

*New Horizons in Adult Education*

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## *New Horizons in Adult Education*

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### EDITORS' NOTES

*New Horizons in Adult Education* is a burgeoning online publication, sponsored by the Adult Education and Human Resource Development program at Florida International University. Our hope as editors is to develop *New Horizons* to become a prominent online journal in the field of adult education. To do this, we have created new sections for the journal such as Point-Counterpoint Essays, Perspectives on People, Practice, Research, and Teaching, and News and Notes. Point-Counterpoint essays are solicited and unsolicited reactions to articles published in the *New Horizons in Adult Education*. Perspectives on People include interviews with leaders, scholars, and practitioners in adult education, human resource development, and related fields. Perspectives on Practice are reflections on the past, present, and future challenges and innovations in the practice of adult education, human resource development, and related fields.

**Perspectives on Research** - discussions of issues raised by empirical studies and reports on new developments in qualitative, quantitative and mixed-methods approaches.

**Perspectives on Teaching** – reflections, insights, and new approaches to teaching in all contexts where adults learn.

Manuscripts submitted for these departments along with Book and Media Reviews are short non-refereed scholarly essays. The guidelines can be found on the web page. We welcome submissions by practitioners, students, and scholars.

At the present, we continue to publish manuscripts that were accepted by the prior editorship, and this will be reflected in this issue.

We are also pleased to announce that Florida International University is now the home of the Adult Education and Human Resource Development Network (AEHRDNET) listserv, the companion to *New Horizons in Adult Education*. We invite you to test the new site and join the conversations as we dialogue on issues of relevance to the field.

Mary Alfred and Tonette Rocco, Editors

Doug Smith, Coordinator, *New Horizons* website & AEHRDNET listserv

Adult Education and Human Resource Development Program

Florida International University

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**UNDERPREPARED ADULT LEARNERS:  
THEIR PASSAGE THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION**

Jo-Ann Thomas  
Union Institute & University

Abstract

This article explores underprepared adult learners within the context of higher education. Because of the self-direction and motivation of adult learners, they manage to adapt and incorporate the components of academia into their complex life. However, this is a challenge for underprepared adult learners. With their desire to participate in academia, also comes the reality of their deficiencies in foundational skills; thus, they require more than just a superficial introduction to programs and services. The article examines the importance of significant adjustments required in higher education in order to incorporate not only adult learners but also underprepared adult learners.

Adult learners typically attend college on their own volition; thus, the idea that such learners are inclined to be self-directed, motivated, and responsible is appropriate. However, this is not necessarily the case for learners who do not possess the skill-sets to overcome the challenges of academia. For underprepared adult learners, although the motivation to improve their circumstances in life is great, the skills required for academic success may be minimal or absent; as a result, they are ill-prepared to accomplish the academic task required in higher education.

In addressing the circumstances of underprepared adult learners, this article incorporates the ideal concept of adult learners as described by the early proponents of adult education. The article addresses a snapshot of adult education, typical attributes of adult learners, the survival component inherent in higher education, institutional fit, and program support. These topics lend themselves to illuminating ideas and concepts pertinent to adult learning. Additionally, this document facilitates a medium to explore current conditions of underprepared adult learners from a practitioner's experience. The document does not propose to reinvent or question the validity of adult education theories but queries the ability of a select adult learning population to perform successfully in higher education, without the benefit of viable support systems that are uniquely tailored to fit their needs.

In an effort to capture the essence of each applicant, adult degree programs request a variety of documents to assure that learners can do college level work: These include :(a) previous transcripts, (b) essays, (c) recommendation letters, (d) g.p.a. requirements (above 2.0), if applicable, and (e) personal statements. Thus, it is problematic when the above-listed documents do not always encapsulate the true story about learners' potential. With "open door"

policies for these career development/adult degree programs, there is the presumption that entering adult learners have college level reading, writing, and critical thinking skills. This article elaborates on how such presumptions affect expectations and outcomes of matriculants, thereby, facilitating the growth of a population of underprepared adult learners. It is imperative to focus on learning strategies that accentuate the strength of these adult learners.

### **A Snapshot of Adult Education**

Malcolm Knowles and Eduard Lindeman, historical figures in the field of adult education, expound both on the contributions adult education makes to interested adult learners and the different style of learning this group of adults bring to higher education. According to Knowles (1980), educators need to focus on the needs, interests, and desires of their adult learners. However, in fulfilling these attributes, educators first have to understand who these adult learners are, how they learn, and why they enter the learning process. Attention to these attributes allows underprepared adult learners to improve their academic potential. Likewise, Lindeman (1961) sees the fulfillment of adult students' needs and interests as the fundamental function of institutions; therefore, he maintains that institutions must do everything possible to fulfill the needs of their students.

In alignment with this philosophy, Knowles (1990) cites the thoughts of Eduard Lindeman on adult education:

In adult education, the curriculum is built around the students' needs and interests . . . . Texts and teachers play a new and secondary role in this type of education; they must give way to the primary importance of the learners . . . [Thus], the resources of highest value in adult education is the learner's experience . . . . [This] Experience is the adult learner's living textbook . . . . [Thus, adult education signifies] the modern quest for life's meaning. (p. 29)

In reflecting on underprepared adult learners who enter higher education, it is clear that such learners do not often conform to the six fundamental assumptions that outline the unique characteristics Malcolm Knowles (1990) utilized in distinguishing the model of andragogy. This model incorporates the following essential attributes of adult learners: (a) the learner's self-concept which is routed in learners' psychological need to be seen as capable of self-direction, (b) the role of the learner's experience as a means of indicating diversity to harness learning/knowledge, (c) their readiness to learn which suggests that they are, therefore, willing to undertake the responsibilities of the learning environment, (d) their orientation to learning which allows adult learners to address and perform real-life tasks, (e) their need to know why they must learn certain materials, and (f) their motivation to learn in order to achieve life-long goals (Campbell, 1999). However, the diminished awareness of essential academic skills, infringes on underprepared adult learners' potential to fully embody the above attributes as they traverse the intricacies of academia.

Lindeman (1961) believes that adults use education as an extenuation of life; therefore, adult education is about learning in adulthood. He states, "its purpose is to put meaning into the whole of life" (p. 5). However, with the graduation of adult learners who are still ill-equipped in reading, writing, and critical thinking skills, it is pertinent to reflect on the work of higher

education in supporting and advancing Lindeman's ideal. Thus, if educational institutions have diluted the concept of learning and scholarship, they have circumvented the intentions of adult educators in their efforts to develop and establish a stellar foundation for the field of adult education.

Do underprepared adult learners have sufficient academic sophistication to exhibit the attributes of andragogy, thus, enabling them to support their existence in academia? Do they conform to the attributes of adult learners as prescribed by Malcolm Knowles (1990), and are they able to survive in academia without institutional adjustments to support them? Kerka (2002) presents the views of Courtney et al. (1999). These authors contend that the "characteristics of adult learners" refers to a small number of identified factors with little empirical evidence to support them. [Thus] andragogy has been criticized for characterizing adults as we expect them to be rather than as they really are" (para. 2).

It is problematic if adult learners, but more specifically underprepared adult learners, are treated as we expect them to be rather than how they really are. If such is the case, the system fails to address the fundamental needs of a subset of the adult learning population. Essentially, many underprepared adult learners enter academia because of their motivation, their need to know, job growth potential, and many other reasons; this indicates that they do possess some andragogical characteristics. The question is whether such characteristics can sufficiently provide a solid academic foundation without specific underprepared adult learner accommodations from educational institutions.

Another salient point imparted by Kerka (2002) is on the concept of the self-directed learner. She states "Adults do not automatically become self-directed upon achieving adulthood. Some are not psychologically equipped for it and need a great deal of help to direct their own learning effectively" (para. 3).

Kerka's (2002) article is a reflection on the myth surrounding the teaching of adults vs. children (andragogy vs. pedagogy); however, it supports the idea that adult learners are, oftentimes, not viewed as they really are, but as they are expected to be, as determined by the historical literature that supports this field of study. With such expectations, there is a presumption that underprepared adult learners understand their deficiencies and, based on the ideals of self-direction, know how to compensate for the academic skills they require for achieving success.

When adult learning programs are not developed to substantively address the needs of underprepared learners who are admitted into degree programs, the learners are at a disadvantage. As a professor of adult learners, it has become increasingly evident that the individuality and the cognitive aptitude of adult learners determine how such learners "fit" into the fundamental assumptions that drive much of the adult learning community. These six fundamental assumptions are, indeed, important as guidelines when shaping and forming academic programs to benefit the wide array of adult learners; however, program planners must be cautious in utilizing these assumptions when building programs to service underprepared adult learners.

Boone, Safrit, and Jones (2002) address the position of Malcolm Knowles in his support of adult educators as change agents. Boone et al. (2002) state, "As a change agent, the adult educator plans and directs the change process as it relates to the individual learner, learner groups, or the institutional learner system" (p. 6). Accordingly, upon the assumption of this role by adult educators, underprepared adult learners should have a fighting chance of harnessing and incorporating the essential components and skills inherent in their learning environment. They are able to do so when "The change agent assists learners in evaluating their successes or failures in needs attainment and helps them replan when necessary (Boone et al., 2002, p. 6). However, if adult educators do not harness their roles as change agents, underprepared adult learners will, somehow, move through the academic system without experiencing "genuine" education; as defined by the movement, growth, and thinking that results from the educational experience.

### **Higher Education: A Means of Survival**

A proportionate number of underprepared adult learners are not familiar with the nature and expectations of higher education because their lives have been entrenched in venues that are worlds apart from academia. Therefore, the motivation of these learners to rise above their life circumstances is admirable and laudable, but this does not eliminate the deficiencies with which they enter academia. These deficiencies position them to continue facing academic challenges that would be fewer, if they were better prepared for the academic requirements essential for academic success. Some deficiencies are: poor reading and writing, ineffective communication skills, and also poor to marginal analytical and critical thinking skills. Nonetheless, the only option for improving their "lot" in life is to venture through the gates of higher education.

When academic institutions integrate the ideals of Knowles (1980, 1990), Lindeman (1961) and other noted adult educators, it is imperative that they make concerted efforts to recognize and understand the issues of adult learners. This is confirmed by the picturesque view outlined by Needham (as cited in Reynolds, 1994) on the pressures and experiences faced by adult learners. These pressures, potentially, influence the performance and enhance the struggles of adult learners as they participate in academia because they are usually pressed for time and often have more than one job, in addition to a home and family. Moreover, they may face family disagreements that can shake their world and increase their chaos as well as the need to overcome the cataclysmic effect of divorce that often stretches them to their limits, as they address money and time constraints (Reynolds, 1994). This adds perspective to the mind-set of this learner population.

Irrespective of the above, it is often believed that once certain components are addressed by adult educators such as (a) transmitting information via lectures, (b) demonstrating new skills, (c) assisting the learner in planning learning activities, (d) facilitating a discovery learning process, (e) directing the learner to other resources, (f) leading the learner through a series of trial-and-error experiences (Zinn, 1990) as well as adhering to institutional fit and supplying the student service needs of adult learners, it becomes the primary responsibility of learners to determine how to achieve academic success. However, with learners experiencing so many life challenges, what options do these institutions have when underprepared adult learners are unable to use available resources to engender academic success, despite the efforts of the institution?

As indicated earlier, it has become increasingly evident that the fundamental assumptions about the unique characteristics of adult learners are based more on the development and individual style of adult learners. Therefore, it is imperative that institutions recognize the type of adult learners they attract, and map out a sound academic path for accepting learners who are not equipped with foundational academic skills. Evidently, the type of college environment makes a difference in what underprepared adult learners retain from their college experience.

### **Institutional Fit**

What does institutional fit have to do with the caliber of learners who come through the doors of academia? Many colleges/universities are grappling with the quality of adult learners who enter their doors; however, because of enrollment and retention concerns, many underprepared adult learners are admitted under the belief that they can be successful. Unfortunately, success is only attainable if academia address the true deficiencies of this population and not presume underprepared adult learners have the wherewithal and skill-sets to do so themselves.

Institutional fit is an important consideration in the acceptance of learners to a degree program. If such a concept is not integrated into the enrollment procedures, it becomes the problem of professors to deal with learners who have no chance of succeeding in a chosen course. It is not prudent to assume that the majority of adult learners, especially those aiming to attain an undergraduate degree (Associate or Bachelor's), fall into the categories as espoused by Knowles (1980, 1990), Lindeman (1961), and other adult educators. To maintain institutional standards and enroll the right caliber of learners, it is best that educational institutions acknowledge the limitations of underprepared adult learners and implement appropriate measures to enhance their basic skills; thus, the learning environment created will be beneficial to supporting such learners throughout the academic process.

In an unpublished report on the matter of revamping a college curriculum, one task force recommended a preparatory program to aid learners “who do not demonstrate the ability to do college level work as indicated by scores on the assessment instrument. . .”(Bahreinian, Beatty, Pastores-Palfy, Piazza, Rodolff, & St. Charles, 2003, p. 43). In undergoing a curriculum change, the following rationale is given for including a preparatory program:

Ethically, we need either to be selective in our admissions or we need to meet the needs of the under prepared learners we admit. If we accept learners who are not prepared for college level work, we have an obligation to assist them in attaining their educational goals through a program of study that is specifically designed to meet their needs. In this way, we can be better assured that learners who enroll in other courses have the necessary skills, which should lead to a better learning experience for all. [If] learners will be prepared to meet the rigors of the educational program, faculty will find it easier to maintain high academic quality. Finally, the college will graduate learners who are competent. (Bahreinian et al., 2003, pp. 43-44)

However, it is not only about the provision of preparatory programs; the issue goes well beyond that. It is about in surging foundational courses with styles that benefit the population. It is about incorporating appropriate learning strategies, andragogic processes, mentoring, and a facilitating

spirit that benefits the “whole,” as learners seek the best of higher education in order to improve their future.

Providing the appropriate climate for the varying quality of adult learners is the hallmark of adult learning programs. Galbraith’s (1990) research on the practices of adult education is also in line with the ideas of Brookfield’s research on understanding and facilitating adult learning. Galbraith (1990) espouses the following thoughts on adult education:

It suggests that adult educators should have an understanding of adult learners; provide a climate conducive to learning; provide a contextual setting for the exploration of ideas, skills, and resolutions; provide a forum for critical reflection; and have the ability to assist adults in the process of learning how to change our perspectives, shift our paradigms, and replacing one way of interpreting the world by another. (p. 6)

Upon incorporating such guidelines, reputable institutions have to assess institutional fit when determining if prospective adult learners can be potentially successful at this level of education. If not, institutions should have a strong system of counseling out adult learners when it is foreseen that such learners do not have the necessary acumen to traverse the challenges of academia. It is a humane act because it benefits the learner in not spending precious dollars in a program that will not lead to program completion, and it benefits the institution because the academic standards remain intact.

Kerka (2002), in discussing adult education and the notion of generic adult learners, states that “... meeting learner needs is not a viable guiding principle; at the heart of practice should be the question of who benefits and who should benefit from adult education” (para. 15). The author, however, maintains that “Andragogical methods, which purport to provide ‘a relaxed, trusting, mutually respectful, informal, warm, collaborative, and supporting learning environment’ . . . are more conducive to learning at all ages” (Kerka, 2002, para. 9). However, such andragogical methods, unaided, do not ensure academic adeptness of underprepared adult learners. If these adult learners are prepared to further themselves, enhance their skills, and improve upon their academic prowess, it will be influenced by what they acquired from the learning environment in tandem with how they implement the learned skills; therefore, more intricate, hands-on and specifically designed programs, are imperative for underprepared adult learners.

### **Reinvigorating Program Support for Underprepared Adult Learning**

Without stating the obvious, it is clear that adult learners have entered academia in droves. Thus, with many adults opting to continue their education that was placed on hold many years ago as well as adults who have realized that the social climate no longer offers great possibilities for adults without a college education, there is a great upsurge, over the past years, of adults returning or entering higher education. Therefore, with that idea that education is a valuable commodity, it behooves educational institutions (2 year and 4 year) to maintain academic excellence, while opening a market for underprepared adult learners.

With the departure of adult learners from two and 4-year institutions with deficient writing and critical thinking skills, a resurgence is needed because the common thread among these underprepared adults learners, irrespective of their academic aptitude, is their ability to take

their business somewhere else, if they are unable to strengthen their marginal skills. Thus, recruitment and retention continue to be familiar bedfellows. As such, it is incumbent upon colleges to facilitate academic pathways that are supportive of underprepared learners as they strive to improve academic skills as well as college survival skills, in their preparation to attempt the challenges of mainstream courses. The processes presently in place are failing many learners. Two and four year institutions must place more emphasis on establishing programs that inform and better prepare underprepared learners for their academic experience. Although programs in the form of orientation, various academic skills improvement seminars/workshops and counseling exist, there is still a significant gap in the intentions of such support programs and what actually occur; therefore, the diminished skills of such learners is continually perpetuated.

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**MULTICULTURAL IMMERSION PROGRAMMING:  
AN ADULT LEARNING CONTEXT**

Chaunda L. Scott  
Oakland University

Abstract

The Multicultural Immersion Program teaches the concepts of multicultural awareness, understanding, and sensitivity using the urban community as its primary educational resource. This innovative, culturally relevant, community-based multicultural model of adult education was created by a diverse group of concerned community members to address the racial tension this city often experiences. The design, mission, and goal of this program contribute to our understanding of multicultural immersion programming and identify several processes that would be useful in replicating this type of programming in a variety of settings where adults learn. A description of the program's development is provided, along with an explanation of how the Multicultural Immersion Program is linked to Sheared's (1999) culturally relevant, adult learning approach, entitled, *polyrhythmic realities*. Directions for future research and dialogue are also offered.

Unfortunately, many major American cities have experienced social ills such as racial tension, unemployment, and poverty. "What differentiates one city from another is the angle of descent. To curtail this angle of descent in major cities in the United States, a noticeable shift in public policy *must* take place or America will lose its cities to these social ills" (Russakoff, 1994 p. 9). Once the industrial center of the nation, Detroit's angle of descent has been steep, and its probability of loss remains great to this day. This paper will begin by defining key terms and concepts, followed by a brief introduction of the urban city's angle of descent in light of the historical and contemporary patterns of racial tension in the form of residential segregation, racial profiling, and a variety of racial hate crimes that continue to exist in the city.

**Definitions of Key Terms and Concepts**

Recognizing the myriad of ways terms can be conceptualized, the following key terms and concepts presented in this paper will be defined (i.e., multicultural education, multicultural immersion program (MIP) the research site, community-based education, and diverse) and for clarity, will adhere to the following working definitions.

*Multicultural Education* — A concept with supporting processes intended to help individuals in educational settings develop competencies needed to understanding and respect human differences. Recognizing that equal access does not guarantee fairness for all, multicultural

education strives to prepare individuals to work actively towards achieving structural equality in organizations (Banks, 1981; Grant, 1992).

*Multicultural Immersion Program (MIP)* — A community-based multicultural education centered program in a Midwestern urban city where seventy-five people spend seven days experiencing food and the culture of five communities of color which include the following cultural groups; European American, African American, Hispanic American, Arab American and Native American discussing issues of concern to those communities (MIP Official Records, 1996, 2004).

*Community-based Education* — Education focused on the facilitation of responsive systems designed to take collective action where agencies work collaboratively within the community to address issues such as substance abuse, housing, violence, crime, teen pregnancy, ill literacy, and various kinds of discrimination using a broad range of resources (National Community Education Association, 2002).

*Diverse* — “A term that captures the many ways in which human beings differ, for example people differ with regard to race, gender, age, class, language, disability, sexual orientation, military experience, personality and so on” (Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1998, p. 241).

#### Racial Tension in a Midwestern City: An Historical and Contemporary Problem

In 1990, this city had 777,000 African American residents, more than any other city, except New York and Chicago (O’Hare, 1992). At the time of this writing, it has the largest population of African Americans and Arab Americans of any major American city and is the most residentially segregated city in the nation (Farley & Frey, 1994).

In the mid-1950s, the population of this city was approximately 2.5 million residents. By 1990, the city’s population had declined to fewer than one million, whereas the population of surrounding suburbs had increased to three million because whites had moved from the city to the suburbs during the 1960s and 1970s (Farley & Frey, 1994). White flight to the suburbs transformed the racial composition of this city from 20% African American in the mid-1950s to more than 75% African American and 20% Arab American in 1990. The remaining 5% are Hispanics, American Chaldeans, Asian Americans, and Caucasians (Russakoff, 1994). As a consequence, Chafets (1990) described this city as “an impoverished island surrounded by prosperous suburbs” (p. 19).

In his pioneering study, *An American Dilemma*, Myrdal (1994) judged this city to have had poorer racial relations than other Midwestern cities because of the strength of the Ku Klux Klan in the city and its large southern-born population. Myrdal based his evaluation of this situation on the city’s long history of racial tension, as evidenced by race riots, cross burnings, church burnings, employment discrimination, and housing discrimination. However, more recently in Detroit and its surrounding communities, daily news reports of racial profiling incidents, racially motivated shootings, and neighborhood violence, between persons of different races, in the forms of fighting and vandalism, continue to persist (Grant, 2005; Shepardson, 2004; Wowk & Lynch, 2004). Nonetheless, the history of race relations in this city is only a slightly worse version of patterns throughout the nation (Russakoff, 1994).

According to O'Hare (1992), like most other large cities at the beginning of the 21st century, this city had areas that were made up of poor minority groups, surrounded by suburbs composed mostly of higher-income Caucasians. These patterns of residential segregation and racial tension, which are products of the 20th century, have continued to this day and complicate life in this community as it relates to race relations and closing the racial divide. These historical and contemporary issues also created a need for this city to identify some ways to address and resolve these problems.

### **Community Concern and Commitment: A Possible Solution to the City's Racial Problems**

On July 27, 1967, in response to the deadly racial riots and uprisings occurring in this city, civic and community leaders assembled at the City-County Building to spearhead a community response to these problems. As a result of that meeting, a coalition of 39 African American and Caucasian local leaders representing business labor, city and county government, the clergy, and civil rights and community organizations, met for the first time to find answers to the civil disturbances that were occurring in Detroit (MIP Official Records, 1996). Although the committee brought a great sense of hope and coming together during this time, the group soon realized that the problems of the inner city were too severe and too entrenched to be eradicated in the near future. The New City committee then declared that they would remain together as long as necessary in an attempt to address these problems. By August 1968, the New City committee became New City, Inc (MIP Official Records, 1996, 2002).

During the next 9 years, serious discussions took place about inequities in the economic system and the public schools, and about the attitudes of the police toward the African American community. These meetings also enabled African Americans and Caucasians to get to know, listen to, and respect each other. What the committees' early organizers did not foresee was the economic challenges that would soon ravage this city. The decline of the automobile industry devastated the city in ways that mere looters and arsonist never could. The many problems facing the city, not just race relations, but also economic problems, continued to escalate, so that today social ills still require a coalition in the city. In some respects, New City has been reinvented through the last 35 years. However, its mission as a race-relations coalition has remained constant (MIP Official Recorded, 1996, 2002).

Initially, the New City committee conducted its daily work through a number of task forces, comprising personnel from area corporations and organizations who were loaned to the project for limited periods of time. By the early 1970s, New City employed a full-time professional staff, had a vast network of volunteers, and operated 14 separate committees. Loaned personnel continued to work as project consultants (MIP Official Records, 1996).

By 1973, New City had identified nine priority areas on which to focus its efforts: housing, public safety and justice, employment, education, drug abuse, minority economic development, community-based development groups, public clarification of urban problems, and health. The organization's initial commitment to serve as an advocate, example, catalyst, and funding source remained the same. As a result of their involvement with New City, several corporations, such as Ford Motor Company, General Motors, and Chrysler hired individuals

responsible for advising their employers of citizens' concerns. The corporate community began to fund community initiatives directly. Further, the catalytic funding of New City enabled many emerging organizations to attract additional monies and stand on their own, thereby providing resources to the community. Several efforts that began within New City were spun off to operate independently (MIP Official Records, 1997).

The election of an African American mayor, Coleman Young, and the adoption of a new city charter, resulted in several institutional changes that had been advocated by the New City coalition, formerly the New City Committee. A major reorganization of New City in 1991 sharpened the focus of the coalition on six areas: education, youth and arts, race relations, minority economic development, housing and public safety, and human needs. Despite this sharper focus, however, external funding sources began to question whether New City still was needed (MIP Official Records, 1997).

By 1994, growing Arab, Chaldean, Latino, and Asian communities were calling for a stronger place in the New City coalition. Many initiatives in 1994 and 1995 were directed to the southwestern part of the city, where problems of the Latino population were burgeoning. Fearing that New City might soon be eliminated due to lack of funding, considerable time was invested during those years in strengthening relationships among the area's communities of color. In 1996, a new effort to promote cross-cultural communications and collaboration was designed and implemented, called the Multicultural Immersion Program, MIP (MIP Official Records, 1997, 2002, 2004).

Threatened with uncertain funding, in 1996 New City leaders conducted individual meetings with many of the coalition's original supporters. Much had occurred in the 30 years following the institution of New City. Most of the leadership of area corporations had changed, and many new leaders were unfamiliar with the inception of the organization and its role in the community. The agenda for this series of meetings contained one item: Do you believe that race relations in this city are as they should be? The answer from meeting attendees was a resounding "No!" Further, all agreed that New City was the only organization that addressed the continuing problems of race relations in this city and the problems stemming from inequities in education and economics that still existed in the community (MIP Official Records, 1997, 2002).

Bolstered by the renewed support of corporate partners and the enthusiasm of the community, New City retooled itself for the 21st century. Following a series of small-group discussions, it was concluded that education and economics were the two arenas that most notably reflected a disparity that was measurable by race. It was further determined that only through efforts to close the gap in these two arenas could positive race relations be achieved. It was also agreed that opportunities for dialogue and collaboration across cultural lines were lacking in the community and could be addressed through the work of the coalition (MIP Official Records, 1996, 2002, 2004).

As a result, in 1996, New City coalition's board membership was expanded to permit an increased number of communities to participate. Also, the United Way committed itself to raising funds to support the MIP, as well as other programs housed under New City. That year, the New City coalition also decided to focus its energies in three areas: youth development,

economic equity and racial justice, and cultural collaboration. This approach and the decision to address the issue of race relations by positively influencing issues and policies that ensure economic and social equity have revitalized the nation's oldest urban coalition and positioned the organization to continue its vital work in the community to this day. In 2002, New City Inc. celebrated its 35th anniversary (MIP Official Records, 2002).

### **New City Mile Stones**

Major milestones in New City's mission to improve race relations in this Midwestern city are summarized below (New Detroit – The Coalition, 2005):

1. In August 1967, the New City committee was established with loaned personnel from around the city to address race relations in that city.

2. In August 1968, the committee incorporated as New City Inc. Its purpose was to ease conflicts and suggest steps toward achieving economic equity, racial justice, cultural collaboration, and youth support.

3. In 1977, gang problems in the downtown area prompted the organization to start a comprehensive youth training and community involvement program. In this program, young people began learning computer skills. More than 1,500 people were placed in jobs over the next 10 years.

4. In the early 1980s, representatives of the city's five ethnic groups were appointed to the New City board. This expanded its focus to Arab/Chaldean, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and Native American issues.

5. In 1987, the neighborhood reconciliation board began training residents in mediation, hoping to help them resolve conflicts over disputes involving such things as noise and pets, which were too minor for police intervention or lawsuits.

6. In 1992 the first New City Concert of Colors, a series of performances by people of different ethnic backgrounds, was held at a park in the downtown area.

7. In 1996, the New City MIP began. Seventy-five people spent a day experiencing the food and culture of the five communities of color and discussing issues of concern to those communities.

8. Also in 1996, the New City Silence the Violence youth campaign was created and implemented; as part of their campaign, city dwellers traded in guns for computers and utility payment vouchers. This nonviolent youth program also presented concerts, in addition to the Concert of Colors.

9. In 2000, the New City Coalition, formerly the New City Committee, made a commitment to develop Detroit youth by starting a movement to improve the quality of urban education in Detroit. Since 2000, coalition members have been involved in efforts to reform to and restructure urban public education in Detroit. Also, several New Detroit Trustees also engage in activities at the local urban school as volunteers for schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

10. In 2001, a community building effort was developed by the New City Coalition. The mission of this effort is to support community and faith-based organizations in Detroit and the surrounding communities of: Highland Park, Hamtramck, Mount Clemens and Pontiac that provided services and programs that address social and economic inequities that have resulted from the impact of racism. The goal of this effort is to assist community and faith-based organizations in building, strengthening, and enhancing their human and organizational capacity to meet the needs of the community.

11. In 2002, the Economic Equity Initiative was created by the New Detroit Coalition. The mission of this initiative is as follows: 1) initiate and support actions designed to increase the number of procurement contracts awarded to businesses owned by minorities, 2) review existing local, state and federal policies, as well as, pending legislation to assess their impact on disparities measurable by race in the Detroit metropolitan area, 3) influence investment in both commercial and residential real estate in Detroit, and 4) work to eliminate the barriers to growth and development of businesses owned by people of color.

12. In 2004, a race relations and cultural collaboration task force was formed by the New Detroit Coalition members to provide information to the Detroit community on topics such as affirmative action, immigration policies and racial profiling. The goal of this program is to promote the elimination of racism by providing open community forums that addressed specify Detroit social justice issues and concerns, and supporting policies that promote racial justice and equality.

13. In 2005, New Detroit Coalition members and Operation Hope, a well known and respected community service agency in Detroit, launched a joint initiative entitled Banking on Our Future. Banking on Our Future is a financial literacy training program that teaches youth between the ages of 4 to 12 about the basics of banking, how to open a checking and savings account, the power and importance of credit, and basic investment strategies.

### **The Multicultural Immersion Program in Context**

Since its inception in 1996, the MIP has become well known throughout this Midwestern metropolitan region for highlighting the histories, cultures, and socioeconomic issues of its five communities of color (African American, Arab/Chaldean, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, and Native American). The MIP content focuses on multicultural ideology, racism and oppression in America, democratic values in America, and multicultural awareness, understanding, and sensitivity. The goal of the MIP is to produce multicultural leaders and educators who will be prepared to share what they learned from this program with their colleagues, family, members, friends, community, and society (MIP Official Records, 2000, 2002, 2004).

Adults interested in participating in this 7-month program must apply six months before the program starts. Once they are accepted, participants must attend a day-long orientation, as well as six 8-hour cultural sessions hosted by five partner agencies that reflect the ethnicities of the five communities of color. Participants must also represent (as closely as possible) people of various racial, ethnic, and cultural groups throughout the region, and a cross-section of businesses, civic groups, educational institutions, health services, and community-based organizations. Last, participants must be committed to promoting racial and cultural understanding throughout the city, specifically, in organizational settings and society. Upon completing the program, participants are recognized at a formal ceremony for being prepared to serve as multicultural leaders and educators in their community, organizations, and society (MIP Official Records, 1996, 2002, 2004).

### **Benefits to Participants**

The main benefit that individuals receive from participating in the MIP is an increased knowledge of diverse communities constituting this metropolitan area and society in general.

Further, the program expands participants' network of diverse colleagues for individual, business, and community problem solving. Finally, the MIP locates new resources and opportunities for cultural collaboration, and it recognizes participants' commitment to promoting racial, ethnic, and cultural awareness and understanding throughout the community and in their organizations (MIP Official Records, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2002, 2004).

### **Benefits to Employers**

The benefit to employers of having their employees participate in the MIP is that the program creates a coalition of leaders and educators who are prepared to promote cross-cultural awareness, understanding, and interaction in workplace settings to improve organizational effectiveness. This program also benefits employers by enhancing business prospects through networking. Organizations that urge their employees to participate in this program and support their participation receive recognition for being committed to promoting racial, ethnic, and cultural understanding (MIP Official Records, 1996, 2002, 2004).

### **Linking the Multicultural Immersion Program Model to Adult Learning Principles and Practices**

The Detroit MIP model can be linked to Sheared's (1999) work in community-based adult education entitled *Polyrhythmic Realities*. Sheared's work offers a cultural approach to exploring how individuals learn from experience by giving voice to learners' lived experiences in the learning environment as they intersect with race, gender, class, language, and other cultural factors, which Sheared referred to as polyrhythmic realities in the learning environment.

In a study Sheared (1999) conducted on the participation of African Americans in adult basic education (ABE) in California, she found that participation occurred when ABE instructors put forth an effort to include African Americans in their programs, when ABE programs made it a priority in their policies to allocate funding to serve this population, and when students believed that their history, culture, and perspectives mattered to those in charge of the program.

Common themes that surfaced in this study were that African American students tended to participate when they were connected with the ABE instructors, other students, and the program goals. Moreover, students acknowledged their polyrhythmic realities and lived experiences as being a critical factor when learning in this environment. For example, students whose polyrhythmic realities and lived experiences were acknowledged by their instructors, curriculum, program staff, and administrators not only participated but also persisted in the program.

According to Sheared (1999), in order for adult education practitioners to fully understand the polyrhythmic realities of African American adults, as well as other ethnic groups, they must give voice to the learners' lived experiences in the learning environment. Sheared further asserted that giving voice to learners' polyrhythmic realities and their lived experiences in the learning environment can help adult learners acquire the skills and tools they need to move forward personally and professionally and challenge the status quo. Sheared's framework offers an example of one culturally relevant, adult education approach to understanding how adults can

learn from giving voice to their polyrhythmic realities, and lived experiences, in the learning environment, when participating in an urban community-based learning environment, such as the MIP.

### **Conclusion**

Since literature is scant on similar MIP programs and approaches used successfully in other urban U.S. cities, the Detroit MIP model, serves as a useful example of what a culturally relevant, community-based, adult education program could look like. By developing adult learners to become multicultural leaders and educators who will be prepared to share what they learned with their colleagues, family members, friends, community and society, the MIP empowers multicultural people in urban Detroit Michigan, to take action towards ending the racial tension that resides in their multicultural community.

Exploring the implications of multicultural immersion programming in fostering multicultural immersion learning in adulthood has left a few questions for further consideration. First, how can multicultural immersion programming be incorporated into other adult settings where adults learn (i.e., college and university classes and ABE classes)? Second, are there other types of disciplines and ideas where multicultural immersion programming will work, for example, business, counseling, psychology, and criminal justice? Third, how would an educator go about setting up multicultural immersion experiences that would be meaningful and safe for reflection to occur?

If multicultural immersion programming can provide the type of learning needed to address and possibly end racial tension in communities, then it is critical that we as educators and practitioners further examine and discuss this kind of programming as a possible multicultural education strategy for fostering multicultural immersion learning in adulthood.

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**ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY AND ADULT EDUCATION:  
TREND OR TRADITION?**

Bernadine W. Raiskums  
Capella University

Abstract

As the field of adult education continues to evolve and mature, so grows the importance for those engaged in it to recognize and be able to communicate its key concepts. Newcomers, those with tangentially related interests, or those on the margins of the field for whatever reasons – may be disadvantaged by unfamiliarity with the peculiarities of the language. This article challenges and encourages writers/speakers in the adult education discourse community to acknowledge that the meanings they assign to polysemous words and phrases may differ from those of their reader/listeners, and to ensure that their intended meanings are made clear.

What is truth? What is education? What is adult education? What is meant by involvement? program? satisfaction? experience? critical? Who has the time or interest to ask? Why should we ask? As the academic field of adult education continues to evolve and mature, so grows the importance for those engaged in it to recognize and be able to communicate their perspectives of key concepts. Those who are unfamiliar with the jargon of the field – newcomers, those with tangentially related interests, or those on the margins for whatever reasons – are disadvantaged by being excluded from communications with those on the inside. “In fact, you may be viewed as an outsider if you don’t know the lingo....As camaraderie develops, those who have not yet mastered the new terminology find themselves being looked down upon as being unenlightened” (Taylor, 1998, p. 66).

Even those within the field who are engrossed in their own specific interest areas may be inhibited from confident and meaningful participation in communications with those whose concentrations are in different areas. Woods, the U.S. Department of Education’s liaison to the two-year-college world, says she is constantly bombarded with new terminology at conferences and seminars. Woods, who is African American, compares it with using so-called “Black English” in some social settings. “It’s our way of communicating, but you have to know when and where not to use jargon” (Woods ctd. in Yates, 1999, p. 9).

Milliron, president of the League for Innovation in the Community College asserts that to be an in educator, you have to keep up with the new jargon: “The danger of course, is that the use of jargon sometimes gets in the way of useful communication and works to exclude many of the people we want to participate in our conversations” (ctd. in Yates, 1999, p. 9). Such exclusion may manifest at the listening edge, at the point of entry, or at any time during our conversations and dialogue.

Alexander, Schallert, and Hare (1991) concluded from an examination of over 150 articles that researchers in the field of learning and literacy used terminology of knowledge inconsistently to identify their constructs, to state their objectives, and to direct their research. Alexander et al. recommended “that those who focus on aspects of knowledge in their research, work toward greater precision in their selection of terms and in their definition of the constructs they study” (p. 336).

### **Definitions in Adult Education**

While stipulative definitions of terms-of-art used by adult education professionals, researchers, and theory builders appear within the text of much of the literature, adult education textbooks, unlike those of other disciplines, generally lack glossaries. Schroeder’s (1970) taxonomy is often considered to be the precedent attempt to define adult education. Schroeder explains that he is attempting to adapt a framework from Upton and Samson to define adult education by classification, structure analysis, and operation analysis. His definition of classification deals with genus (e.g., education) and species (e.g., adult education). In his definition of structure analysis, he deals with leadership, goals, content, and processes as functional parts of a structure. Finally, his definition of operation analysis deals with operations (i.e., the purpose and functioning of the parts) within the field.

Courtney’s (1989) definition presented five classifications of adult education. His classifications included (a) the work of institutions, (b) the education of adults, (c) a profession or scientific discipline, (d) an element of spontaneous social movements, and (e) terms of functions and goals.

In addition to attempts at defining adult education, some attempts have been made to define the jargon of the field. Jarvis’s *An International Dictionary of Adult and Continuing Education* (1990) represents the first formal attempt to define the terminology of adult education in a dictionary. However, in 1989, Titmus edited the first edition of the *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education & Training* under the original title of *Lifelong Education for Adults: An International Handbook*. Recognizing both the changing demands of his audience and the changes in the language, Jarvis published a second edition of his *International Dictionary of Adult and Continuing Education* in 1999. The second edition included numerous new terms and concepts, in spite of the total number of entries being reduced from over 5,000 to fewer than 4,000.

In a less formal process to develop a set of descriptive definitions of jargon peculiar to alternative higher education, Warren (2000) prepared a *Glossary* for the American Council of Education’s *Principles of Good Practice for Alternative and External Degree Programs for Adults*. The goal of this glossary is to offer a set of definitions that will help clarify and unify this arena of higher education.

Raiskums designed her master’s thesis at University of Alaska Anchorage to involve a literature-based study of terminology peculiar to the field of adult education. As a result, she produced the 2001 *Principles and Principals: A Dictionary of Contemporary Adult Education Terms and Their Users* as a handy, inexpensive tool for those on the margins of adult education, which was subsequently made available online through the ERIC Adult, Continuing, and

Vocational Education Clearinghouse and is now available through the Center on Education for Training and Employment.

Currently in press and edited by English, *International Encyclopedia of Adult Education* is being produced “as an act of resistance to these existing compendia, and at the same time an epistemological attempt to gather cacophonous global voices, to challenge contributors to stretch the boundaries of knowledge by unmasking the unspoken struggles and debates about what constitutes knowledge in our field” (English et al., 2004, p. 572). The encyclopedia will include contributions from adult educators who are internationally known for their specialized work in the field.

The above-described works have provided only descriptive definitions of adult education and its peculiar terminology. Still lacking are stipulative and/or prescriptive definitions for specific discourses within the field.

### **An Historical View of Analyzing Education Language**

Activities toward defining the language of adult education in dictionaries and encyclopedias certainly serve their purposes for providing assistance to the uninitiated in the field. But what about the responsibilities of the writer/speaker to take time for personally reflecting and bringing to consciousness his/her own perspective on meanings of particular language being used to describe important adult education concepts? What about the responsibilities of the writer/speaker to acknowledge that the reader/listener may have a different perspective, and to appropriately recognize and address the differences?

Reflection upon words and meanings is a recurring theme through the history of Western philosophy. Protagoras can be considered the founder of linguistics as he studied the language used to convey the laws and customs in the fifth century BCE. Plato is most cited for reflection upon words and meaning as a philosophical exercise of education. Moving forward to the 1800s, we find that Frege introduced the contemporary tradition of analytic philosophy, with its emphasis on the analysis of language and meaning (Burgstaller, 2000; Funk & Wagnalls, 2002).

Several lines of thought originated from this tradition including logicism, logical atomism, logical positivism, structuralism, and ordinary language philosophy. The latter, linguistic analysis of ordinary language, comprises explicative analysis for precise definition of concepts, semantic analysis for identification of what it makes sense to say with given concepts, and contextual analysis for identification of the functioning of given terms within specific situations (Kemerling, 2001).

Ordinary language philosophy appeared in Wittgenstein’s later lectures, in the early 1930s, as he reached the conclusion that final analyses of language are invariably mistaken (i.e., language analysis alone cannot resolve philosophical problems). Since philosophical problems arise from the misuse of language, the only way to resolve them is to use examples from ordinary language to deflate the pretensions of traditional thought. Careful attention to the actual usage of ordinary language should help avoid the conceptual confusions that give rise to traditional difficulties. The members of any discourse community develop ways of speaking that serve their

needs as a group, and these constitute the language systems they employ. Human beings at large constitute a greater community within which similar, though more widely-shared, language-systems are used. Although there is little to be said in general about language as a whole, therefore, it may often be fruitful to consider in detail the ways in which particular portions of the language are used (Funk & Wagnalls, 2002; Kemerling, 2001).

Two generations of British philosophers joined with Wittgenstein by engaging in this new form of philosophical activity. Although their individual interests differed, all shared the commitment to careful analysis of ordinary language and the confidence that this method would tend to dissolve traditional philosophical problems. Ryle proposed a philosophical method of dissolving problems by correctly analyzing the derivation of inappropriate abstract inferences from ordinary uses of language. Applying this method more generally in *The Concept of Mind* categories, Ryle (1949) showed how the misapplication of an ordinary term can result in a category mistake by which philosophers may be seriously misled. Austin (1961) proposed that the philosopher's role is to clarify by investigating and cataloging the most commonly employed grammatical constructions beginning with analysis of the subtleties of ordinary language. Application of his method distinguishes between what we say, what we mean when we say it, and what we accomplish by saying it.

Scheffler (1958), associate professor of education at Harvard, introduced the application of methods of analytic philosophy to clarify certain pervasive features of educational thought and argument. He explained (1960) that increasing volumes of data and specialization of knowledge it is more difficult to encompass available information in a single, significant world-picture. He further asserts that educational ideas serve not only descriptive functions but also policy functions, so participants in educational research or debates over goals may be confused by widespread usage of a single, apparently simple term that carries different meanings for different users. He addressed meanings attributed to the concept of teaching, as well as meanings in definitions, educational slogans, and metaphorical descriptions. Through his analysis of selected statements in educational and social contexts, Scheffler (1960) presented strategies for the critical evaluation of statements with "emphasis on relating the critical evaluation of assertions to the contexts in which they appear" (p. 3).

Smith and Robert Ennis published a compilation of essays that represent an attempt to examine some of the more central and pervasive concepts in educational thought. Although the terms rigorous, searching analysis, analytic studies, and critical examination all appear in the preface, neither analytic philosophy, linguistic analysis, nor concept analysis appear as terms to describe the work presented.

Soltis (1968) brought forward from his courses in philosophy of education an introduction to analytic thinking about education and to some of the basic techniques of philosophical analysis. The emphasis of the approach is on provoking thought, examining and questioning basic educational ideas, not on reaching final and satisfying answers. Soltis argues that values are attached to subjective contextual definitions – different values being attached to the word and/or the concept by people with different values. He asserts that by attempting to explicate, we will unveil nuances of meaning that we unconsciously assume in our discourse and in our actions as students or teachers. As a result, we will not only become more sophisticated

and careful in their use, but will also gain a deeper insight into education as a human endeavor in which all individuals take some part sometime in their lives. Soltis (1968) designed his book “to introduce anyone without a background in philosophy to a new way of approaching and examining quite ordinary yet central ideas which are fundamental to the everyday business of educating” (p. vii).

Soltis (1968) posits that although analytic techniques may be used to bring clarity to educational problems in the realm of values, one of the strengths of the neutral stance of analysis is its potential to provide a methodological means to hold our own values at bay while we search into the logical features of educational ideas. Analytic techniques have the power to clarify and make more precise and intelligible the broad and comprehensive concepts of synoptic philosophical systems.

Soltis (1978) argues that values are attached to subjective contextual definitions – different values being attached to the word and/or the concept by people with different values. Soltis asserts that ordinarily, very few of us define and examine the ideas which are common currency in one’s life, and that many of us would be hard pressed if asked to spell out in simple words the ideas which are contained in ordinary concepts of education. He says we may talk about our own definitions and may assume that there is a *real* definition of a word, but he asks us to examine the idea of definition itself, and refers to Scheffler (1960) for a discussion of stipulative (exercising freedom of pronouncement), descriptive (dictionary-like), and programmatic (both descriptive and normative/prescriptive) definitions. The standard is rigorous, clear, and precise thinking, letting the chips and cherished ideas fall where they may (Soltis, 1978).

Soltis (1978) asserts that when we attempt to explicate educational ideas, those efforts invariably result in the unveiling of nuances of meaning that we unconsciously assume in our discourse and in our actions as students or teachers. As a result of such attempts, we will become more sophisticated and careful in the use of polysemous terms. “To make the language of education work, we must be clear about its intent and meaning and not be swayed only by its imagery and poetry” (Soltis, 1978, p. 88).

### **Application of Linguistic Analysis to Adult Education Concepts**

Snyder, a Florida State University doctoral student, wrote the first in a series of dissertations applying ordinary language analysis to a term with particularly meanings in the field of adult education. *An analysis of the Concept ‘Involvement’ with Special Reference to Uses Found in Ordinary Language, Adult Education, and in Empirical Research* (Snyder, 1970) applied ordinary language analysis to the concept of involvement as used in ordinary discourse and as used specifically in adult education literature and in empirical research. The purpose of Snyder’s analysis was “to achieve greater clarity regarding the uses of the concept or term and its meaning(s)” (p. 10). Snyder’s early foray into this particular arena was reflected in his primary citations for conceptual analysis being Ryle (1949), Austin (1961), and Wilson (1963), although he included Soltis (1968) in his references. In his very structuralist approach, he applied logic formulas to the sentence construction, and followed his analysis with a lengthy validation process to determine the degree to which confidence could be placed in the stated findings.

Snyder (1970) concluded:

Ordinary language analysis is a useful technique for exploring relevant concepts and for establishing a foundation for conducting an analysis of specific areas of usage...it appears that many authors and researchers, particularly in the field of adult education, have not generally understood the distinction between the senses of [the word] involvement. They have generally operated on the assumption that the concept possessed a unitary character, and that this characteristic could be applied (in the form of principles) as if it had been fully validated. (p. 113)

Schwartz (1971), also a Florida State University doctoral student, followed shortly after Snyder (1970) with *An analysis of the Denotations of 'Program' as Employed in Ordinary Language and Adult Education Discourse, with a Typology of Program Based on the Denotations*.

McDougald (1984), a University of Georgia doctoral student, completed the next similar study. The stated purpose of *An Analysis of the Concept 'Satisfaction' as Employed in Ordinary Language and Adult Education Discourse* was to identify and clarify what is meant by a term "both in ordinary language and in the more specialized language of adult education" (p. i). This statement may be misconstrued to imply that in addition to ordinary language analysis, there had been developed techniques for special language analysis. In fact, it means that the techniques of ordinary language analysis are being applied to *common* meanings of polysemous words as well as to more specific meanings in the ordinary language of the special interest group. McDougald's dissertation represents a less structural approach of the ordinary language techniques introduced and explained by Soltis (1968, 1978).

Streib, a doctoral student of Memphis State University, completed his *History and Analysis of Critical Thinking* dissertation in 1992. The stated purpose of his work was to examine the history of the term critical thinking and did not purport to apply analytic philosophy. Rather, he applied an informal language analysis which he defined as the examination of words, terms or expressions to determine whether the *standard* meaning has changed by its use in a different context. Streib concluded that the meanings of the terms critical thinking and problem solving overlap or intersect. Further, that the study suggests the continued use of the two terms, but he recommended the introduction of new terms to describe the relationship between the terms problem solving and critical thinking.

Hanan (1997), a doctoral student of University of Oklahoma, completed the most recent in this line of dissertations, *An Analysis of the Term 'Experience' in Ordinary Language and in the More Precise Arena of Adult Education Literature*. The stated purpose of the study was to add clarity to what is meant or intended by the use of the term experience. The title, like McDougald's (1984), may be misconstrued to imply that in addition to ordinary language analysis, there have been developed techniques for special language analysis. Hanan's study includes identification, analysis, and typology of uses of the term experience in ordinary language including selection of specific examples from adult education literature illustrating usages of the term. Hanan categorized various common usages of the term, then went on to analyze meanings of the term as used in adult education literature based on the Soltis's (1978)

techniques of differentiation-type and conditions-type analysis. Hanan concluded:

1. the meaning of the term “experience” has expanded over time;
2. current ordinary language usage includes at least six kinds of meaning;
3. usage within adult education literature closely parallels ordinary language usage;
4. authors of adult education literature use the term experience to connote different meanings often in the same paragraph
5. multiple meanings of experience when used in a single paragraph may result in confusion;
6. it is important for authors of adult education to agree on what they mean by experience; and
7. the outcome of this work may have confirmed the ambiguity and confusion surrounding the use of the term experience.

With the insights I have gained from reviewing this small but growing core of literature, I plan to carry forward a tradition of ordinary language analysis by applying the techniques to usage of the word critical, especially in the context of adult education literature. I anticipate that the outcome of my analysis will be a finding that meanings associated with usage in adult education literature are more numerous than and different from usage in other ordinary language. I base this anticipation on my knowledge that the field of adult education is a composite of numerous and varied academic fields, each of which brings its own meaning of the word into the literature.

My broader objective is to challenge and encourage adult education theorists and researchers to practice the critical thinking skills they preach, when writing and speaking to communicate with readers and listeners at the margins of our field. According to Brookfield (2000), as a concept attains a place of prominence in the discourse of adult education, it faces dual risks of evacuation and reification that may be mitigated by maintaining critical scrutiny of, and constant debate around, the concept and the ways it is understood and practiced.

If adult education writers/speakers truly expect to communicate with uninitiated readers/listeners, they must acknowledge that the meanings they assign to polysemous words and phrases may differ from those of their reader/listeners, and they must be sure the intended meanings are made clear at the outset or supported by adequate context. According to Soltis (1968, 1978), before attempting to answer the question, “What is the meaning of this term?” one must ask *prior questions*, what analytic philosophers call *metaquestions*. Prior questions, seek clarity before commitment and do not consider the substance of the topic. They seek to clarify what *criteria* or *standards* we assume and apply when we use the term in ordinary usage. Proper application then calls for testing the criteria.

Admittedly, application of linguistic analysis to the terminology we employ would require more time and attention than most of us can afford from our very demanding schedules. Soltis (1978) asks, “But should the nobility of words keep us from demanding the precision of ideas? I hope not, for not only is the language of education filled with high-sounding but vague phrases which sway us away from clear thinking, but so is much of our discourse in other spheres pretending to knowledge” (p 28).

I request only that we give careful consideration to the language we use and to recognize the importance of meaning what we say and saying what we mean. While a significant goal of adult education is to enhance adults' knowledge and understanding, actual communication with and within the adult education discourse community is vulnerable to appropriation of polysemous words to convey special meanings with which not all participants may be familiar. I ask, How can we educate others to be critical thinkers when we don't understand ourselves?

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**MAKING SENSE OF ADULT LEARNING: EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

Lawrence A. White  
Athabasca University

Abstract

Eduard Lindeman has described learning, when combined with action, as having the qualities to enrich and solidify an experience. By engaging in a practice of learning through action, he states that “life itself becomes a perpetual experience of learning” (Keregero, 1989, p. 196). Building on this concept, a host of theorists and researchers working in the field of experiential learning have been establishing a foundation for the field and providing a stepping-stone from which to evolve into the future. This paper explores the current state of affairs in the field of experiential learning.

John Dewey, often considered to be the father of experiential education, believed that learning, while important to human and societal development, was an individual experience. Due to the fact that students bring with them an infinite variety of genetics, predispositions and past experiences, each will leave with a different interpretation of any new learning that takes place. Believing that “the only true education comes through the stimulation of the [individual]’s powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself” (Dewey, 1897, p. 77), Dewey maintained that the link between education and experience is tantamount to human development and that formal, curriculum-based education might be cautious in its approach to learning in that most curricula teach, especially in the case of children, knowledge that will not have experiential applications for years to come.

Experience, he says, is twofold: the active element relating to the actual performance of an action, and the passive element relating to the consequences arising from the active element (Dewey, 2004). A person may hold their hand above a flame, only to have it burned – the active element. However, the hope is that that same person will avoid such activity in the future through having developed an understanding of the consequences related to doing so – the passive element. Dewey explains that learning from experiences requires the development of a conscious rationalization both backward and forward in time in relation to an experience. In this example, curriculum-based formal education would teach that flames are hot and can cause burns. However, the mechanics of non-experiential (rote) learning are such that the learner will not have personalized the learning, based on his/her own experience, and saved it in memory as an experience with consequences.

In modern society, experiential learning clearly finds its roots in the writings and philosophies of Dewey. However, it has been identified that current research seems to polarize experiential learning in two main groups. One school of thought describes experiential learning

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<http://education.fiu.edu/newhorizons>

as those opportunities afforded learners to acquire and apply learning in an appropriate location (Brookfield, 1983). This refers to such non-formal learning activities as field placements, co-operative education, apprenticeships, preceptorships, and work-based training programs. Such opportunities are often sponsored or led by existing work or educational institutions.

Another school of thought suggests that experiential learning is “education that occurs as a direct participation in the events of life” (Houle, 1980, p. 221). In this school, learning is informal and is precipitated by people themselves, rather than under the umbrella of a specific institution. Learning is the output of reflecting on everyday experiences. This is the most common way that people learn.

This paper explores the current state of affairs in the field of experiential learning through the examination of a variety of writing on the subject. Specific emphasis is placed on the search for a definition of experiential learning and consideration as to how it might best be considered more formally alongside its curriculum-based counterpart.

### **Understanding Learning and Experiential Learning**

A variety of definitions abound for the term experiential learning. In fact, in each new situation, in each culture, in each set of priorities, there exists a definition that is relevant in the current situation. For some in the industrialized world, experiential learning often refers to the methodologies attached to non-formal education and the translation of that learning into formal academic credit. For others in less developed areas, experiential learning refers more to personal survival and day-to-day decision-making and problem solving (Weil & McGill, 1993). According to Peruniak (1993), there are no fewer than 58 terms related to and defining experiential learning. He argues that it is the intricate and situational nature of experiential learning that is, in fact, its strength. “To have integrity, a concept should reflect reality’s complexity” (Peruniak, 1993, p. 8). Table 1 summarizes a variety of perspectives on the subject of experiential learning.

Experiential learning may be at a crossroads, opening a new paradigm in education arising from a variety of stimuli that include such factors as cultural and political ideologies, desired and changing levels of empowerment, and social conditions (Brah and Hoy, 1989). There appears to be a shift away from the concept of *education* and towards the concept of *learning* such that “the value of any experience will depend not so much on the experience of the subject, important though this is, but on the struggles around the way that experience is interpreted and defined and by whom” (Brah and Hoy, 1989, p. 72).

Weil and McGill (1989), in attempting to provide a framework for thinking about a field of learning that is in a state of change, captured related ideas and concepts and described four ‘villages’ of thought:

1. Village One relates to the assessment and accreditation of prior experiential learning (APEL) that results from life and work experiences and for which there is no formal academic outcome. Individual learning outcomes and means of assessment are identified in an attempt to create a standardized process.

Table 1

*Current Perspectives on Experiential Learning*

Origin	Definition
Miriam Hutton	<p>Experiential learning is focused on solution finding by engaging learners in a variety of issues or foci of concern in order that they have the opportunity to both perform and experience an outcome (Hutton, 1989).</p> <p>Rooted in the work of Donald Schön on change, process development and problem solving.</p>
Shari Peterson	<p>Experiential learning is all learning that actively involves the learner, without specific focus on learning outcomes (Peterson, 1989).</p> <p>Rooted in the work of David Kolb on learning cycles.</p>
Costas Criticos	<p>Experiential learning is “from experience, through experience, to experience” (Criticos, 1989, p. 212).</p> <p>Rooted in the works of Frank Youngman and Paulo Freire on conscientization and praxis.</p>
Jack Mezirow	<p>Experiential learning is the attachment of meaning to a situation in which one experiences a disorienting dilemma, through reflection of past meaning perspectives and meaning schemes (Mezirow, 1991).</p> <p>Rooted in the works of Jürgen Habermas’ work on critical self-reflection.</p>
David Kolb	<p>Experiential learning is a continuous process of experience, reflection, concept formation, and testing (Smith, 2001).</p> <p>Rooted in the works of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin and Jean Piaget on development and cognition.</p>
Tara Fenwick	<p>Experiential learning is the process of human cognition achieved by differentiating meaning derived from theoretical and non-formal life experiences with that attained through formal education (Fenwick, 2000).</p>
Geoffrey Peruniak	<p>“Experiential learning is the creation of meaning from direct experience” (Peruniak, 1993, p. 17).</p> <p>Rooted in the works of Peter Jarvis on cognition and David Kolb on learning cycles.</p>

2. Village Two relates to the changes in the focus, infrastructure and curricula (the process of learning) that are precipitated by experiential learning. Changes are essential ingredients in the preparation for learning and for building partnerships between education and other elements of society.

3. Village Three relates to social change and conscientization as the result of learning from experience. Individuals and society become empowered through the relationships between personal learning and public participation.

4. Village Four relates to personal growth and development stemming from interpersonal experiences. Focus is on establishing goals leading towards new attitudes and behaviours that engender self and communal awareness and effectiveness.

Each village, they say, is complementary to the others and none are exclusive or dominant.

Clearly, across the villages, as in the perspectives identified in Table 1, there are a number of common themes. These include, notably, the effort to define the significance of experiential learning and the changes brought about through dialogue, transformation, commitment, participation, and empowerment. In each, there is a sense of moving forward, of change that is progressive, positive and paradigmatic. “To truly know does not require that we separate ourselves from that which we wish to know, but that we become critically engaged with it with a view towards changing it” (McGill & Weil, 1989, p. 257).

Jack Mezirow’s work also underscores the changing nature of learning. In developing his theory of transformative learning in the 1980s, Mezirow (1991) was quite explicit that learning, or making meaning as he called it, was a personal affair resulting from individual interpretation through reflection about experiences in order to strengthen, change or create new meaning perspectives and meaning schemes. At the time, Mezirow defended his own theory amidst dissenting opinions suggesting such considerations as the role that culture and society play in the formation of meaning (White, 2004).

A decade later, Mezirow’s position seems to have broadened somewhat with the addition of subjectivity regarding the influence of society, culture and personal empowerment on the process of learning. Central to his definition of learning, unchanged from his original proposition, is that learning is “the process of using prior interpretation to construe a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to future action” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 5). However, he seems to venture more into the abstract by allowing for such occurrences as dreams, imagination, inspiration, and empathy. These, he suggests, help to facilitate and frame the making of meaning. By doing so, he posits that there are both societal and individual implications for transformative learning.

Mezirow’s revised concept of transformative learning is, he says, based more on consensus than on individuality. By incorporating the concept of need, drawing on the theories of Abraham Maslow, Mezirow suggests that “feelings of trust, solidarity, security, and empathy are essential preconditions” (Mezirow, 2000, p. 12) to effective participation in reflection and reflective action. He suggests further that those who are homeless, hungry, or otherwise threatened are less likely and less able to participate in the process of reflection and making meaning.

Mezirow's rationale strays from his original theory considerably to the extent that it is difficult to make sense of his intent. While, on the surface, it appears that he is suggesting that people may be more predisposed to thought and reflection once their basic security needs are met, for example, it seems implicit in his political arguments that those individuals in a democratic and free society are better able to make meaning than those who are not. This line of thinking appears to discount the impacts on learning caused by ideologies other than those deemed to represent free societies. It also contradicts the concept of learning as an individual activity, as contained in his original theory, and adds greater emphasis to the supposition that society plays a considerable role in learning. While it is arguably true that an individual's society and culture play a role in shaping meaning perspectives and meaning schemes, a position outlined a decade earlier by Clark and Wilson (1991), it is difficult to comprehend the limitations suggested by a lack of enlightenment or empowerment. This approach appears to be amerocentric in the sense that it elevates the status of 'acceptable societies' and devalues the contributions of others. It would be interesting to learn the reaction to this position by such notables as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Olavo de Carvalho, and Mao Tse-Tung or their followers. Aside from this, there is a question that must be asked: Who would hold responsibility for and make this type of determination in the first place?

Somewhat contrary to Mezirow's theory, but also drawing on many of the discussions related to experiential learning – and drawing directly from the works of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget – David Kolb's theory of learning style has emerged as the central unifying perspective in experiential learning (Hunt, 1985; Pakham, Roberts, & Bawden, 1989; Smith, 2004). Kolb identified a continuously flowing cycle of learning that incorporates concrete experience, observation and reflection, formation of new concepts and principles, and application to new situations. For Kolb, the reliance on concrete experiences along with an abstract feedback process stresses the importance of experience in learning (Smith, 2004). Kolb's theory allows individuals to self-assess their unique learning style and to understand the characteristics related to their particular style. Kolb suggests "effective learning entails the possession of four different abilities" (Smith, 2004). These are often represented in a quadrant format with observation/reflection and application to new situations at opposing ends of a vertical axis, and formation of concepts/principles and concrete experience occupying the extremes on the horizontal axis (Hunt, 1985; Pakham et al., 1989; Smith, 2004). However, the ideal is virtually unreachable and, as Kolb suggests further, each individual finds within themselves a learning style indicative of one of the quadrants. Kolb defines experiential learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, qtd. in Peruniak, 1993, p. 15).

As with any theory, a number of cautions have been shared with respect to Kolb's theory of learning styles (Smith, 2004). While it does demonstrate the interconnectedness of learning and knowledge – "knowledge results from the combination of grasping experience and transforming it" (Kolb, 1984, qtd. in Smith, 2004) – it does not explore the breadth of the relationship between the two. For example, it does not encompass learning in the form of praxis, from Freire, or other methods of learning, such as memorization. Kolb's approach has also been criticized as overly rationalist and lacking sensitivity to emotional and spiritual matters. His theory also falls somewhat short in connecting the concept of reflection to learning in sharp contrast to Mezirow's transformative learning theory, in which reflection is critical to the process of learning. This is exemplified in Peruniak (1993) through discussion about a forest fire.

Learners may learn about forest fires through reading or lectures. However, there is a disconnect in experiential learning when learners do not have the opportunity to actually *experience* the learning. In the forest fire example, the learning achieved through active participation in fighting a forest fire or in being its victim is qualitatively different from the learning achieved through reading and classroom study. Suggesting that experiential learning steps beyond the bounds of simple cognitive learning, Peruniak maintains that it “helps to develop the relationship of the whole learner in the whole of his or her environment, for the whole of his or her life” (1993, p. 8).

Building on Kolb’s theory by drawing in key concepts from several other theories and in an effort to expand its usefulness to experiential learning, Peter Jarvis incorporated the concepts of non-learning situations, non-reflective learning, and reflective learning. Jarvis’ definition of experiential learning is “learning is the transformation of experience into knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (Jarvis, 1987, qtd. in Peruniak, 1993, p. 15).

### **Relationship to Learning**

Clearly, there are problems when trying to develop a single definition or a single process that encompasses a subject such as experiential learning, one that has broad outcomes depending on a variety of circumstances as wide ranging as personal interests, politics, ideologies, and even geography, and one that does not necessarily fit into the standards of scientific method. “Definitional problems continue when one tries to disentangle the notion of experiential learning from experiences commonly associated with formal education” (Fenwick, 2000, p. 243). In her article, Fenwick (2000) identifies a number of perspectives on learning.

In keeping with the concept of individuality identified by Mezirow and others and drawing from a constructivist perspective, adult learning places the individual at the centre of the process of making meaning. Learners draw from stored knowledge and new experiences to reflect upon and interpret the meanings associated with learning (Fenwick, 2000; Mezirow, 1991). Piaget described this process as an oscillation between new experiences and existing mental constructs with the goal of incorporating the new experiences within the known inventory of constructs. Donald Schön promoted constructivism in an effort to understand workplace learning and Stephen Brookfield demonstrated the application of skeptical questioning and imaginative questioning.

The psychoanalytic perspective provides approaches to such abstract concepts as the unconscious, the underlying tensions between the learner, knowledge and the educator, and the potential resistance to knowledge. Often these dilemmas arise from a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious in such a way that the unconscious cannot often be educated, but that it has a direct impact on the decisions of the conscious mind. Learning is, in this perspective, the process of toleration exercised with respect to internal conflicts resulting from a fear of fully knowing one’s self.

The belief that “adults do not learn from experience, they learn in it” (Fenwick, 2000, p. 254) exemplifies the situative perspective. Proponents of this perspective maintain that knowledge forms a critical part of the process of participation in the present, not something to be absorbed, transformed and potentially used in the future. Particularly important to the individual

is the community in which they find themselves. If learning occurs through interaction, then it is only through interactions with an immediate community that it occurs. In this case, understanding is achieved through consensus and interaction with others. It is a negotiation between the individual and the community and individuals improve as they develop greater appreciations for the constraints and allowances within which they live.

Power is a central issue in the critical cultural perspective. An understanding of the power structures and hierarchy of dominance in society lead to an understanding of a variety of means for resistance. It is through resistance, according to critical cultural pedagogy, that individuals become open to the unexpected and unimagined. Institutions, such as norms, codes, signs, and categories, form the basis for power determination and, thus, individuals learn “through accepted social discourse to discern blurring borders and categories” (Fenwick, 2000, p. 259). Foucault described this as challenging the assumptions in order to see the possibilities.

As a final perspective, Fenwick introduces the concept of enactivism, a process through which learning and environment work together. In regards to learning, enactivists consider that it is rooted in the connections between individuals and context, but that these can change according to the convergence or divergence of one with another. In this perspective, humans are simply part of a much larger system in which they act, thinking in terms of ecological and planetary perspectives. James Lovelock refers to this relationship as *Gaia*.<sup>1</sup> When two components of the greater system coincide, the dynamics of one or both are altered. The focus of enactivism is not on the individual experiences or interactions between two components. Rather, it highlights the relationship between the components such that learning is a constant process of understanding relationships.

### **Building an Evaluation Process**

As Peruniak suggests “getting a grip on some aspects of experiential learning is a lot like trying to catch poplar fluff on a windy day” (1993, p. 8). As already illustrated, it is clearly difficult to develop a definition or a learning theory that encompasses all opinions and thoughts on the subject mostly because the field of experiential learning has not made significant empirical progress. However, as Fenwick (2000) relates, these philosophical discussions help to steer the field towards the development of tools that will assist in the collective understanding of experiential learning. Emerging from these and many other discussions is the standardization of experiential learning, under the umbrella and name of prior learning assessment (PLA). Prior learning assessment refers to the “set of procedures that facilitate the recognition by an academic institution of an individual’s learning that may have been acquired informally through a variety of life and work experiences and personal study” (Peruniak, 1993, p. 11).

The development of a concept similar to PLA started in the mid-1900s when, predicated on the work of John Dewey, individuals became curious about the transferability of credit for their informal learning to their formal education (Peruniak, 1993). The United States experienced a surge in such requests when, as veterans returned from their duty in World War II, they began questioning the concept of recognition for their informal learning experiences. The result was the

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about *Gaia*, see Myers, N. (1993). *GALA: An Atlas of Planet Management*. New York, NY: Doubleday.

creation of the Advanced Placement Program and College Level Examination Program. These programs evolved in several universities and, by the 1950s, several institutions were granting credits. By the 1970s, interest was rising in the assessment of experiential learning and, through the launch of the Cooperative Assessment of Experiential Learning Project, work began in the areas of assessment reliability and validity. Also by the 1970s, interest in PLA resulted from the identification of and focus on the adult education market as a source of economic.

Competence-based education, well entrenched by the 1980s, provided a means by which individuals could progress on the basis of a formal evaluation of a curriculum against demonstrated performance. Within the field, PLA has grown from CBE in such a way that standards could be measured and research could be conducted. PLA is, therefore, an attempt to oblige experiential learning to 'conform' to the scientific method. By doing so, a variety of outcomes, such as learner satisfaction, credits awarded, and graduate success, can be scrutinized. However, according to Peruniak (1993), considerable research is still required in this regard. A number of challenges, however, face PLA as it continues to evolve.

The first challenge is the issue of congruence between the means of learning and the learning outcomes. Historically, there has been little consideration afforded the means of learning as long as the outcomes desired were achieved. This undermines the value of the learning process. A balance should be found that incorporates both the means and the ends, without harming the independent nature of experiential learning.

A second challenge exists because of the limitations of the framework provided by CBE in the first place. Through the establishment of learning outcomes in an effort to create a means against which experience can be measured, the challenge lies in the finite nature of the exercise. "No one system can capture the variety of learning that is possible from life experience" (Peruniak, 1993, p. 20).

A third challenge relates to the diversity of PLA procedures that are, invariably, created by each institution for their own purposes. In trying to slot experiential learning into formal credit requirements, PLA often overlooks the fact that knowledge is an intricate web of facts, information and nuances, and that it is not a single, easily identifiable truth.

A fourth challenge facing PLA is the fact that agencies outside the field of education are beginning to adopt it as a practice. A variety of governments and professional associations are beginning to adopt the practices established within the framework of CBE and PLA. However, without the background and resources to effectively measure the substance of prior learning, such agencies often explore no more than the immediate shell surrounding a situation.

As Peruniak (1993) suggests, the challenges facing PLA represent both threats and opportunities with regard to experiential learning which will be destabilized if the PLA process fails to accommodate the variety of means for learning that exist. On the other hand, the growth of and interest in PLA can only serve to enhance its prominence within the academic and non-academic communities. It further strengthens the concept of the learner as a whole being and living in a whole environment.

### **Future Trends in Experiential Learning**

“To truly know does not require that we separate ourselves from that which we wish to know, but that we become critically engaged with it with a view towards changing it. Indeed, to learn about something *is* to change it, for to learn is to appropriate, name, and use” (Boston, qtd. in McGill & Weil, 1989, p. 257).

Experiential learning has shown marked progress over the years but considerable growth is still required (Peruniak, 1993). As requirements and challenges become better defined through greater and broader participation and continued research, the best course(s) to follow will undoubtedly emerge. In keeping with the villages of experiential learning (Weil & McGill, 1989), some of the key directions in which the field should be headed include:

1. The development of strategies to define and recognize work and life experience within a formal education setting;
2. That development within experiential learning cannot progress in a vacuum but must coincide with similar and supportive developments in other fields;
3. That learning cannot succeed without a greater understanding and awareness of the self;
4. The incorporation of learning techniques to challenge, interest and motivate learners to participate in order to increase their individual capacities to learn;
5. The encouragement of group learning activities in order to provide opportunities for individuals to think beyond their comfort levels by exposing them to a variety of societal elements and systems;
6. The development of new techniques such that educators can continue to evolve into better resources for learners and can become co-learners;
7. That opportunities for personal empowerment and dialogue be provided in order to better appreciate the opportunities afforded by social change; and
8. That opportunities be provided to foster discovery of the role of the personal within the realm of the communal.

### **Conclusion**

While difficult to define, practice and progress with and within experiential learning have allowed for the opportunity to debate, discuss and, indeed, reflect upon the field and its implications with respect to learners, learning providers and society as a whole. Through the work of such notables as Dewey, Mezirow, Kolb, Jarvis and a host of others, experiential learning has begun to occupy a position of prominence within the field of adult education and unto itself. This is demonstrated through the variety of theories and enhancements and augmentations to theories (Jarvis ctd. in Smith, 2004; Mezirow, 1991, 2000; Kolb ctd. in Smith, 2004) that help to explain the relationship between experiential learning, the individual, and associated fields.

Further evidence of paradigmatic shift is provided through the growth of importance of prior learning assessments in which formal credits are increasingly being sought for learning achieved through informal and non-formal means in and through an ever-increasing variety of situations and institutions.

The future of experiential learning seems secure in the sense that there is considerable development and research required in order to further define processes and needs and to better understand the concepts of learning that work best in learner applications. After all, learning is all about the learner. As we progress, taking risks and engaging in new experiences along the way, of course, we increase the opportunities available to ourselves for reflection and redefinition of our meaning perspectives and meaning schemes which will, in turn, motivate us to explore and delve yet further afield.

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**NEWS AND NOTES****The 19th Annual QUIG Conference on Interdisciplinary Qualitative Studies**

Athens, Georgia, January 6-8, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.coe.uga.edu/quig/>**The 4th International Conference on Civic Education: Research and Practice**

Orlando/Altamonte, Florida, January 19-21, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.civicedconf.org/civiced.html>**College GLBTQA Spirituality & Sexuality Conference**

Augsburg College, Minneapolis, MN, January 20-22, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.augsburg.edu/qsu/redefinetherainbow>**2005-2006 Conference: Disability, Narrative and the Law**

The Ohio State University, Columbus, February 16-17

Conference website: <http://moritzlaw.osu.edu/cilps/events.html>**Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) 2006 International Conference**

Columbus, Ohio, February 22-26, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.ahrd.org>**The 44<sup>th</sup> Annual International Performance Improvement Conference (ISPI)**

Dallas, Texas, April 6-11, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.ispi.org/AC2006/>**American Educational Research Association (AERA) 2006 Annual Meeting**

San Francisco, California, April 8-12, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.aera.net/annualmeeting>**Multiple Perspectives on Access, Inclusion & Disability 2006 Conference**

The Ohio State University, Columbus, April 17-18, 2006

Conference website: <http://ada.osu.edu/conferences.htm>**The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry**

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, May 3-6, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.qi2006.org/>**The 23<sup>rd</sup> Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research Conference**

Niagara Falls, Ontario, Canada, May 16-18, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.qualitative.ca/>

**The 6th Annual Second City National Disability Studies in Education Conference**

Michigan State University, East Lansing, May 18-21, 2006

The deadline for manuscript submission – February 15, 2006

Conference website: <http://edr1.educ.msu.edu/DSEConf>**The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Pedagogy and Theatre of the Oppressed Conference**

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, May 18-21, 2006

The deadline for manuscript submission – January 9, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.ptoweb.org>**Annual Adult Education Research Conference (AERC)**

Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 19-21, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.edst.educ.ubc.ca/aerc/about.htm>**The 7<sup>th</sup> International Conference on HRD Research and Practice across Europe Conference**

Tilburg, Netherlands, May 22-24, 2006

Conference website:

<http://www.tilburguniversity.nl/faculties/fsw/departments/HRS/hrdconf/>**The 25<sup>th</sup> Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, Extension, and Community Education**

St. Louis, Missouri, October 4-6, 2006

The deadline for manuscript submission – March 1, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.umsl.edu/~conted/education/mwr2p06/>**The 6<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Knowledge, Culture and Change in Organizations**

Monash University Centre, Prato (Near Florence), Italy, July 11-14, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.ManagementConference.com>**The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on Education, Labor, and Emancipation**

El Paso, Texas &amp; Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico, September 28-October 1, 2006

The deadline for manuscript submission – May 31, 2006

Conference website: <http://academics.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=28992>**Annual American Evaluation Association Conference Evaluation 2006**

Portland, Oregon, November 1-4, 2006

The deadline for manuscript submission - March 17, 2006

Conference website: <http://www.eval.org>

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