

agenda Pädagogik



Gundula Frieling
Klaus Radpe
Ulrike Sommer (Hrsg.)

Erwachsenenbildung und ethnische Minderheiten

Situation und Perspektiven
in internationaler Perspektive

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John A. Henschke

Adult Education and Ethnic Minorities in the United States

The present and historical situation of minorities

Ethnic minorities have a unique configuration in the United States. Some of their classifications in other countries may not hold in the U.S.

When one defines the term »minority«, it traditionally means the smaller of two related numbers. However, in this context, minority also has the term »group« accompanying it, so the idea of smaller may not be in regard to numbers, but lesser in such things as economic or political power.

Feagin suggests that a minority group is a group of people who differ from the principal, or dominant, group in a society in speech, appearance, and cultural practices; having less economic, political, and social power and opportunities, and who are treated unfairly by the dominant group.¹ Indicating that sociologists refer to minorities as racial or ethnic, he gives separate definitions of each. Racial distinctions are physical characteristics like skin colour, type of hair, body structure, and shape of head and nose. Ethnic distinctions, on the other hand, are chiefly cultural practices such as language or speaking accent, religion, and manner of living, with many having left their homeland and settling in another society.

Pettigrew, on the other hand, mixes the racial and ethnic together when he says that in the United States, the term »ethnic group« refers especially to nationality groups that have immigrated to America since about 1840, including Chinese, Dutch, Germans, Greeks, Irish, Italians, Japanese, Jewish, Mexicans, Poles, Blacks, and American Indians.² Feagin says that Black immigration started as early as the 1600s.³ Boyer includes Blacks, Chicanos, and Puerto Ricans as ethnically distinguishable because they share the common plight of being economically poor or disadvantaged.⁴ Rice and Meyer include women in a definition of minorities because many still work in lower-paying, traditionally female fields.⁵ Briscoe and Ross only selected Blacks, Native Americans, and Hispanics in their treatment of racial and ethnic minorities.⁶ But, Ross-

¹ See FEAGIN (1995)

² See PETTIGREW (1995)

³ See FEAGIN (1995).

⁴ See BOYER (1979).

⁵ See RICE/MEYER (1989)

⁶ See BRISCOE/ROSS (1989).

Gordon, Martin, and Briscoe expand the concept to include Cuban-Americans, Laotians, Vietnamese, Koreans, and Hmong.⁷ Knox changes the wording of »ethnic minorities« and names it »cultural minorities«, and adds to the above designations affluence, gender, region, age, handicap, or disability.⁸

The foregoing diversity of the description of ethnic minorities is broad and inclusive in its unique configuration in the United States and implies that there is no one all-inclusive definition. The one thing which is certain is that the diversity currently reflected in ethnic minorities within the United States – however they are defined – is showing its face at levels and ways not thought of previously.

According to some of the latest reports,⁹ a snapshot of the U.S. shows a total population of 261,653,497. Of that total, 8,000,000 are Asian-American – Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Taiwanese, Koreans, Hmong, and Filipino. Predictions are that by the year 2000, this number will more than double to well over 16,000,000. There are 28,000,000 to 30,000,000 Hispanics in the United States, including Mexican-Americans, Cuban-Americans, Puerto Rican-Americans, and other Latin Americans. This number is expected to be 41,000,000 by the end of this decade. Native Americans, made up of hundreds of tribes, currently account for 3,500,000, with the number of nearly 7,000,000 anticipated by this decade's end. There is no speculation on the number of African-Americans there will be by the end of the year 2000, but the present count numbers 35,000,000. A sampling around the country indicates that 63 percent of Detroit is African-American, only 30 percent of New York City is English speaking and Caucasian born, Minneapolis has 8,000 Laotian Hmong, Memphis is 50 percent African-American, Detroit has 200,000 Muslims, and by the turn of the century, English as a second language will be the primary language need of California.

A new minority, which was previously classified as »other«, is emerging with the title bi-racial. It comes about through any combination parentage of mother and father being Caucasian, African-American, Mexican-American, Native-American, or Puerto Rican. There are presently 632,000 children in school now who are classified as bi-racial. Other minorities have become identified resulting from demographic changes in the population. There are 45,000,000 disabled Americans as defined by Public Law No. 94-142 and the subsequent Americans Disabilities Act. There are 31,000,000 Americans for whom English is not the first language. Two-thirds of the 1,000,000 prisoners in the U.S. are minority males. Less than ten of the 33,000 banks in this country are owned by women. Eight of the 100 United States senators are females. There are only two female governors of the fifty states. More than 90 percent of custodial parents in cases of separation and divorce are women. In the next three or four years, 78,000,000 people will turn fifty-years-old. The fastest

⁷ See ROSS-GORDON/MARTIN/BRISCOE (1990).

⁸ See KNOX (1993).

⁹ See BOYER (1996).

growing group is the population over eighty-five years old. In addition, there are 650,000 people who are HIV positive, 17,000,000 who are divorced, and 29,000,000 who need psychological help.¹⁰

Jewish people have often fled from other lands to the United States to avoid persecution, only to meet continued discrimination. There are 6,000,000 in the United States. Most European minorities came to the United States from Austria-Hungary, Germany, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Russia, and the United Kingdom.¹¹

According to the listing of the various ethnic minorities, some people could be members of more than one group. For example, one may be Asian-American and disabled. Another may be Hispanic and in the fastest growing group over eighty-five years old. Still another may be African-American and a custodial parent.

Pettigrew suggests that some consider this nation a melting pot which means that many different ethnic groups have joined to form a unified culture and have given up their ethnic ties.¹² Others believe it consists of many separate groups and call it ethnic pluralism. A combination of both is apparent; there has been considerable melting in the United States, but the nation also reflects much pluralism.

Political and other initiatives for ethnic minorities

Many countries have considered adult education as an instrument of social and political policy which governments have used for the development of the nation. Even in the United States, the institutions for the education of children and youth had their genesis in a broad conception of general education that predicated a continuing process of learning with unity, sequence, integration, comprehensiveness and articulation. In contrast, the institutions for adult education emerged as a movement in response to meeting the educational needs of adults. This means that the developmental process is more episodic than consistent.¹³

Consequently, the ethnic minority adult education initiatives in the United States are a mixture of political, voluntary, governmental, mandated and self-motivated initiatives. Following is an overview of the numerous programmes provided which by no means includes a listing of everything and every institution involved.

¹⁰ See BOYER (1996).

¹¹ See FEAGIN (1995).

¹² See PETTIGREW (1995).

¹³ See KNOWLES (1977).

African-Americans

One of the earliest initiatives with African-Americans was in 1693 when, according to Cotton Mather, an ordained Puritan clergyman, a company of poor Negroes came of their own accord to ask his help to establish a society which would combine learning the catechism with the encouragement of mutual assistance among its members. In the late eighteenth century, African-American societies were established which included education of both men and women. Such societies were the African Union Society of Newport, Rhode Island in 1780; Perseverance Benevolent and Mutual Aid Association of New Orleans in 1783; The Free African Society of Philadelphia of 1787; The Boston African Society of 1796; and The Benevolent Daughters of Philadelphia in 1796. Later in antebellum United States, the Black churches served as the most far-reaching agencies of Black adult education.¹⁴

Some of the educational efforts were also included in abolition societies and African-American conventions begun in 1794. Other societies were started which aided in the education of African-Americans: The New York Phoenix Society of 1833; The Gilber Lyceum of Philadelphia in 1841; The California Academy of Natural Sciences, The Historical Society, and The Negro San Francisco Athenaeum in San Francisco in 1853. These and other educational programmes like the Quakers' evening schools managed to stir prejudice against African-Americans in the minds of Whites.¹⁵

According to Kett, scores of other Black literary associations similar to the Phoenix Society of New York, were formed during the 1830s to teach intellectual skills and engender pride in racial intellectual attainments.¹⁶ These societies included New York Garrison Literary Association, The Boston Philomathean Society, The Female Minerva Literary Association (Philadelphia), The Demos-thean Institute (Philadelphia), The Adelpic Union for the promotion of Literature and Science (Boston), and The Theban Literary Society (Pittsburgh).

After the Civil War (1861-1865), Tuskegee, Fisk, and Howard Universities were established. In 1890, 13 Land Grant Universities were established throughout the United States by the federal government to serve the educational needs of African-Americans. This was necessary when some of the 1866 Land Grant Universities established in each state addressed only the educational needs of a predominantly Caucasian population.

As voluntary associations emerged in the United States, two were established which emphasised a primary concern for intercultural education on the behalf of Negroes: The National Association of Coloured People in 1909, and the Urban League in 1910.¹⁷

¹⁴ See STUBBLEFIELD/KEANE (1994).

¹⁵ See STUBBLEFIELD/KEANE (1994).

¹⁶ See KETT (1994).

¹⁷ See KNOWLES (1977).

In 1929, the Iota Lambda Sorority for Negro Women was established with 80 chapters throughout the nation to urge further intellectual development of members. In 1935, the national Council of Negro Women was established with 96 chapters in the United States to (among other things) unite women's organisations for effective study at the national and local levels on matters affecting the educational welfare of women.¹⁸

There have been a series of civil rights acts in the United States from the Civil War to the present. These acts have been aimed toward ending discrimination in education (and other things) and to guarantee equal rights and opportunities for all people. Black Americans, who make up the largest minority group, have been denied their full civil rights more than any other minority group. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the strongest civil rights bill in U.S. history. Its strength barred discrimination on the basis of race, colour, religion, or national origin, established the enforcement of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and provided for a cut-off of federal funds from any program of activity, including educational, that allowed racial discrimination.¹⁹ In 1966, the Adult Education Act through the U.S. Office of Education helped provide instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics for undereducated adults. This program is identified as adult basic education and preparation for general education development (GED - the high school equivalency exam). Many African-Americans have benefited from this program.

Hispanic-Americans

The Hispanic population in the United States consists of those for whom Spanish is a first language and many do not speak English. Their immigration to the United States began before this country existed.²⁰ In the Hispanic population, 29 percent are classified as poor, compared with the 12.9 percent of the general United States population, excluding the Hispanics, or 2.25 times as high.²¹ For many years, the educational achievements of most Hispanic-American students have not equalled those of non-Hispanic students. By the early 1990s, although only 53 per cent of Hispanics age 25 and older had graduated from high school, the dropout rate of Hispanic students remains almost double the dropout rate of non-Hispanic students.²²

Community organising involves a process of informal political education in which persons learned to identify their own interests and collaborate with others to confront the various power structures. A major force in community organising was Saul Alinsky and his Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF). In 1947, he organised the Community Service Organisation (CSO) in California.

¹⁸ See KNOWLES (1960).

¹⁹ See MURPHY (1995).

²⁰ See GARCIA (1995).

²¹ See DANZINGER (1995).

²² See GARCIA (1995).

In 1953, The Schwarzhaupt Foundation awarded the CSO a grant to help Mexican-Americans in antidiscrimination efforts. The first projects focused on English and citizenship education. Learning occurred as part of the action projects in 1955, a three-year, grant funded educational program to help members think about issues crucial to them.²³

In 1962, Cesar Chavez, a CSO organiser and labour leader, organised the California grape pickers, and later the farm workers union, to address their social, economic, and political interests.

Some of the adult educational effort devoted to Hispanic-Americans is directed toward adult basic education and teaching English as a second language. In 1966, the U.S. Office of Education (now the Department of Education), through the Adult Education Act, initiated help to provide adult basic education instruction in reading, writing, and mathematics for undereducated adults. This federal program has also provided instruction in preparing for the GED and English as a second language.²⁴

The Adult Performance Level (APL) study of the early 1970s was a major effort to help adults identify competencies needed to function effectively in the world.²⁵

In 1970, the U.S. Office of Education started a project called »Right to Read« to encourage reading instruction of illiterate adults through private organisations such as Project Literacy U.S., Literacy Volunteers of America, and Laubach Literacy International.²⁶

In 1972, the IAF began to regard the community organisations they created as schools of public life, or self-funded citizen organisations where people learn the arts and skills of politics. These organisations included COPS in San Antonio, BUILD in Baltimore, EBC in New York City, and UNO in Los Angeles. Through these schools of public life, IAF returned power to citizens unable, due to their lack of skills and of knowledge about public affairs, to influence the political process.²⁷

Adult education in the United States reaped much attention in the 1980s by the focus on workplace literacy. Kozol's book »Illiterate America« sparked interest in state departments of education. Howard McGraw of McGraw-Hill Publishers started the Business Council for Effective Literacy. Local programmes were supported by Gannet Corporation, publishers of »USA Today«.²⁸

²³ See STUBBLEFIELD/KEANE (1994).

²⁴ See GRAFF (1995).

²⁵ See OREM (1989).

²⁶ See GRAFF (1995).

²⁷ See STUBBLEFIELD/KEANE (1994).

²⁸ See OREM (1989).

Native Americans

Following the Revolutionary War, responsibilities for Indian Affairs was placed with General Henry Knox, Washington's Secretary of War. In 1791, missionaries joined the federal Indian agents in developing vocational skills in agriculture and crafts to transform the Native American from a nomadic hunter into a »civilised« farmer. Knox reported that the teaching of agriculture would demand great knowledge and much time. There were also a variety of skilled trades people to teach the many competencies of the farming enterprise. The missionaries also provided for adults instruction in religion, English, domestic economy, and agriculture after the founding of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions in 1810. In 1819, Congress made annual appropriations to the Civilisation Fund. In the following year, Indian treaties included specific cash annuities.²⁹

By 1828, the Cherokees had established their own printing press to print a variety of educational materials, newspapers, texts, and Bibles. A system of informal adult education developed through the medium of the Cherokee language with Cherokees teaching and contributing to the tribe's social, economic, and political progress. In May 1830, the Indian Removal Act was passed requiring all Indians to be moved west of the Mississippi River, ultimately moving them to such places as Oklahoma, Arizona, and the Dakotas. The appointment of a Commission of Indian Affairs in 1832 renewed federal interest in Indian adult vocational education. By the Civil War, Indian-Caucasian relations had deteriorated to the point that they were subjected to the authority of The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and in 1871, the federal government took control of Indian education. The Women's National Indian Association, organised in 1879, drew support for its schools among other things. A second reform group, the Indian Rights Association, organised in 1882, created networks in several cities. In 1991, Indians organised The Society of American Indians, the first all-Indian political association, to pursue their own adult educational and reform agenda.³⁰

Currently, adult basic education has a strong component with Native Americans in such states as Oklahoma, Arizona, and the Dakotas.

The design of the Navajo Community College in Chinle, Arizona illustrates an effort to make education relevant to the needs of this minority group.³¹

Asian-Americans

Voluntary minorities, such as Asian-Americans, have chosen to move to the United States in an effort to obtain either economic well-being or greater political freedom. They have as their reference group, peers in their former

²⁹ See STUBBLEFIELD/KEANE (1994).

³⁰ See STUBBLEFIELD/KEANE (1994).

³¹ See ROSS-GORDON/MARTIN/BRISCOE (1990).

homelands. They see themselves as different from not opposed to, Americans. They tend to perceive schooling, knowledge, and individual effort as the primary means of economic advancement. Thereby, they pursue English as a Second Language (ESL) and adult literacy programmes with a strong expectation of adapting to and succeeding in mainstream American culture.³²

European Immigrants

Most of the other immigrant ethnic minorities which came to the United States have a similar approach for accomplishing their goals as the Asian-Americans. The immigrant education programmes address objectives in addition to ESL, such as basic and vocational education, but their typical goal is to be assimilated into, and make progress within, the majority culture and to, thereby, also reach their economic goals.³³

Jewish-Americans

Jewish-Americans have not always found it easy to become assimilated within the majority culture in the United States, nor have they wished to in all respects. There were two groups whose primary concern was for intercultural education and the protection of civil rights for the Jewish community. One was the American Jewish Committee established in 1906, and the other was The Anti-Defamation League started in 1913.³⁴ Many Jewish-Americans have also advanced their own people by retaining their religious beliefs and many traditional practices.³⁵

Older Adults

Educational gerontology is defined as the study and practice of instruction for and about the aged and ageing. While educational gerontology may have had other geneses, it is reported that the first use of the term was with a doctoral program at the University of Michigan, started in 1970 by Howard McClusky, purported to be the father of educational gerontology. The movement gained national recognition in 1976 with the establishment of the Journal of Educational Gerontology. Older adults have caught the spirit of lifelong learning in that their primary purpose for being involved is to learn. A wide variety of agencies and institutions offer programmes including such public institutions as secondary schools, universities, colleges, and community colleges. The college in the country at West Georgia College in Carrolton was a driving

³² See ROSS-GORDON/MARTIN/BRISCOE (1990).

³³ See KNOX (1993); CORLEY (1995).

³⁴ See KNOWLES (1977)

³⁵ See FEAGIN (1995)

force for combining education and travel especially accessible to the older population free from other duties.³⁶

Elderhostel is a week-long non-credit, collegiate-level academic program on personal enrichment topics. In 1987, about 740 four-year colleges and universities in the United States enrolled approximately 50,000 retired persons in Elderhostel. The number continues to grow.³⁷

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) is a strong and continuously growing movement with many educational offerings. Retired workers in New York and public access cablevision by and for elders in California are only a couple of the many organisations serving older adults.³⁸

Women's Adult Education

The women's movements in the United States came about through religious, charitable, and political activities aimed toward achieving greater social, economic, and political involvement for women.

The first wave of women's movements developed during the 1800s in the United States in response to the coming of modern urban and industrial society, and concentrated primarily on gaining voting rights. The second wave of women's movements developed during the period of great changes in the 1960s and have sought greater equality for women in the family, in the work place, and in political life.³⁹ Most of these activities had an educational component to help accomplish their primary purpose.

Continuing education for women (CEW) programmes focusing on flexible programming and stop-out education began in the 1970s and became institutionalised at the college level. Close to 1,000 programmes, centres, and courses are presently on campuses across the nation. Today CEW is moving beyond the original mission of helping women of means to obtain higher education for enrichment and professional training to empowering groups of disadvantaged women.⁴⁰

Examples of programmes with this sort of shifting emphasis would include, but not be limited to, The Lutheran Settlement House Women's Program in Philadelphia, programmes for divorced and single mothers, displaced homemakers, programmes for minority women, and educational equity. Community colleges developed numerous programmes for divorced women and single mothers with Brevard (Florida) Community College using an educational self-help Job Club, and Daytona Beach (Florida) Community College instituting a successful non-traditional vocational-technical education approach.⁴¹

³⁶ See COURTENAY (1989).

³⁷ See HATFIELD (1989).

³⁸ See COURTENAY (1989).

³⁹ See GIELE (1995).

⁴⁰ See RICE/MEYER (1989)

⁴¹ See RICE/MEYER (1989).

The first Displaced Homemaker Program in Baltimore in 1975 grew into 750 programmes nationally by 1986. Miami-Dade Community College in Florida focused on Hispanic women, while Blackfeet Community College in Browning, Montana, worked with Native American women. Funding for these programmes included private funds, as well as funding from the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA), the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), the U.S. Department of Labour, and the U.S. Department of Education.⁴²

Examples of programmes for women on worker re-entry include Native American Educational Services College serving Native Americans, Sojourner-Douglas College and Malcolm-King College serving African-Americans, as well as Boricua College and The National Puerto Rican Forum serving Hispanics. The National Congress of Neighbourhood Women Grant, through a fund for the improvement of secondary education, focuses on adult basic education and general educational development, while the ACCESS for Women Program at New York City Technical College offered to teach women math, science, and skills needed for entry into male-dominated trades such as air-conditioning, refrigeration, apartment superintendency, and computer technology.⁴³

Funding for educational equity started with CETA in 1972 and the Women's Educational Equity Act (WEEA) under Title IX in 1978. In 1980, The Women in Science Program was incorporated into the Education Act, and in 1985, help came from the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act.⁴⁴

Concepts and possible solutions as far as adult education is concerned

Much remains to be accomplished in the area of providing adult education for ethnic minorities in the United States, despite the myriad activities, programmes, and systems addressing this for numerous decades. Increased and continuous effort along the lines previously pursued could well be a next step toward a possible solution as far as adult education is concerned. However, more steps are needed beyond this one.

The concept of popular education, with its home in the sociology of knowledge, holds some promise. It is defined as a social behaviour which situates itself within a framework broader than that dealing exclusively with education and which aims at the popular sectors, so that persons in these sectors will become self-aware political subjects. It is characterised by (1) horizontal relationships between participants and facilitators, (2) response to a need expressed by an organised group, (3) group involvement in planning the training and

⁴² See RICE/MEYER (1989).

⁴³ See RICE/MEYER (1989).

⁴⁴ See RICE/MEYER (1989).

political action, and (4) acknowledgement that the community is the source of knowledge.⁴⁵

Popular participation has as its goals so-called critical conscientization, the development of a capacity to transform reality, and the strengthening of the organisational structure to challenge existing power arrangements. The results of this could be conceived as an increasing ability of people (1) to consciously appropriate their own reality, (2) to influence and to control the processes in their daily lives, (3) to defend their own interests and to define the type of society that would serve them best, and (4) to make the society less hegemonic and more responsive to them.⁴⁶

The above concept, if implemented, would certainly help develop within the minorities involved an additional measure of control over having their learning needs met. In turn, those facilitating the processes as well as the educational systems would benefit from the shared expertise resident within the participants.

The concept of various paths to alternative images is worthy of consideration as a possible solution as far as adult education is concerned. First, the »path of a wordless communitarian vision« grows out of adults co-operating convivially with each other in the day-to-day life of organic communities and integrated with the broad intentional visions of the community. Going to a separate building to learn this would be a foreign concept. Second, the »fiction as wisdom path« carries with it implied criticism of present practice, and is indirect, that is, the exactness of the author's point is impossible to ascertain, since everything is presented through the minds of the characters.⁴⁷

Third, the »path of entrepreneurial creations« illustrates the occasional overlap between alternative and mainstream images of the future. It could be helpful in bridging the gap between the two, and it sometimes poses new directions to protect the old, worn out ones. Fourth, the »eclectic conferencing path« is organised around an image or theme that both alternative and mainstream groups find congenial, i.e., a national conference with a particular theme. Finally, the »focused imaging path« builds on the value of personal daydreaming, night dream exploration, and fantasising in order to facilitate this in a social dimension.⁴⁸

The various paths provide some help suited to the tastes of diverse persons. Engaging ethnic minorities with these tools will be very fruitful to their own maturing and sense of accomplishment.

The concept of social and technological trends and constraints giving direction and substance to the efforts of ethnic minority adult education as a possible solution as far as adult education is concerned is not without merit. The ageing of the U.S. population and a shift from a youth to a maturity orienta-

⁴⁵ See HAMILTON/CUNNINGHAM (1989).

⁴⁶ See HAMILTON/CUNNINGHAM (1989).

⁴⁷ See OHLIGER (1989).

⁴⁸ See OHLIGER (1989).

tion in the society certainly supports the adult education notion that adult learners need to be treated as adults (mature) in the process of learning. The increasing sophistication and influence of technology will definitely provide the challenge and opportunity to help ethnic minorities gain access to these important resources. The redefinition of work, productivity, and participation in the information era will open new opportunities for ethnic minorities to move beyond meeting basic educational needs to personally realising the full flower of the American dream. The growth of dissentience, the influence of information access, and the struggle for power by special interest groups should level the playing field for ethnic minorities. This will move the United States closer to the reality of being a society of ethnic pluralism.⁴⁹

Perhaps the most workable concept that poses a possible solution to addressing the needs of ethnic minorities as far as adult education is concerned is one envisioned by Briscoe and Ross which increases partnerships between leaders in minority communities and adult education professionals, thus creating a broader array of options for lifelong learning. There will be new research efforts on adult learning and development across cultures.⁵⁰ Community-based programmes will address minority learning needs and styles. Private and government sources will provide financial support where needed. The National Endowment for the Humanities will support new programmes bringing minorities and others together with a focus on contributions of all ethnic groups. Numerous distance learning programmes will be delivered through the convenient scheduling of home computers subsidised by a major philanthropic organisation. Adult educators will work with networks of minority adults creating community-based centres in urban and rural areas. Minority adults will be engaged in supportive climates to design and evaluate programmes offered in these centres. Boyer's dream of structuring a user-friendly system teaching the economically poor will be brought to reality in the United States.⁵¹

Other scenarios could be added which may fine tune those provided in the foregoing. However, if these mentioned are implemented fully, major strides toward providing solutions for ethnic minority adult education needs will have been accomplished.

The future tasks of adult education

Although adult educators have numerous accomplishments in addressing the needs of ethnic minorities, the future will not allow for resting on past victories. This situation implies that a pause for reflection is in order. This reflection needs to focus on the crucial questions: What of the future? What are the future tasks of adult education regarding the needs of ethnic minorities? There

⁴⁹ See LEWIS (1989); SPEAR/MOCKER (1989)

⁵⁰ See BRISCOE/ROSS (1989).

⁵¹ See BOYER (1979).

are multiple answers to this question and many adult educators have given thought to this directly. Others have developed answers to this question for the whole field of adult education, and these answers may appropriately be applied to ethnic minorities.

A first task to be given priority for the future of adult education is a tremendous emphasis on providing the learning climate and environment conducive to developing human beings. This means adult educators must know what the ethnic minority participants' lives are like, where they come from, what their situation is when they arrive, and their identity regarding culture, ethnicity, race, gender, linguistics, and economics, and how to use our tools in accomplishing their goals.⁵²

As a second task, adult education as a field must develop a group of professionals who themselves have learned how to learn, and then have learned how to help others to learn. Where those preparing the professionals have not learned to fully participate in continuous lifelong learning, they will need to be confronted with the fact that teachers cannot convey to others what they have not learned for themselves.⁵³

A third future task of adult education is to become an example of and convey the notion that the people most successful on the job and who will survive during this era of downsizing or rightsizing are the people who have the best people skills. This means those people most comfortable with people unlike themselves, who have a knowledge base of people unlike themselves, a sense of responsibility, a respect for themselves, concern for the rights and welfare of others, and a capacity for service to ourselves and others no matter what the skill or precision level. This includes teaching occupational competence and priority skills to the economically poor, becoming environmentally literate and mastering computer technology, with the deliverers and receivers vitally connecting with each other.⁵⁴

Another future task of adult education is to overcome the stalemate of helping to keep ethnic minorities in a subservient relation to the majority culture and to break out into creating alternative educative systems to challenge both their ascribed station and the rationale used by the majority culture to restrict their access to civic and economic rights. This needs to take place even in alternative, informal adult education systems, which are created are out of the mainstream, but which help develop self-improvement and productive skills according to the standards of ethnic minorities.⁵⁵

A fifth task for the future of adult education is to develop multicultural approaches which bridge courses to prepare participants to use general adult education offerings; focus on self-esteem; emphasise family, political, and oc-

⁵² See BOYER (1996).

⁵³ See KNOWLES (1977).

⁵⁴ See BOYER (1996).

⁵⁵ See STUBBLEFIELD/KEANE (1994).

cupational roles and opportunities; and, provide follow up and supportive services which also contribute to empowerment.⁵⁶

Task number six focuses on the need for educators of adults to be prepared and to hone their theory and practice so that they are consistent with each other as they help ethnic minorities learn what they themselves determine is important for them to learn. This means that although some are natural-born teachers of adults, the vast majority of teachers need generous amounts of sculpting if they are to attain the competence required for helping ethnic minorities grow in their new setting.⁵⁷

The seventh task of adult education is that research must determine more specifically the conditions under which minority adults do and do not participate in adult education. Correlated to this is the need to collaborate with educators of youth to enable us to address the educational needs of minorities before they are turned off to formal learning. Additionally, partnerships must be formed with the appropriate community leaders and organisations to enable adult educators to reach and serve minority adults better.⁵⁸

An eighth task in an era of rapid change and confusing voices is that adult educators need to develop the ability to: inspire across racial, cultural, ethnic, economic, gender, physical ability, and linguistic lines; call out reluctant learners; praise a learner for meagre efforts in an effort to get a better effort.⁵⁹

A ninth task is for adult educators to understand and take action on elements of effective programmes for ethnic minorities which are community based, have relationships between the day-to-day world of formal instruction, involve teaching their own, include institutional collaboration, and take advantage of technology.⁶⁰

Task number ten is for adults to improve their critical-thinking skills, to be given every opportunity to think critically, to discuss their thought processes with other students and with their teachers, and to discover the answer to their questions through the process of critical thinking.⁶¹

The eleventh task is for adult education to integrate all the technology – computers, Internet, world-wide web, CD ROMS, video disks, satellites, etc – with the best that is known of how adults learn, as a means of helping ethnic minorities to become competent in this area.

The twelfth task for the future of adult education is to keep current with the trends that influence the continuous shaping of ethnic minority adult education and improve such offerings accordingly.

Task thirteen is for adult education to gather all the foregoing tasks together and to develop an enlightened concept of race, age, gender, ethnicity, language,

religion, handicap, and economics; knowing that character has no colour, integrity has no age, honesty has no gender, compassion has no height or weight, caring has no language, relationships have no degrees, certificates, or contracts; and that all programmes must have a social justice agenda or be living below their privilege. According to Boyer, the final task for the future of adult education is to send out a «wake-up» call to all adult educators willing to shape the future by preparing and identifying themselves as the ones who: are visionary workers, are team players, live with a passion, are achievers, are not emotionally and spiritually bankrupt, who make decisions to improve the quality of their life when they lose control, are deliberate in proving themselves, transcend previous accomplishments, avoid the comfort zone, examine processes involved in the work place, have a multicultural perspective on who they are, take moral responsibility in an essentially immoral society, are sensitive that human beings are present, are conscious of diversity, are committed to equity, have a cohesive ethnic minority adult education curriculum, collaborate in decision making, are competent with culture and learning styles, are ethical in all their dealings, have courage to confront tradition in issues of social justice, avoid the violence of ostracism, are able to connect with learners of all kinds, and have the ability to instil a sense of hope in ethnic minority adult education participants.⁶²

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⁵⁶ See KNOX (1993).

⁵⁷ See HENSCHKE (1987).

⁵⁸ See BRISCOE/ROSS (1989).

⁵⁹ See BOYER (1996).

⁶⁰ See ROSS-GORDON/MARTIN/BRISCOE (1989).

⁶¹ See SPEAR/MOCKER (1989).

⁶² See BOYER (1996).

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