can enliven the educational experience and enhance the learning process.

If adult educators ground their personal educational philosophies in respect for their learners as independent adults, then they will seek to create a climate conducive to helping their adult learners grow and develop. Creating a supportive environment can help adult learners build confidence, take appropriate risks, learn, and grow.

Conclusion

The keys described here can provide the novice as well as the seasoned and schooled adult educator with valuable strategies for working with adults in a wide variety of settings. Most adult educators would agree that teaching and working with adult learners is a rewarding experience. Adult educators willing to be flexible in their practice and to take risks along with their participants will find that these keys can help them to open up a new and richer education for both teachers and students.

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PAACE Journal of Lifelong Learning, Vol. 2, 1993, 71-79.

Theory to Practice

Practice Makes Perfect—Or Does It? The 3 R's of Becoming a Reflective Practitioner

Gary J. Dean

An effective practitioner is a reflective practitioner. We have all met people who are revered for their experience, professionalism, and indeed, their wisdom on the job. We have all also met those who are held up as negative examples—those with a narrow focus and limited gifts to give to others. What are the differences between the people with 10 years experience and the people with one year of experience 10 times? It just may be the ability to learn from that experience and to grow from it.

The Theory of Reflective Practice

Schon (1983) describes the concept of reflective practice. He explains that a reflective practitioner "does not keep means and ends separate, but defines them interactively as he frames a problematic situation" (p. 68). Peters (1991) states that "the reflective practitioner is a student of his or her own actions and that the study of these actions is conducted in a systematic, analytical manner" (p. 90). Courtney (1992) discusses the problem of separating theory from practice: "Our field has become increasingly split around a false theory/practice dichotomy. And yet this need not be. For all of us engage in both theory and practice" (p. 21). The difference is between "espoused theory" and "theory-in-use". Espoused theory is the accepted, text-book, explanation we give for our behavior. Theories-in-use are those we actually use to guide our actions on a daily basis; our skills are based on theories which we use to direct our behavior. We decide which skills to use, when and how to use them, what works and what does not. When there are difference between an espoused theory and our theory-in-use, we need to engage in systematic reflections to evaluate both our assumptions and our practice.

The Practice of Reflective Practice

Becoming a reflective practitioner takes effort but, fortunately, not the kind of effort that impinges on our ability to do our jobs. The effort can be put into our jobs—with immediate and long-term pay offs. This process is the 3 R's of becoming an effective reflective practitioner: read, reach out, and reflect.

Read

The word *read* represents getting to know your field; the first step is to ground your actions in a solid knowledge and skill base. There are a variety of ways in which we can engage in professional development: enrolling in formal education such as graduate programs in adult education, attending conferences and workshops, taking advantage of in-service training, engaging in self study, and observing the experts around us.

Acquiring knowledge and skills means dedication and commitment to professional development. Yet it is not possible in today's demanding world to approach so important a task as adult education with anything less than a solid knowledge and skill base.

Reach Out

As we engage in our professional development, we are anxious to try out our new found knowledge and skills. In order to do this, we get involved in a variety of activities—on the job, in our communities, with our families, and elsewhere. The idea is to get involved, to reach out. Try to find new ways to get involved, new projects, new people to help, new areas to serve. Getting involved serves as the opportunity to test and hone new skills, apply new knowledge, and develop problem-solving and critical-thinking skills.

Reflect

The key to successful practice as described under *Reach Out* is to learn from that practice. We can learn from our experiences when we engage in systematic thought about what we did and why. In effect, we must make explicit our theories-in-use and scrutinize them for their effectiveness. How can we do this? There are a number of techniques which will help us develop critical reflection:

> Keeping notes, a diary, or a log of activities. We can review this literature in order to find common threads in our behavior and to find what works and what does not.

- Talking with colleagues, either informally or formally, and comparing notes on what we are doing and how well it is working.
- Trying new ideas systematically. When we learn something new, we should not just try it uncritically the first chance we get, but plan when we are going to use it and keep notes on how well it works.
- Instituting staff meetings to review cases, clients, learners, and new ideas. Using the staff meetings to generate and critique new ideas as well as current practices.

Conclusions

Of course, reflection must lead to renewed action, to reaching out in new and better ways. Such purposeful practice creates a continual cycle of reading, reaching out, and reflecting. In fact, there are not three discrete steps to this process; we are continually engaging in all three processes at once. What is important to remember is that we must be conscious that there are three different, if interrelated, processes going on simultaneously. Keeping their functions separate will enable us to be aware of when we are preparing to do (reading), when we are doing (reaching out), and when we are reflecting on what we have done.

Adult learning has been described as "systematic and sustained learning activities for the purpose of bringing about changes in knowledge, attitudes, values, or skills" (Darkenwald and Merriam, 1982, p. 9). This definition also describes reflective practice. Reflective practice is a commitment to continual learning—learning about oneself in order to improve what we do so that we can become more effective in helping others.

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