

## Book Reviews/Recensions

### *THE FUTURE OF LIFELONG LEARNING AND WORK: CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES*

**D. Livingstone, K. Mirchandani, and P. Sawchuk (Eds.). Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, 2008, 308 pages.**

This collection comes from a conference held at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), and is linked to the Edmonton Work and Learning Network based at the University of Alberta in 2005 and built around the research work stemming from the OISE-led Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL) network. The majority of the book's 20 chapters are rooted in Canadian case studies; the chapters cover different aspects and dimensions of work and learning—including domestic work, marginal work, arts, and immigrants—and offer differing perspectives on how to interpret and understand these diverse work and learning experiences and settings.

Part 1 (six chapters) provides differing “Perspectives.” It begins with a useful overview from David Livingstone that touches on the key issues. This is followed, in turn, by a chapter on unpaid housework (Margrit Eichler), a useful critique of the new economy rhetoric by Jane Cruikshank, and an odd piece on human capital by Thomas Courchene. Next, Peter Sawchuk explains a cultural historical activity theory (CHAT) perspective. An interesting chapter on art in the workplace (Bratton and Garrett-Petts), also using CHAT, concludes Part 1.

Part 2, headed “Social Justice,” leads off with a chapter by Stanley Aronowitz, followed by informative chapters looking at gender politics (Butterwick, Jubas, and Liptrot), disability (Church, Frazee, Panitch, Luciani, and Bowman), and two on social justice aspects of work (Deborah Boutilier; Jan Kainer). Three chapters form Part 3, “Precarious Employment,” all of which contribute to our understanding of the precarious nature of learning at work (Leah Vosko; Mirchandani, Ng, Colomo-Moya, Maitra, Rawlings, Siddiqui, Shan, and Slade; and Tara Fenwick).

Part 4 has two chapters on “Apprenticeship”: one from the United Kingdom (Keith Forrester) and the other on the school-to-work link in Canada (Taylor and Watt-Malcolm). Part 5, “Multiple Literacies,” has four chapters; two discuss multiple literacies (Jim Cummings; Margaret Early) and two are more focused on immigrant experience (Schugurensky and Slade; Lichun Liu). The book concludes with a short afterword by the editors.

There is no doubt this is a useful collection, and I can see it replacing some existing edited collections on graduate courses on work and learning in Canada. Like all edited collections, it is uneven and contains some specific oddities. For example, David Livingstone still refuses to use the commonly accepted adult education trio of informal, non-formal, and formal when discussing education and learning, which could aid his distinctions between formal and informal. More importantly, Chapter 4 is out of place in this collection, as it fails to provide a critical examination of globalization, human capital

theory, competitiveness, or changes at work. Getting Stanley Aronowitz’s talk into print is no doubt a coup, but it’s a shame no references could be provided to support his text—which still reads as an informal talk rather than an informed chapter. It’s also disappointing that some early writers on women’s work and learning don’t make it into the reference list in Chapter 2.

Nevertheless, many strong empirically based and theoretically informed chapters are in this collection, with Kiran Mirchandani et al.’s “The Paradox of Training and Learning in a Culture of Contingency” being a leading example. The book is also representative of the useful work going on in Canada to puncture the myths of mainstream workplace learning rhetoric. There are some omissions (for example, the role of unions is largely ignored, as are employee development schemes), but the editors have made the most of what they have. Although the editors all come from OISE, they represent different dimensions and strengths of the critical tradition that has emerged within Canadian scholarship on work and learning.

The title suggests a reader could expect an examination of the concept of lifelong learning, or at least more references to the growing critical lifelong learning literature, but this is not the case—it is only visited in a few chapters. The afterword does review some aspects of the debate and makes some useful points about the lack of a knowledge economy, while at the same time the editors are optimistic that current rhetoric on knowledge work can be turned toward recognizing workers’ existing knowledge and genuinely improving educational/learning opportunities for workers.

This book deserves to be widely distributed in Canada and sold in Canadian dollars (it is advertised at \$39 US, but a request to a university bookstore resulted in a sale price of \$58.50 CDN). An e-mail to the publisher confirmed it is not using a Canadian distributor nor selling the book in Canadian dollars. This is a shame, as the collection deserves to be adopted as supplementary reading material across the curriculum.

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***NARRATIVE AND THE PRACTICE OF ADULT  
EDUCATION — PROFESSIONAL PRACTICES IN ADULT  
EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING SERIES***

**Marsha Rossiter and M. Carolyn Clark. Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar, FL, 2007, 187 pages.**

Narrative has been a topic of study across disciplines for decades. It is an interpretive approach that has the potential to inspire and support adult learning in myriad forms, and is one that Marsha Rossiter and M. Carolyn Clark subscribe to and regard as invaluable in their scholarly endeavours as teachers and learners. It is a way of “being and doing” (p.