Three areas of the literature on adult learning showing recent activity are transformative learning (TL), adult learning related to technology, and collaborative/group learning. Recent publications on TL include a critical review of the literature, discussion of TL's relationship to adult development, and description of TL in practice. Technological developments have also affected adult learning research and theory building. In adult education, technology is emerging as both a delivery system and a content area. Although learning in groups has had a long history in adult education, the focus has traditionally been on group processes. Recently, the emphasis has shifted to groups as learning environments and helping learners think about group learning as opposed to individual learning. Collaborative learning partnerships and the effect of technology on group learning are other aspects of group learning that have been explored. Other aspects of adult learning that have recently been examined are the relationship between power and gender and the connection between adult learning and social change. The continuing progress in adult learning research is the sign of a vital field, and the literature provides information that can be used to improve practice. (A 21-item annotated bibliography constitutes the majority of this document.) (MN)
New Views of Adult Learning
Trends and Issues Alert No. 5

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New Views of Adult Learning

The anxieties associated with the use of learner experience in adult education are examined. Shows that the links between experience, knowledge, and practice to be confusing and contradictory.


Explores the effects of the Internet on adult learning, including learning facilitated through formal instruction and occurring spontaneously in the experiences of individuals and groups.


Contains six articles that comprise a critical discourse about theories, practices, and research focused on realizing the potential of adult learning to bring about change.


Reports on the use of computer-mediated-communication (CMC) during the teaching of a postgraduate course, focusing on the extent of student interaction and the possible impact of the instructors’ roles.


Summarizes four theoretical perspectives on transformative learning as consciousness raising, critical reflection, development, and individuation.


This book contains 14 essays exploring how the theory of women’s psychology, development, and ways of knowing has developed during the past decade.


Reflects on motives for researching computer-mediated communication discussions and the relationship of research styles to the interactions between individuals and groups in online distance learning. Suggests how a pluralistic investigatory approach can support cooperative learning and reflective practice in online adult learning settings.

This book provides a comprehensive, up-to-date overview and synthesis of what is known about adult learning, including the context in which it takes place, who the participants are, what they learn and why the nature of the learning process itself, and major theoretical developments.


Includes a collection of writings that describe a varied and broad range of collaborative partnerships in many different adult learning venues, including those involving two people, group situations where the effort is grounded in cooperation among members, and collaborative efforts where all members work to create new knowledge distinct from what each member brings to the group.


Suggests that lifelong learning can be seen as an affective and cognitive activity that occurs in the life-space of the actor in response to positive or negative field forces at any given moment in time or across periods of time. A section of vignettes reporting the lifelong learning experiences of a variety of persons is included.


Reviews over 40 empirical and theoretical works on transformative learning, the process of making meaning from experience. Identifies unresolved issues and outlines the essential practices and conditions for fostering transformative learning in adults.


This book provides a critical account of the psychological theories that have informed contemporary adult education theory and practice. Included are discussions of humanistic psychology and the self-directed learner, psychoanalytic approaches, development of identity during adulthood, development of intelligence and cognition, learning styles, behaviorism, group dynamics and the group facilitator, and critical awareness.


Compares theoretical underpinnings of three strands of feminist pedagogy—psychological, structural, and poststructural—in relation to four themes: knowledge, construction, voice, authority, and positionality.

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