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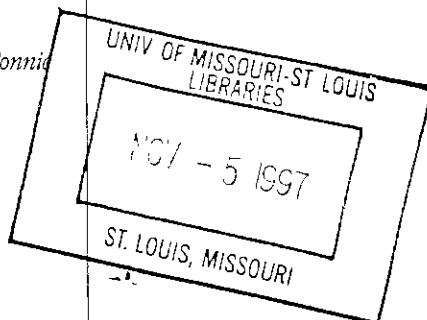
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Organized For Adult Learning

The Fifth International Conference in Adult Education (Confintea V), sponsored by the United Nations' Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, (UNESCO) is now history. I was one of fourteen observer/participants from AAACE among the more than 1,800 delegates who attended from 160 nations around the world. Held in Hamburg, Germany, July 14-18, 1997, the most immediate outcomes of the conference were two documents: (1) A Declaration on Adult Learning, in the form of a manifesto; and (2) an Agenda for the Future, containing a series of more specific and detailed proposals. The theme of the conference, "Adult Learning: Key To The Twenty-First Century," was divided into ten sub-themes, which riveted our attention on Adult Learning as a fundamental and universal right, and indispensable tool for the survival of humanity, a joy or manifestation of self-determination and quality of life, and, a responsibility to be shared, in becoming organized for adult learning.

The first four conferences sponsored by UNESCO were held in Elsinore, Denmark in 1948, Montreal, Canada in 1960, Tokyo, Japan in 1972, Paris, France in 1985, and were focused almost exclusively on "adult literacy." This conference in Hamburg, Germany was the first one to break out from those boundaries of defining adult learning as literacy, and aim for the objectives of:

- Acknowledging the critical importance of adult learning,
- Forging worldwide commitments for adults' right to learn;
- Exchanging experience on present provision and needed improvements,
- Recommending future policy and priorities and adopting A Declaration on Adult Learning and An Agenda for the Future, and,
- Promoting international co-operation.

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The various national delegations expressed delight that there was a USA presence and voice at the conference, in light of the fact that the USA has not been a member of UNESCO for fourteen years. In addition, the warm greetings sent by President Bill Clinton, commending the participants for their work in adult education, were enthusiastically received by

everyone when the message was flashed on the screen at a plenary session, and was published in the daily conference newspaper. The USA observer delegation of thirteen people from the governmental sector and thirty people from the non-governmental sector met daily, to share information and reports with each other about what was transpiring in the sessions, and on our connections with the conference in being organized for adult learning.

The ten sub-themes addressed at the conference were indicative of the things with which AAACE is, or could appropriately be, involved.

- Adult learning and the challenges of the twenty-first century such as democracy, peace, indigenous cultures, and minority/majority cooperation;
- Improving the conditions and quality of adult learning in universities, university-community partnerships, research, documentation networks, and policies of global transformation
- Ensuring the universal rights to literacy and basic education in various regions, learning strategies, social development, multi-lingual/inter-cultural settings, and community development,
- Promoting the empowerment of women through adult learning in women's issues and raising gender issues;
- Adult learning and the changing world of work in its impact on adult education and training, programs, and policy

and social implications.

- Adult learning in the context of environment, health and population in environmental action, health promotion, and population issues;

- Adult learning, culture, media, and building bridges through new technologies,

- Adult learning for all — the potential of education for aging populations, migrants, prisoners, and persons with disabilities,

- The economics of adult learning through the government role and private enterprise, and,

- Enhancing international cooperation and solidarity

This is undoubtedly a broad scope and wide spectrum of adult education, which will see us well into the twenty-first century as we are organized for adult learning.

I certainly can agree with the words of Paul Belanger, General Secretary to the Confintea V Conference, in applying to AAACE what he said, "Never before has so much attention been paid to the problem of literacy, the individual's claim of the right to learn throughout life, of the necessity of continuing training, and the urgent need to support community life from within" because "at the moment citizens' creativity is more than ever becoming the main resource that will enable societies to face up to the political, economic, and cultural challenges on the horizon." As we serve constituencies in the field of adult

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perspectives are also listed. Included are the work of Henry Louis Gates, Walt Whitman, Sonia Sanchez, Georgia O'Keefe, W. E. B. Du Bois, Maria Hong, and Julia Alvarez, as well as many more covering the subjects of rural and small town America, immigration, age, music, women, and cultures, among others

This book, however, goes beyond a mere annotation of available titles by offering suggestions on how to use these materials. A workplace literacy tutor at the Ohio State University Medical Center, Weibel speaks with the voice of experience. The books and methods recommended are for students in adult basic education (ABE), although the materials would be suitable for students

of English as a second language (ESL); adaptability is mentioned in the annotations for some titles

Each chapter suggests a variety of ways to use the books. Weibel indicates how "reading" art and photography can exercise intellectual and critical thinking skills that students will eventually apply to their ideas and stories. Sample lessons for using periodical indexes, reference books, memoirs, children's books for family literacy, and poetry are provided. Teaching strategies include reading aloud to students, using whole language, and teaching reading methodologies. The chapter on using nonfiction books suggests an "information reading technique" that involves reading out loud, discussion, and

writing. After the teacher reads the selection, the student is asked to discuss the material that the teacher then writes down and uses for the reading text.

Helpful notes to librarians and literacy tutors are presented in each chapter. For example, Weibel includes ideas for librarians on creating library displays and sponsoring such literacy projects as oral history events, author visits, and technology workshops for new readers. Notes to literacy tutors are filled with methods that extend individual activities to include outreach into the community through group projects, letter writing to the local newspaper editor, and information events for new readers and their families

While almost 700 titles are

listed and arranged by chapter, subject, author, and title, the real contribution of this book is the comprehensive approach Weibel takes in presenting us with examples of how to make reading enjoyable using the resources of our local libraries.

—by **Barbara Sparks**
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education, reminding ourselves of this will help us become better organized for adult learning.

This working conference, with its plenary sessions, reception, thematic working groups, public round tables, commissions, dialogues, caucus groups, publishing of a daily newspaper, paying tribute to recently deceased adult educators, rubbing shoulders and discussing with others in the halls, synthesis, street party, adoption of A Declaration on Adult Learning and An Agenda For The Future, and translation of the sessions into seven languages, truly made it a conference organized for adult learning.

A number of media opportunities were presented to some from the USA delegation. Catherine Wolters from Ohio arranged for herself, Yvonne Fiskum from Wis-

consin, and me to be interviewed on UNESCO radio, talking about our positive experiences of being involved in prison education. That interview is to be aired on 200-300 English speaking radio stations around the world. Alex Charters from Syracuse, New York, and coordinator of the USA delegation, arranged with a TV producer from the conference to tape one of our USA meetings and interview many of us on our thoughts about the value, meaning, and implications of the conference for our own work in adult education. Selected parts of this information will appear on CNN-TV. The producer also discussed with me his interest in producing a documentary for AAACE from the interviews obtained with those AAACE members at the conference. This causes one to realize that the media and technology

will play an important role in our being organized for adult learning in the future

The conference Declaration on Adult Learning, on the basis of the delegates being convinced of the necessity of adult learning, pledged that all men and women from the nations of the world will be provided with the opportunity to learn throughout their lives. The Agenda for the Future made a commitment to promote a culture of learning through the "one hour a day for learning" movement, and, to the maximum extent possible, encourage existing institutions, structures, and networks already organized for adult learning, to coordinate their energies for effective action. Full copies of the final Declaration and Agenda documents will be available from UNESCO for use by adult education organizations

and agencies.

The privilege and opportunity of a lifetime to participate in a conference of this magnitude, learn to know many new people from numerous countries around the world, reconnect with others I've met previously at other international conferences, and to be involved in shaping a Declaration on Adult Learning and The Agenda for the Future, makes me more excited than ever about the fact that AAACE is a driving force in the worldwide movement of adult education that is poised to address the current and upcoming educational needs of adults, and is ready to be organized for adult learning in the 21st Century. ▲

— by **John A. Henschke**
President, AAACE