

Resources

Recent Publications in Adult Education

Jeffrey A. Ritchey

Kegan, R. & Lahey, L.L. (2009). *Immunity to change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

With *In Over Our Heads: The Mental Demands of Modern Life* (1998), Robert Kegan posed the question of how adults might be expected to deal with the limitless cognitive demands of modern society. His most recent work, a collaboration with Lisa Lahey, Associate Director for Harvard University's Change Leadership Group, poses an equally compelling question--why don't modern humans make adaptive changes with greater ease, even in the face of life and death decisions? In *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome it and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organization* (2009), Kegan and Lahey provide both a developmental analysis of individual and organizational change, as well as a plan to reduce fear, assess "competing commitments," and create more open and responsive workplaces. Kegan and Lahey provide equal parts research and practice with writing that is both academic and accessible. Moreover, it is not necessary to have read Kegan's earlier works to understand and incorporate the valuable insights contained in this text. At a time when panic and uncertainty often drive our decision-making, this work offers a deliberative and hopeful process for the creation of more effective and responsive organizations.

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Merriam, S. (Ed.) (2008). Third update on adult learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, No. 119. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This work continues the overview of adult learning theory provided in two earlier *New Directions* volumes (Merriam, 1993; Merriam, 2001). While transformative learning theory remains a staple, the 2008 edition explores with greater depth the growing areas of spirituality, learning through the body, the neuroscience of learning, and narrative learning. As with past volumes, this work continues the service of providing a broad sample of the major ways adult learning is being conceptualized and theorized in current research. This is particularly true in the authors' sensitivity to issues of context and the impact of culture on learning. As such, this work is a useful and important guide for academics and practitioners alike.

Mezirow, J., Taylor, E., & Associates (Eds.). (2009). *Transformative learning in practice: Insights from community, workplace, and higher education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

The impact of transformative learning theory on adult and continuing education has been profound and pervasive. In this edited work, academics and practitioners from throughout the world provide their insights on transformative learning. More importantly perhaps, the authors' provide tested strategies for incorporating transformative learning into programs both inside and outside the classroom. The book conveniently divides the examination of transformative learning into three sections addressing higher education, workplace, and community/social change contexts; closing with a chapter reflecting on transformative learning's history and potential for future use.

Schein, E.H. (2009). *Helping: How to offer, give, and receive help*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Teaching is often included among "the helping professions" that make up a growing portion of our post-industrial world. From social workers to nurses, financial planners to travel guides, a large number of

us are involved in the task of helping. In *Helping: How to Offer, Give and Receive Help*, Edgar Schein, professor emeritus in MIT's Sloan School of Management, provides a framework for better understanding "helping events" and the often unexpected outcomes they precipitate. Schein points out the "ambiguous" nature of helping events and the issues of power and control inherent in helping practice. More importantly, his work provides both a thorough analysis of the helping process and advice on how to both give and receive help more effectively. For those of us who genuinely want our work to be *helpful*, this is important reading.

Vella, J. (2007). *On teaching and learning: Putting the principles and practices of dialogue education into action*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Few in the field of adult and continuing education are unfamiliar with the work of Jane Vella. Her exploration of dialogue education continues in this most recent work as she shows its application to teaching situations from around the world. As in *Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach* (2002), Vella's extensive travels form the foundation for her description of dialogue's power to create dynamic and liberatory learning spaces. Vella's compelling stories, thoughtful reflections and wealth of experience come together in this inspirational and insightful work. This book could be easily understood by those unfamiliar with Vella's earlier works and there is ample overview of the tenets of dialogue education and their practical application.

Wlodkowski, R. (2008). *Enhancing adult motivation to learn: A comprehensive guide for teaching all adults*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

In this work, Raymond Wlodkowski continues his analysis of adults' motivation to learn, adding to his prior psychological focus a new and important neurobiological aspect. Wlodkowski's focus is on unleashing learners' intrinsic motivation, a process facilitated by his "motivational framework for culturally responsive teaching." This text is well-organized, highly readable and full of useful insights and techniques for fostering motivation among adult learners in various contexts. Wlodkows-

ki's analysis of the "five pillars" of a motivating teacher is particularly useful, as he addresses the elements of each pillar while also providing specific tools for implementing those elements in practice.

References

- Kegan, R. (1998). *In over our heads: The mental demands of modern life*. Boston: Harvard University Press.
- Merriam, S. (Ed.). (1993). An update on adult learning theory. *New Directions for Adult and Continuing Education*, No. 57. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
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