As with other areas of education, the knowledge base that has developed around adult learning and education has been firmly lodged in Western values and culture. But we need only look beyond our borders as well as to our own indigenous Native Americans to find major systems of thought and beliefs embedded in entirely different cultural values. Chapters on Native American indigenous knowledge, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Maori, Latin American perspectives, and African indigenous knowledge will acquaint readers with alternative understandings of learning and lead, it is hoped, to a more holistic understanding of adult learning.

Sharan B. Merriam is professor of adult education at The University of Georgia in Athens, where her responsibilities include teaching graduate courses in adult education and qualitative research methods, and supervising graduate student research. Her doctorate is in adult education from Rutgers University. Before coming to Georgia, she served on the faculties of Northern Illinois University and Virginia Tech. Dr. Merriam’s research and writing activities have focused on the foundations of adult education, adult development, adult learning, and qualitative research methods. For five years she was coeditor of Adult Education Quarterly, the major research and theory journal in adult education. She is a three-time winner of the prestigious Cyril O. Houle World Award for Literature in Adult Education for books published in 1982, 1997, and 1999. She regularly presents seminars on adult learning and qualitative research throughout North America, southern Africa, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. In 1999 she was a Fulbright Scholar to Malaysia.

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Other Titles by Sharan B. Merriam

ADULT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT: Multicultural Stories edited by Lisa Baumgartner & Sharan B. Merriam


Adult Learning and Development: Multicultural Stories simultaneously entertains and educates the reader on issues of adult development. Recognizing the role of both sociocultural and psychological factors in shaping people’s lives, the editors have compiled a unique anthology of culturally diverse stories and poems that illustrate six themes of adult development: identity; the importance of work; intimacy; the family life cycle; physical development, health, and aging; and learning in adulthood. Selections feature protagonists who are African American, Asian American, Latin/o American, Native American, physically challenged, or gay and lesbian among others. Selections include "How I Got To Be Jewish" by Erica Jong and "Groom Service" by Michael Dorris.

Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education, 3rd Ed. by John L. Elias & Sharan B. Merriam


The Third Edition of Philosophical Foundations of Adult Education presents seven theoretical approaches to adult education: liberal, progressive, behaviorist, humanist, radical/critical, analytic, and postmodern. The book gives the historical grounding as well as the basic principles for each approach. In this edition each chapter has been revised and brought up to date. The chapter on radical adult education incorporates recent developments in radical education, phenomenology, feminism, educational theory, and critical social theory. The book contains an entirely new chapter on postmodern adult education.

A Guide to Research For Educators and Trainers of Adults by Sharan B. Merriam & Edwin L. Simpson


Most texts on educational research methods present only the most commonly used research designs and draw supporting material from school-related studies. The authors have presented a full range of methodology for doing research, with examples from research studies done with adults in adult settings. Chapters of the book are devoted to both traditional and less traditional research methodologies used to study adult education and training. To provide an organizing framework, the common processes found in all research approaches are used as a guide: (1) types of research problems, (2) assumptions underlying methodology, (3) ways the research phenomenon is delineated, and (4) use of data gathering procedures and techniques.

Selected Writings on Philosophy and Adult Education edited by Sharan B. Merriam


Selections representing critical theory, phenomenology, and feminist theory are included in this edition. Further, new material reflecting more traditional philosophical traditions has been added, such as selections from Bloom’s The Closing of the American Mind, Nadler and Nadler’s Developing Human Resources, and Mezirow’s Fostering Critical Reflection in Adulthood. These and other additions complement “classic” selections by Dewey, Lindeman, Skinner, Freire, and others.

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Other Titles of Interest

LEARNING LATER

by Brian Findsen


This book explores the relatively ignored issue of the social context and dimensions of learning for older adults. It combines international perspectives drawn from adult education, sociology, social gerontology, and critical theory to investigate the social and material circumstances of older adults' lives and connected learning. The central argument is that educators and practitioners will better understand older adults' learning by more fully addressing social context, the social construction of aging, older adults' interaction with social institutions, the nature of social change to which they contribute, and the social issues they face.

FREEDOM ROAD: Adult Education of African Americans

edited by Elizabeth A. Peterson


ISBN 978-1-57524-293-4 $30.50

Through changing times, from slavery to the present, freedom has meant different things for the African American. Yet, education has also been seen as crucial to obtaining true freedom and equality for all African American people. This book attempts to look at the African American struggle for racial equality and socio-economic equity from Reconstruction to today, by focusing on African American educators who persevered in this struggle and the philosophy which guided their practices. The book has a special focus on the role of adult education and struggle. In this updated edition of Freedom Road a new chapter has been added that explores the role that Malcolm X, a minister in the Nation of Islam and civil rights activist, played as an adult educator. Today educators are beginning to recognize that lifelong learning will play a critical role in an ever-changing society. This book, therefore, lends a historical perspective to contemporary issues in education.

COLLEGE TEACHING: Building Perspective Through Dialogue

by Michael W. Galbraith


College Teaching is about the philosophical and practical aspects of teaching at the college and university levels. Through the use of a question and answer format, the nine major parts of the book cast a wide net over the various components associated with being a college teacher — from gaining insight on your self and the social world you believe and value to how to be politically savvy in your survival as a college teacher. In between these broad components, a dialogue takes place on such topics as preparing the course, the first class session, issues that concern that reentry college women are not nontraditional women students. This is the first work that recognizes that reentry college women are not a monolithic group and that Black reentry women have unique concerns as well as those universally shared with all nontraditional women students. This text depicts college through the eyes of a segment of this group, those women existing on the margins of the ivy. The author has chronicled the experiences of eight Black women using their own words to relate their painful, joyous, and often humorous experiences. In addition, the author shares their recommendations and insights regarding the process of schooling. Providing a wonderful analysis of women's issues in the higher education setting, this text also gives an erudite picture of race concerns that still loom in present-day academia.

SISTAHS IN COLLEGE: Making a Way Out of No Way

by Juanita Johnson-Bailey


ISBN 978-1-57524-074-9 $27.00

The face of American higher education is changing with over 45% of its student body consisting of nontraditional women students. This is the first work that recognizes that reentry college women are not a monolithic group and that Black reentry women have unique concerns as well as those universally shared with all nontraditional women students. This text depicts college through the eyes of a segment of this group, those women existing on the margins of the ivy. The author has chronicled the experiences of eight Black women using their own words to relate their painful, joyous, and often humorous experiences. In addition, the author shares their recommendations and insights regarding the process of schooling. Providing a wonderful analysis of women's issues in the higher education setting, this text also gives an erudite picture of race concerns that still loom in present-day academia.