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Perspectives on International Adult Education

By John A. Henschke

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In recent years, international adult education has emerged increasingly as a prominent force on the adult education horizon. Although many adult educators have been conducting adult education programs for numerous decades around the world, the Commission on International Adult Education (CIAE), formerly the international unit of the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE), has been a most important catalyst for raising awareness and interest in international adult education, stretching around the globe to help adults learn in various cultures, contexts, and countries.

The seven articles in this "international adult education" themed issue of *Adult Learning* (our journal of theory and practice) draw upon a group of authors who share their experiences and a broad spectrum of active engagement in facilitating adult learning through a multiplicity of adult education programs. Come with us on a delightful trip as we criss-cross the globe!

In the first article, Roger Morris, from "down under" in Australia, reflects on his numerous significant international adult education encounters. He has done this during a 30-year period of time to overcome what some call "the tyranny of distance" that separates Australia from other parts of the world, including Asia, North America, Europe, and the South Pacific. Roger has been deeply involved with the United Nations Educational,

Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the International Council of Adult Education (ICAE).

In the second article, Gretchen T. Bersch from Alaska describes in glowing terms how her grandmother and parents (because of their energetic, adventurous, and visionary penchant for travel) inspired in her a lifelong interest in international work throughout many parts of the world. As a consequence, Gretchen built a figurative bridge from Alaska over the Bering Strait to Magadan, Russia (in far Eastern Siberia). She poignantly describes the work she has done since the iron curtain fell in 1988 between Russia and Alaska, and how she has helped destitute people in a region where daily life is a challenge often filled with unimaginable sadness.

In the third article, Peggy Gabo Ntseane from Botswana, Southern Africa, tells of her excitement for international adult education, arising from Setswana Proverbs: "we learn from one another," and "a bag of locust can only be lifted if we all lift it." Combining the cultural socialization and indigenous learning models of collective learning with the individualized learning models of the United States helped Peggy focus her adult education work on the function of spearheading global social justice.

In the next article, Qi Sun takes us to the Peoples' Republic of China. She developed her interest in international adult

education through the Scientific Research Institute of International and Comparative Education (SRIICE) at Beijing Normal University and discovered its connections with Russia, Eastern Europe, France, Germany, Japan, United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and UNESCO. She emphasizes her gratitude for the opportunities afforded to her as a result of her affiliations with numerous international adult education groups. As a multilingual adult educator, she is often called on to serve as translator to many individuals and groups.

The fifth article whisks us to Greece and its rich culture, the launching pad from which Marcie Boucouvalas blossomed into a true internationalist. Marcie travels to numerous countries, and hosts a multiplicity of adult education delegations and visitors to the United States in the Washington, DC, area. She focuses on the communication of people between languages and culture as contributing to a “way of being” with others around the world. This ‘way of being’ also includes identity, paradox, integration, and resonance.

Rosemary Closson transports us to many places in Africa and delves into the very practical matters of helping people learn how to purify water, store vegetables, become adept at reading, sustain human rights, be anti-HIV, care for orphans, live ethically,

exemplify management practices, raise funds, and build internal capacity. Rosemary shares insights regarding the power of nonformal education to profoundly change adult lives and the future of nations.

Finally, I bring us back to the United States where I share my experience of how travel and adult education merged, for me, into a major emphasis in international adult education (AE) and human resource development (HRD). This was all guided by my ideas about andragogy—the art and science of helping adults learn—and I ultimately became involved in researching its international foundation. Working with adult learners from numerous countries and conducting programs in several of them with adult educators (my most intensive and extensive being in Brazil) has been a top-notch, exhilarating experience in my AE and HRD career.

Join us on our “magic carpet” as we move rapidly around the world. Then, consider how you may also become thoroughly engaged in international adult education. ▼

International Adult Education: A Personal Reflection From Australia

I was born during the Second World War, in Sydney, Australia, and was educated in public schools and at a state teachers' college, largely during the 1950s. I began my working life as an elementary school teacher in the early 1960s, and entered higher education as a lecturer at a small teachers' college in the early 1970s. I retired from paid employment at the University of Technology, Sydney, as an associate professor in adult education at the end of 2005.

Now as I look back over my life, I realize that the one enduring theme that runs like a thread through my professional life is a strong interest in international adult education. I suppose that I first became interested in the wider world when, as a student in elementary school, I explored "ways of living around the world." In high school, geography was a favorite subject, and as a student teacher at the teachers' college, I found the study of comparative education to be fascinating.

While part of my interest in international matters is personal, another part has to do with nationality. Australia is a federation of 6 states and 2 territories, and it occupies a continent of about the same land area as the contiguous 48 states of the United States. Its population is relatively small (about 20 million persons). Its European history is relatively short (not much more than 200 years) though, of course, the culture of the Australian Aborigines is one of the oldest in the World.

Australia and the Wider World of Adult Education

The most significant fact about Australia is its isolation, as any American who has visited our shores will quickly tell you. One of the best-known histories of Australia is called *The Tyranny of Distance*. The distance and, more significantly, the concomitant feeling of isolation have meant that, over the years, Australians have become great travelers, both for personal and professional reasons.

In earlier times, such travel was quite difficult, involving lengthy sea journeys, which were often measured in months. Moreover, given Australia's status as one of the nations of the British Commonwealth, the final destination of such travel was almost inevitably Great Britain. But the vast changes—social, economic, political, and technological—that followed the Second World War, meant that in the second half of the twentieth century, Australians looked more and more to the United States and the developing nations of Asia. That was the case with adult education.

From the 1950s onward, Australian adult educators came in regular contact with adult educators from North America. Among the first group of North American adult educators who visited Australia in the 1950s and 1960s were Evelyn Bates, Richard Frankin, Paul H. Sheats, Alexander N. Charters, and Alexander A. Liveright. Australian adult educators were also traveling to the United States. Joan Allsop, who traveled to New York City to pursue

By Roger K. Morris

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graduate study at the Teachers' College, Columbia University in the 1950s, is generally regarded as the first Australian to gain a doctorate in adult education.

Professor Paul H. Sheats, Dean of Extension, University of California, undertook a study tour of Australia in 1959. The results of his study were published the next year, and included two of his more significant recommendations: the need for a unified national adult education association and for Australian adult educators to become more involved in the then-emerging field of international adult education. These recommendations coincided with strong pre-existing trends within the field of Australian adult education. That same year (1960), the AAAE (Australian Association of Adult Education) was founded and an Australian delegation participated in UNESCO's Second World Conference on Adult Education in Montreal.

The growing interest, indeed, an eagerness among Australian adult educators to be more involved internationally, culminated in the Regional Seminar on Adult Education organized by UNESCO, which was held in Sydney in January 1964. Dr. Alexander N. Charters of Syracuse University participated in this seminar as an invited expert. The most lasting and important outcome of the UNESCO Seminar was the formation of a regional adult education organization—the second oldest such regional organization in the world—the Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPBAE).

Australian interest in the more international aspects of adult education is just one more manifestation of the fact that adult education, both as a field of practice and an academic study, has always had such an orientation. Many of the first proponents of adult education began to look across national boundaries, seeking to carry their particular version of adult education and learning to the “unenlightened” and to ally their movement with similar activists abroad. Others looked across these same boundaries for inspiration in order to address local concerns. Adult educators were soon busy transmitting educational ideas from nation to nation.

While this internationalizing task may have been difficult and still remains incomplete, it has been, at least partially, successful. A belief persists among many adult educators across the nations of the world, that they are involved in a universal movement for the education of all adults.

A More Personal Point of View

I must confess that I am one of those adult educators. As such, over the past 30-plus years, I have engaged in a range of activities of an international nature. While it would be patently untrue to claim that I have played a major role in many of these events, there has been a sustained, if modest, personal contribution.

Among the more significant of these activities were memberships of: the Board of Adult Learning Australia, which I have served as both the National President and National Secretary; the Australian delegation to the DVV Conference and as a participant in the related study tour of German adult education; the team for an Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) workshop on leadership development for ASPBAE; and the Selection

Committee for the C. O. Houle Award for Outstanding Work in the Literature of Adult Education (invited). Over the past two decades, I have served as a delegate for the International Council of Adult Education at the 32nd World Confederation Organizations of the Teaching Profession's World Congress in Melbourne, the Second General Assembly of ASPBAE, the Fifth UNESCO World Conference on adult education in Hamburg, and the World Congress of the International Council of Adult Education in Jamaica.

Early in my career, I undertook a lengthy study tour of North American schools, colleges, and teachers' unions. Since that time, I have been a participant in the Australian Bicentenary International Adult Education Conference organized by the Board of Adult Education and a Kellogg Visiting Scholar at Syracuse University's Adult and Continuing Education Research Collection. Most recently, in 2006, I was honored for my international involvement by being inducted (along with 13 other adult educators from around the world) into the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame.

Over the years, I have participated in and helped to organize a large number of international conferences across Australia, the Pacific, Asia, North America, and Europe. In both my work and my roles in the various professional associations, I have hosted numerous adult educators from around the world when they have visited Australia. Additionally, I have met and taught many international students.

Some practitioners have questioned the value of international adult education and its relevancy to their everyday work. Even from a purely instrumentalist point of view, an engagement with international adult education can help to improve our understanding of our own adult education efforts. It can assist us to appreciate the reasons for the differences and the similarities. It can show us initiatives that have succeeded and failed in other lands and other circumstances. It can show us that many of the challenges we face are not specifically Australian or American; they are universal. The study of international adult education builds and documents the diversity of adult education practice and knowledge across both place and time.

Some of my most valuable insights into the real nature of adult learning and education have come from interactions with adult educators from other cultures. And, of course, the sheer joy we all experience each time we find that we share with so many others a common purpose: to enlighten and to empower adult learners. I can do no better than to conclude by quoting the final clause of the Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning:

We, gathered together in Hamburg, convinced of the necessity of adult learning, pledge that all men and women shall be provided with the opportunity to learn throughout their lives. To that end, we will forge extended alliances to mobilize and share resources in order to make adult learning a joy, a tool, a right and a shared responsibility. (UNESCO, 1997, p. 4)

Reference

UNESCO (1997). *The Hamburg Declaration and the Agenda for the Future*. Hamburg, Germany: UNESCO Institute for Education. ▼

Adventures in International Adult Education

Introduction

My international interest and some valuable skills came from my grandmother and parents. My grandmother was a stateswoman, peacemaker, and visionary who was advanced for her time. She gave me my middle name and a lifelong interest in international work. My scientist father and adventurous and energetic mother homesteaded with our family on Yukon Island across Kachemak Bay in Homer, Alaska. The experience there taught me to be flexible and resourceful, and how to make do without the modern conveniences of running water and electricity—useful preparation for international travel and work.

After graduating from college and teaching junior high math and science, I moved for a year to Kaltag, an Athabaskan village of 32 families on the Yukon River. That winter, the Adult Literacy Laboratory hired me to write culturally relevant curriculum materials and teach adult basic education to village teachers, most of whom were Alaska natives. This led to a decade of work in rural Alaska. The experiences taught me how to listen, live, and work in different cultures and how to act as a resource while doing work that aimed to empower people. The culturally rich environment and remote locations make experiences in Bush Alaska similar to international work.

Doing my graduate adult education work at Florida State University in the 1980s motivated me further to get involved internationally. My professor, George Aker,

was internationally renowned and my student colleagues were from all over the world; we had wonderful opportunities to learn about cultural differences and viewpoints from one another.

International Work

While I had occasionally traveled outside the United States, my international work really began when the Iron Curtain between Russia and Alaska fell in 1988. By 1989, friends and I were hosting Russian visitors. Since 1991, I have spent time each year in Magadan, in the Russian Far East—a sister city to Anchorage, and the place of Stalin's camps where so many thousands died. We began to collaborate with Magadan's Northern International University, including faculty and student exchanges, joint conferences, policy, and curriculum work.

It is my Russian friends that make my experience so interesting and vivid. I am inspired and humbled by Russian university colleagues who are dedicated, creative, and effective despite limited resources and huge obstacles in a place where daily life is difficult. Cold university buildings, intermittent phone and Internet access, and scarcity of supplies all provide challenges. But I have been fascinated with their language and mathematics teaching methods, and the Russian people and system have taught me a great deal.

In the mid-1990s, a group of women started the Magadan Women's Center, one of the earliest nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and later, a second NGO that assists women and children in the destitute settlements in the region.

By Gretchen T. Bersch

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It has been exciting to be involved with these women and centers. They have done amazing things: established a domestic violence hotline, assisted handicapped children and their families, offered prenatal education, and co-sponsored the first women's conference. Sometimes I assist by supplying materials, training, carrying money and supplies, hosting them in Anchorage—whatever seems to help.

Can we fix all the problems? Certainly not! Can one person make a little difference in the lives of others and herself? Yes, indeed. The needs and situation internationally seem quite overwhelming, but it is gratifying to have the chance to be involved. It has surely changed my life, my perspective, and some of my direction.

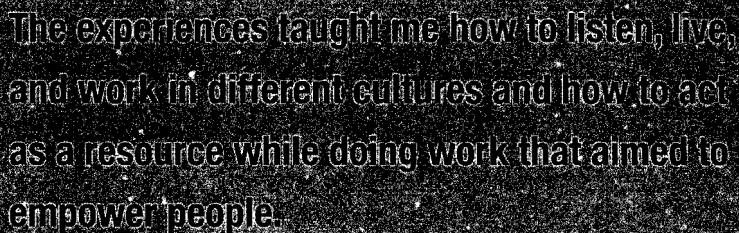
Working With International Colleagues

Before traveling, there are some things you should take into consideration. It is important to learn about the country, the culture, the people with whom one will work, and some of the language. You should consider the skills and expertise you possess that might fit and be useful. And, go with an attitude of, "How can I collaborate with you and share my expertise" rather than "I am the expert who will tell you what to do; I am here to enlighten you."

It is best to stay neutral, not make judgments or take sides, and be very careful about the politics. It takes some time to understand the power structure and appreciate the local situation; it is important to be cautious so no one is harmed or embarrassed.

I try to be a creative source of contacts, resources, and new ideas. When sharing with colleagues, I encourage them to choose, adapt, change, and rearrange things to fit their local situation. Viewing through their own experiences and cultural lenses makes for a much better and more useful fit. At the same time, people everywhere have great ideas, and given the opportunity, will usually share, enhancing everyone.

When I travel, I take a few interesting and appropriate gifts for my host/hostess or main colleagues with whom I will be working. While the distance is not far between Alaska and the Russian Far East, mailing a small package takes months or more to arrive, so there may not be the opportunity to send something later. Bringing a few things "for any occasion" has proved very useful. At this point I know the special needs of my close Russian friends. I always bring



The experiences taught me how to listen, live, and work in different cultures and how to act as a resource while doing work that aimed to empower people.

Luda extra gifts, for instance, so she can barter to receive proper medical treatment. I try to be sure to thank those who have helped me. In Russia, it took me a while to realize that sometimes help is almost invisible behind the scenes.

I have learned greatly from my international colleagues. Watching, listening, and learning in recent years when I visited adult education colleagues in Abu Dhabi, Malaysia, and Europe has been invaluable. The learning and sharing go both ways in international collaboration—learning from new colleagues and our international experiences can be rich opportunities.

Participating in Confintea V, the United Nations UNESCO meeting on adult learning held in Hamburg, Germany, in 1997, was a highlight. We gathered from all over the world, working together, discussing common concerns, often working through interpreters to communicate. Both the Russian experiences and Confintea V created the chance for me to teach graduate courses in international adult education as well as share in other situations.

Working With Interpreters

If you plan to work internationally, it is great if you can learn the language. On the other hand, if you do not know the language, no one is more important to your success than your interpreter. Interpreting work is tremendously difficult. When I make a presentation or public speech in Russia, it is not really me they listen to, it is my interpreter. It has been rare that I have worked with someone who simultaneously interprets, that is, he or she interprets at the same time as I am speaking. Usually, I must speak and then allow my interpreter a turn. I try to divide up my ideas so my interpreter will not have to wait for many paragraphs before he or she has a chance to interpret. When giving a presentation or speaking to a class, I usually prepare a handout, or better yet, make arrangements for the handouts to be translated beforehand so the interpreting will be easier and faster. If I am making a public speech that may be especially stressful for my interpreter, I give my interpreter my speech in advance so there will be no embarrassing surprises. Be sure to listen to your interpreter; very often he or she will give great hints about what is expected, who is important, and how things are done. Finally, I thank my interpreter with a gift, if appropriate.



The needs and situation internationally seem quite overwhelming, but it is gratifying to have the chance to be involved.

Photographs are a wonderful teaching tool because they more easily transcend language and appeal to our curiosity to learn about one another.

Ideas for International Involvement

Every experience provides much learning, new cultural insights, and global ties. There are many ways adult educators can get involved in international adult education work. They include: attending international adult education conferences or meetings; getting involved locally with exchange students or groups from other

places in the world; finding and linking outside your own country to people, adult education programs, and opportunities through friends, relatives, or on the Internet; and doing volunteer work overseas. Furthermore, educators can give a joint presentation or co-author an article with an international colleague. One can mix pleasure travel with work opportunities and by all means, when international friends or colleagues invite you, say yes.

In a tumultuous world, global collaboration is a comforting opportunity and experience. Adult education can be a key to working and learning together. Step out and get involved—you will be glad you did. ▼

Working With International Students

I continually search for better ways to model best teaching practices and create interesting learning opportunities for learners. I often design teaching materials using local supplies, so people will see it does not take fancy, expensive supplies to make them. Photographs are a wonderful teaching tool, because they more easily transcend language and appeal to our curiosity to learn about one another. Many international students are accustomed to more formal teaching situations. It may take some time for them to get used to working or discussing in small groups or less formal activities. Their system may also be more socialistic in nature and less individualistic—how do you take this into account? Encouraging students to create and share with their own student colleagues can be productive. Teaching provides multiple dimensions. In addition to content, modeling good practice, fostering active learning, and adapting the context are important.

We Learn From Others: An Adult Educator's Experience with International Education Practice

Before beginning a discussion on international adult education, it is important to understand what it means. According to Cookson (1989), international education is "the systematic study of the process whereby men and women (in individual, groups, or institutional settings) participate in or implement organized learning activities that have been designed to increase their knowledge, skill, or sensitiveness, and that take place across international borders" (p. 71).

The idea of joint adult education practice by adult educators from nations throughout the world is not new because it has evolved over time. During the pre-industrial revolution, forms of adult education, such as self-directed learning, apprenticeships, early mass literacy campaigns, military training, and newspapers were developed and widely diffused throughout Europe and subsequently to its colonies, such as those in Africa and Latin America. For example, innovations that have been spread from North America and Europe to other parts of the World include correspondence instruction, agricultural extension, and experiential learning. Similarly, influences of Western models of learning, such as the Brazilian Paulo Freire's (1970) ideas concerning

conscientization (i.e. the heightening of one's critical awareness) was disseminated through what was called "world education."

Recent forms of international cooperation and exchange include UNESCO's (1985) effort to promote cooperation to combat worldwide illiteracy more effectively. In fact, the concept of "adult learning" as articulated by the United Nations' conferences, including the fifth International Conference (CONFINTEA V) in 1997, is a broad one embracing "formal, non-formal and informal learning processes in all areas of people's lives" (UNESCO, 1997, p. 43). Through UNESCO's international conferences, adult educators have an opportunity for a global forum where they may exchange information on problems, pool experiences and expertise, disseminate research findings, and address issues of international cooperation in the provision of aid and assistance to one another.

As an adult educator who is both a product of international education institutions and one with a passion for international adult education practice, I share my personal experience and lessons learned from participation in international adult education.

By Peggy Gabo Ntseane

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Expect that not only will other people challenge your perspectives, but even more importantly, you will become a critical thinker of your own context.

International Adult Education: Why a Personal Interest?

After 25 years of experience in the field of adult education, three major aspects stand out as key to my passion for international adult education. They include my African cultural educational background that upholds collective learning and living (Avoseh, 2001); interest in issues of difference and adult education; and the need to satisfy an interest in how human beings live and learn. This section briefly discusses these three factors:

My African cultural educational background: In my oral traditions, cultural proverbs and common understandings are used to reinforce collective methods of learning and teaching. For example, the following proverbs attest to the existence of alternative ways of learning to the dominant paradigms of knowledge acquisition and learning. Setswana Proverb 1: "*Dilo makwati di tsewa mo go ba bangwe,*" meaning "we learn from one another," and Setwana Proverb 2: "*Kgetsi ya tsie e kgonwa ke go tshwaraganelwa,*" meaning "a bag of locust can only be lifted if we all lift it."

Based on these two proverbs from my culture and the reality of the impact of globalization on adult education practice, I truly believe that adult educators have to share information, ideas, and experiences. This, in my view, is critical for improving their practice. As Walters (2001) puts it, "think global—act local" and "act global—think local" (p.23). This is true because the reality for adult educators is that today, the global and the local are interconnected, thus people have to be encouraged to think globally and act locally regardless of their context.

As a product of the Botswana cultural socialization and indigenous learning models that have a bias to collective learning (Ntseane, 2004), studying in the United States helped me realize that other cultures had a lot to offer for adult education to effectively and truly fulfill its social function of spearheading global social justice. My experience of learning in another context as well as the literature and learning methods different from my own (collective versus individualistic) proved to be a key motivating factor for my involvement in international education.

Passion for issues of difference and adult education: As an adult education student, I took courses in multicultural education and gender studies, and this introduced me to issues of difference. Informed by work on education and exclusion

of women and other cultures in learning and knowledge, my analysis of adult education practice quickly helped me to realize that my own African indigenous epistemology and ways of learning were also excluded from the mainstream literature (Mkabela, 2005). This served as a strong motivation for me to develop an interest in international

adult education. I saw it as a possible avenue for giving voice to the excluded learning paradigms. Furthermore, this instilled a personal commitment to the contribution of an African contextual learning to the field of adult education.

How human beings live and learn: As an international student in American universities, I studied with graduate students from Southern Africa, Asia, India, Middle East, Europe, and Latin America. That experience opened my eyes to other constructions and contexts of knowledge. For example, it was interesting to realize that for difficult concepts, most non-Americans, myself included, confessed that we had to first systematically translate to our mother-tongue languages before we could tackle the issues in group work, for instance. Although what emerged from our encounters with Western models of learning was strange and different, it obviously changed our views of life. This is what Walters (2001) would term "dialectics of learning."

International Adult Education Work

Although my work in Africa as an adult educator involves teaching and conducting research, I have sustained my interest in international education by engaging in specific global activities. I have participated in international conferences in an effort to share and to learn from other adult educators from different contexts. For example, I have presented papers alone or co-presented with other international adult educators at the Adult Education Research Conferences (AERC) in the United States, The Standing Conferences on University Teaching and Research in Education of Adults (SCUTREA) in Europe, and the Salzburg International Seminars in Austria. Through my involvement with the Cyril O. Houle Scholars in the adult and continuing education program: Global Research Perspectives, I conducted research on HIV/AIDS, gender, and poverty in Botswana. I had the opportunity to relate the findings to adult education and global health issues. The results of this study were shared regionally in Southern Africa and internationally at the World Information Fair on HIV/AIDS (organized by UNESCO-UIE) in Thailand. Currently, I am involved in collaborative work with an international team of adult educators on transformational learning. These international adult education activities were valuable to my education experiences and the development of new ideas. Furthermore, they have also enabled me and my international teams "to learn, to do, and to live together."

Adult education is lifelong learning because every encounter or interaction with a person from a different context is an opportunity for learning, critical reflection, and intellectual growth.

Lessons Learned From International Adult Education Work

My broad international experiences have taught me some major lessons. Adult education is lifelong learning because every encounter or interaction with a person from a different context is an opportunity for learning, critical reflection, and intellectual growth. For example, in my opposition to the Western epistemology and exploitation of other people, I have had to define my own theory, methodology, and epistemology. This was essential for defending my positions and arguments in adult education. In fact, because of this lesson, I have learned to speak for the marginalized, especially the poor and women. Another lesson is the realization that international experiences can and do inform teaching and research. For example, my international adult education contributions and challenges have made me a more tolerant, accommodating, and better listener.

The Value of International Adult Education

Getting involved in international adult education can be a rewarding experience. I believe it is a humbling experience that is critical for the social function of an adult educator. Through it, you will be able to initiate meaningful reforms needed to confront fundamental issues surrounding the practice and study of adult education. Expect that not only will other people challenge your perspectives, but even more importantly, you will become a critical thinker of your own context. For example, as an advocate for indigenous knowledge systems relevant to adult education, and through my critical lenses, I realize that there is a need for the reconstruction of indigenous knowledge systems if they are to effectively enhance the value and practice of adult education in this era of globalization. It is important to note that there are serious linguistic and conceptual problems in comparative studies across multi-lingual societies. For instance, the concept of adult education does not mean the same in each country or to educators within a country. Issues of translation have to be considered. Furthermore, a value of international adult education is that it helps adult educators to continuously develop their overall adult education philosophy. For instance, I have learned that rather than compare adult education across countries, we might compare specific types of adult education. It seems that all new comparisons will have to move beyond the capitalist model of standardization.

Conclusion

Based on my personal international adult education experiences, this article has demonstrated that finding the links in the world in which we live is the real starting point for the principle of adult education with a global perspective. This is because every encounter or interaction with a person from a different context is an opportunity for learning, critical reflection, and intellectual growth. One would argue

that it is time for adult educators to recognize and research existing learning and knowledge paradigms; international adult education is better suited for that. As a discipline tasked with a social function, adult education should not continue marginalizing other existing alternative knowledge paradigms to the dominant Western models. As the Botswana proverb attests, "We are here together because we learn from one another."

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Journey to International Adult Education

My journey to international adult education started with my graduate study in the program of international and comparative education at Beijing Normal University (BNU) in the late 1980s, when the reform of the Chinese opening to the outside world had gone broader and deeper under Deng Xiaoping's administration. Modern economic construction was a priority, and education was seen as a practical instrument for producing a varied and qualified workforce for the nation. Thus, special attention was given to learning from others and borrowing useful educational experiences from developed countries. Consequently, universities were highly involved in exchange programs with foreign educational institutions.

Being the leading institute of the international and comparative education program of the nation, the Scientific Research Institute of International and Comparative Education [SRIICE] of BNU specialized in comparative research on several foreign countries, namely Russia (and some Eastern European countries), France, Germany, Japan, United States, United Kingdom, and other English-speaking countries, such as Canada and Australia. Faculty were not only knowledgeable of those countries' cultural and educational systems, they were also fluent in these languages and had good connections with their educational institutions from which they received their education. Further, one of the competency requirements for admission into SRIICE

was that applicants must be fluent in one of the foreign languages. Having such advantages, almost every semester, the Institute either invited international scholars to offer workshops and seminars, or held (or co-sponsored) international conferences that brought many foreign scholars. As a master's degree student, I benefited greatly from participating in these activities and, more importantly, they provided great learning opportunities for me as I voluntarily worked as an interpreter for those foreign scholars. They offered workshops and seminars to Chinese graduate students, faculty, and practitioners, and gave speeches and presentations at conferences. Working with them was a priceless bonus to my classroom learning and made my international experience exceptional.

One adult educator particularly influenced me and led me into the field of adult education, changing my career path. His name is Dr. Dusan Savicevic, a well known Yugoslavian adult educator. Dr. Savicevic, a dissertation director of one of our faculty, was invited to and visited Beijing, China, in the summer of 1990. He offered seminars to graduate students, adult educators, practitioners, and administrators. I was honored to work closely for weeks with Dr. Savicevic, and that experience enabled me to see a larger world that adult education plays in fulfilling various roles with different purposes and goals for diverse adult learners. Dr. Savicevic particularly introduced the concept of andragogy. In

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fact, he is the person who introduced andragogy to Malcolm S. Knowles in the late 1960s, and Knowles (1980) further developed the concept and made it applicable in the practice of adult education for North America.

I was so interested in adult education that I changed my thesis topic to adult education. This transition changed my career path. While I worked with Dr. Savicevic, I moved forward and graduated. I received two employment offers; one was an administrative position at the Department of Adult Education, Ministry of Education of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC). The other employment offer was an editorship of the People's Education Publisher of China. Both were decent jobs and matched my career goals. Dr. Savicevic recommended taking the administrator position, because, among other things, it would provide me with more opportunities to continue my international and comparative inquiry. Following my heart to the international adult education journey, I accepted the offer, and in July of 1990, I became an administrator of the Department of Adult Education of the Ministry of Education of China.

Dr. Savicevic was absolutely correct. My administrative jobs at the Department of Adult Education provided me with greater opportunities to continue my international adult education journey. Since the late 1980s, Chinese adult education has gained a solid status in the Chinese educational system. The "Decision on the Reform and Development of Adult Education," approved by the State Council in 1987, further enhanced the status of adult education. Starting in the 1990s, Chinese adult education received even more attention from both government and society, and it has played various roles in providing educational opportunities for workers, peasants, professionals, and the general populace of adult learners to meet diverse learning needs for modern economic construction (Sun, 2006).

My international and comparative education degree, with a concentration on adult education and English language skills, prepared me to coordinate national adult education research projects, administer and promote international cooperative programs, and facilitate information analysis and assessment for national policy making. These projects involved working with university professors and researchers, specialists from international educational agencies and the provincial adult education administrator. Additionally, it provided me the opportunity to travel extensively within China as well as visit several other countries, such as Germany, Japan, Thailand, Singapore, and Malaysia.

For example, I worked with a specially-selected group of researchers and professors on a competitively-funded project by the National Philosophical Research Fund of the Eighth Five-Year Plan and conducted Comparative Studies: Eight Countries' On-the-Job Training (OJT) System. I co-edited research findings with Professor

Being at a distance from my own country enabled me to reflect on my country's own merits more objectively.

Gao, a leading team member, and in 1996, we published the first book in China about OJT in the United Kingdom, United States, Germany, France, Canada, Japan, Korea, and Singapore.

I was involved in a national adult literacy program evaluation, working with local administrators and adult educators to evaluate literacy programs and to develop a national literacy campaign. From 1978 to 1998, 76.93 million illiterates became literate. Illiteracy can hardly be found among the workers in cities and towns (Ministry of Education, Adult Education China, 2001, IV). I was also a team member of Population Project No. 20, a five-year population education project in adult literacy program funded by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). I coordinated and led overseas training programs in Bangkok, Thailand, for provincial administrators and program officers.

I also represented the Chinese Adult Education Association (CAEA), working closely with some adult educational agencies, such as the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPEAE), and German Adult Education Association (DVV), to name a few. CAEA has actively participated in international collaboration, information, and program exchange.

All these assignments taught me more than I had realized. I loved my jobs and yet felt the need to recharge. After six years working for the Department of Adult Education, Ministry of Education, in 1996, I came to the United States to pursue my doctorate. Studying abroad gave me a particular vivid view of international adult education. Its different theoretical perspectives have helped me better understand the diversity of adult education practices that are deeply embedded in its social contexts. At the same time, being at a distance from my own country enabled me to reflect on my country's own merits more objectively. As Kubow and Fossum (2006) comment, international and comparative education not only provides an opportunity to explore and better understand others' cultural and educational values, but it also provides a refreshed capacity to appraise one's own.

My journey to international adult education over the years has taught me a great deal. We should consciously understand that each individual country has practices and operations that have been historically, culturally, and socially embedded in contexts. A more open, nonjudgmental and appreciative lens helped me avoid quick conclusions. We should always be willing to view things from new

perspectives and be ready for transformative learning (Mezirow, 1991, 2000, 2003). Adult educators should strive to get in touch and network with international colleagues in the field to obtain updates on practice, research, and theory development. Learning from others helps envision our own research and practice.

As we become more globalized, we must expand our lens and scope. "In light of greater globalization, it seems even more important that citizens possess cross-cultural knowledge and skills that provide them with an international vantage point from which to view their local educational endeavors" (Kubow & Fossum, 2006, p. 17). King (as cited in Kubow & Fossum) challenged us to consider how international and comparative education might be used as a teaching and learning activity, because it could provide educators with "a sense of cultural 'wholeness'" (p. 17). Evidently, our lives have been broadly influenced by diverse cultures and traditions, therefore, we, as adult educators, must acknowledge and embrace differences and help increase our learners' international consciousness, equip them with culture competency, and foster a sense of connectedness to the whole of which we are a part.

There are many ways you can start your international journey of adult education. Be willing to learn from and work with international students or scholars near you. For instance, you may have them in your classroom or in the office next to yours. My observation is that this country attracts more international scholars and graduate students, and they could be live learning resources. Consciously integrate the international awareness and comparative spirit into your formal and informal teaching and learning activities. If feasible, travel to and participate in some international conferences and make connections with people. Take advantage of technology and the Internet to find resources of international adult education agencies and scholars for possible projects and cooperation. Get involved in international efforts of local community or university international programs. One could start with any of those that are available or convenient. You will find it an exciting and rewarding journey through which your life could be transformed.

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Forging the Family of Humankind Through International Adult Education

As authors of this special issue on international adult education, we have been asked to address the following questions: How we developed an interest in and originally became involved with international adult education; in what countries we have “worked” and with whom; lessons learned; and suggestions for others.

As far back as I can remember I have experienced comfort, energy, and hope in thinking about and feeling part of the greater family of humankind. From a young age, I heard distant voices calling to me from cultures and countries that I had not yet encountered. My attunement perhaps was due, at least in part, to growing up knowing that I had cousins across the sea whom I knew through pictures but had the opportunity to meet only decades later. Upon reflection, my global interests clearly appear to have begun in youth.

My responses to the above questions, however, are framed by key concepts that in retrospect have grown with me and defined my experiences, lessons learned, and suggestions for others. These concepts are automaticity, identity, paradox, integration, and resonance. They appear in **bold** when defined and discussed throughout the article.

One more example from my youth should set the stage—remembrances from family gatherings, which in the Greek-American culture of those years, were often. Christmas, Easter, name days, and birthdays, were all causes for extended family gatherings. I remember the fluidity with which my relatives were able to toggle back and forth between English

and Greek without even being aware that the language had changed. More than the words of the language, however, I witnessed tones, gestures, movements, and ambiance with the language contributing to the communication and way of being. Some feelings and expressions were untranslatable and conveyed best in Greek; others in English. I witness that even now, particularly with my work in Europe where colleagues switch back and forth between many languages simultaneously. Some are just speaking the language, but a few others are of the ilk that I observed as a youth, having transcended the language, *per se*.

I refer to this phenomenon as one of **automaticity**, an understanding of which has become a key concept in my practical as well as scholarly development as an international adult educator. For me, its meaning is no longer restricted to language but plays out in ways of thinking and being in and with others around the world. **Automaticity** is an incremental process. One evolves, moving from a mere engagement in external behaviors of adaptation to internalizing anything from cultural gestures to values, that is—from merely action (what you do) to a natural part of who we become and how we continue to navigate as internationalists. As discussed later, a cultivation of inner silence speaks volumes in this regard.

My Unfolding

I first became aware of the international aspects and activities of adult education while matriculating for my master’s degree with Malcolm Knowles at

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Boston University. My part-time study and full-time employment, however, precluded any active involvement at that time. Years later, when I was ready to pursue a Ph.D., I carefully chose a program with a concentrated international population. At that time, few could rival Florida State University. I immediately became immersed and involved in learning about the greater terrain of the field around the globe. Curiously, the country of Greece was missing both from the literature and from discussions, thus launching me on a treasure hunt. I did find fugitive documents from UNESCO consultants who were there during the 1960s and early 1970s. I contacted one (Edward Townsend-Coles) who lived in Oxford, England, and continued communications with him for decades. Once I accepted a faculty position in 1980, I was able to further formalize a research agenda which continues to this day. While in England during 1984, as part of the first North American British exchange of professors, I branched into British library resources on Greece, conceptualizing adult education very broadly. Long-lasting contacts, colleagues, and friendships emerged from that exchange and the counterparts who subsequently returned to my own university. Return trips to make conference presentations flourished, and I was able to accept the gracious invitation from Townsend-Coles to visit with him, learn more about his work on adult education in developing countries as well as in Greece, and—with his encouragement and urging—publish a book based on my years of research. My international adult education experience was broadening and deepening.

More countries followed: Germany, Czech Republic, Thailand, Nigeria, Egypt, Russia, India, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Sweden, and more recently, Australia and Italy. Conferences, consultancies, and research drew me there (in addition to serving as a U.S. delegate to key international assemblies). Over the decades of the 1980s, 1990s, and continuing to the present, I have hosted delegations of visitors from a number of the above countries, as well as from Serbia, Turkmenistan, Middle East, North Africa (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Tunisia, West Bank, Yemen), China, and others.

As early as 1983, however, I became equally interested in conceptualizing the phenomenon called “international adult education,” and worked and re-worked conceptualizations and gave presentations in both the United States as well as abroad. Of early interest and concern was our transnational and transcultural potential. Although too detailed for discussion herein, it was clear to me that the phenomenon of an international dimension to the adult education movement, apparent from the 1920s, was only a step

along the way to the articulation of international adult education as a field of study and practice. As I had indicated (1986),

the latter implies more than the involvement of representatives from different countries working with and learning from each other . . . it implies a cadre of (trained) professionals and practitioners who identify themselves as international adult educators and who work for and with international concerns. It also implies a knowledge base to the field and a host of researchers and professionals [today I would urge that we transcend that seeming dichotomy] studying the area and laying a more solid foundations for practice. (p. 3)

Twenty years later, we are beginning to find such identities—but challenges still beckon.

Lessons Learned and Suggestions for Others

I find it less discordant and more harmonious now to talk of professionals involved in the lifelong learning movement. Some **identify** as adult educators, vocational and career developers, human resource development professionals, and other designations. Each has a unique contribution, but all sport commonalities vis-à-vis the global nature of adult learning worldwide. All are concerned with both the individual adult as well as development of the greater context in which adults find themselves, whether it be the nation, society, the community, an organization, or a group. As we know, computer and communication technologies have brought colleagues around the globe closer so that international exchanges are commonplace, even in cyberspace. Community is no longer a geographical phenomenon. That does not necessarily signify, however, that meaningful or appropriate **identity** will be forged as an international adult educator (or any of the other appellations). If we who call ourselves adult educators can cultivate a greater **identity** as lifelong learning professionals, then we may be able to work most closely with others to forge that cadre of internationalists. The very term “international adult education” may need to be re-visited.

As indicated earlier, five concepts (automaticity, identity, paradox, integration, and resonance) grew with me, and defined my experiences as well as lessons learned to pass on—although I am still in process. The psychological concept of **identity** is central to becoming an internationalist, not just in the professional sphere as discussed above, but equally in terms of working and being with those from different countries and cultures. A sense of culture (or

multi-culture) is important in affording a heritage and a sense of belonging, and if denied or suppressed, returns with a fury when control is lifted, a phenomenon we are witnessing worldwide. Moreover, citizens of many countries sport bi-, tri-, and multi-cultural identities.

The very beliefs, habits, customs, behaviors, values, mores, and folkways

Let go of the way you think things should be, even—or especially—when bringing needed expertise to a country or culture.

inherent in cultural identity can indeed cause challenges to intercultural understanding. I have found myself in situations where I knew I was misunderstanding or being misunderstood, and I learned. What I learned, however, was more about how I was functioning from what my own cultures or other cultures had taught me. I could “go native,” so to speak, in behavior, dress, manners, etc., but it was not possible to embrace the deep identity others shared. So, while I was able to acknowledge, live in and with, respect, and honor the other’s identity, I learned that I must strive to catalyze experiences to tap that common identity that we all share. We share emotions. In fact, our facial expressions to identify strong emotions are similar if spontaneous, albeit some are more adept and practiced than others in masking external expressions of emotion. Music played in particular notes yields the same emotions from people regardless of culture.¹ Eating together (manners aside) is another way to share a commonality.

Over the years, I have carried with me as a reminder—in the form of a mental guideline—the awareness that international work is served well by remembering to perceive similarities in differences and not miss the differences in seeming similarities—until I was dizzy. The sensitivity needed when working with other English-speaking countries is a common one.

How **paradoxical**, I thought, that many cross-cultural training programs emphasized the differences one would face, with less emphasis placed on the opportunities to **resonate**² with commonalities of the human species as well. Culture, it struck me, was an external personal/group **identity** internalized. Honoring differences was rich, but connecting with a larger **identity** as a human species was equally important. It has been a lifelong challenge to **integrate** these personal and transpersonal aspects of my being, and remains one of our species’ challenges worldwide—**integrating** what I have discussed elsewhere as autonomous and homonomous **identities**. **Resonating** with a homonomous identity as a member of the planet is a developmental process illuminated by the literature on adult (especially transpersonal) development. With new and renewed xenophobias and centrisms (e.g. ethnocentrism, nationalism, etc.) proliferating, world challenges abound. Our planet, thus, offers opportunities to all of us for further development.

Each of us, however, works within the framework of our own personalities. So, not everyone will encounter the same lessons nor heed or need the same suggestions. Misunderstanding and being misunderstood can be aspects of daily life anywhere, but the potential is exacerbated when one is unaware of these differences, thus compounding the dictum “know thyself.” Let feelings of disorientation become familiar. Do not fight them; they are natural. Let go of the way you think things should be, even—or especially—when bringing needed expertise to a country or culture. Strive, however, to remember the commonalities we share as a human species and meet others in that space. Some lessons we will learn only by ourselves and recognize only in retrospect.

Practical Suggestions

Finally, some practical suggestions: Upon reflection, I realize that I was not fully aware or heedful of the odds against me. Although I was cautioned that a busy, well-known person would probably not respond to a query from an unknown individual, I did receive responses which launched me into the international arena. Early in my research on Greece I wrote a letter to the then Minister of Education proposing my agenda and expressing sincere concern that Greece was absent from the literature. I did receive a response and an invitation (similarly, regarding my communication with UNESCO’s consultant to Greece, Townsend-Coles). So, I would suggest finding the appropriate person who is aware of your interest in serving another country and beginning a dialogue. Another meaningful practice is to find or cultivate a “buddy” in the culture or country to both act as your advocate and to be forthright with you in sharing any faux pas you may be making. Do not cringe from the feedback but maintain the universal sense of humor, “laughing” at oneself while at the same time remaining vigilant about the cultural differences in humor.

Becoming an internationalist is a developmental phenomenon and is a ripe arena for further inquiry both of a practical as well as scholarly nature. How one learns to ‘be’ is fundamental to the ‘doing’ and ‘thinking’ involved. More essential is the silence, not just of a behavioral nature, though—because silence has different meanings in different cultures—but the internal silence that stops the chatter, the judgments, etc., in order to open an aperture for potential **resonance** with others.

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Notes

1. See the ground breaking work of H. Bonny & L. Savary (1973). *Music and your mind*. NY: Harper & Row, augmented in recent years with research that suggests that, regardless of culture, specific notes and selections bring out similar emotions. See, for example, the earlier work by Cooke, D. (1959). *The language of music*. London: Oxford University Press and the more recent work by Mithen, S. (2005). *The singing Neanderthals: The origins of music, language, mind, and body*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
2. According to most sources, the concept of resonance dates to the 1600s and the discovery made by Huygens in designing the pendulum, and discovering that two or more pendulums placed near each other would eventually synchronize. The pendulum experiment in an array of variations has become classic in explaining principles of physics. ▼

An Adult Education Practitioner in Africa: An Opportunity for Relearning

I became interested in international adult education as a result of being in a doctoral program at Florida State University, where the adult education doctorate was very closely aligned with the International Intercultural Development Education (IIDE) program. Both programs were housed within the Educational Foundations Department in the College of Education; many of the IIDE students included adult education courses as a part of their curriculum. Additionally, both IIDE and the Adult Education and the Instructional Systems Design program (housed in the Educational Psychology Department) enrolled a significant number of international students from Korea, Latin America, and Africa.

I originally intended my graduate focus to be in human resource development. However, not long after engaging in class discussions with international classmates and hearing their quite distinct perspectives, questioning both what they often perceived as very American approaches to learning as well as the value of American ideals and culture, I became attracted to adult education in developing countries.

African Countries as the Context for My International Work

I have taught in university settings in both Nigeria and Kenya. In both countries, I was fortunate to have not only the opportunity to teach in formal educational environments, but also to design and deliver two nonformal educational programs.

In Nigeria, all my students were

Nigerian graduate students in an adult education master's program. Most of them worked in adult education agencies and were either on leave or working part-time in order to obtain their master's degrees (not so different from student circumstances in the United States). In Kenya, I was selected to teach in the American-based branch of United States International University (USIU). My charge in both cases was to teach teachers using participatory and learner-centered techniques. Since both Nigerian and Kenyan schooling systems were heavily influenced by British colonialism in the early 1900s, learner-centered approaches do not typically prevail in the schools.

However, in Kenya, the state-funded university where the College of Education was housed was on strike, so I taught Introduction to Management and an ethics course in an MBA program at the Kenyan branch of an American university—USIU. At USIU, my students were predominantly middle- to upper-class Kenyans, with a scattering of students from various other countries, such as Norway, Brazil, and Uganda. Some of these students were the children of ambassadors to Kenya.

In Nigeria, I initiated a relationship with the Agency for Mass Education (AME) which was responsible for adult literacy programs throughout Borno State. Borno, one of 36 Nigerian states, had a population of approximately 3 million people in 1994 when I was there. I was granted an opportunity to visit several of these programs around Maiduguri (the state capital)—two programs for women and

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a program for tradespersons. Additionally, I had many conversations with Bintu, my friend and our cook, who experienced multiple frustrations in learning to read through adult literacy programs in Maiduguri. Based on my observations of the visited programs and Bintu's tales of woe, I asked if I could conduct a needs assessment of literacy program supervisors and program directors to ascertain if a professional development program for supervisors might be beneficial. Based on the results, I wrote a proposal to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to fund a program consisting of three components: low- or no-cost materials; supervisory practices; and teaching tips. After the UNDP granted funding, we added skills training for women, which included how to purify water and how to store vegetables.

I had two goals: a) provide the needed training and b) model a collaborative planning process between the AME and the university adult education faculty. The collaborative process was full of political twists and power-struggle turns, but in the end, three workshops were conducted in three towns within Borno State: Monguno, Biu, and Maiduguri. Attendance averaged 60 persons at the half-day sessions; the room was always full.

I believe it instructive to briefly address the politics of program planning during this experience. The expected positional politics within an agency like the AME were complicated by ethnic rivalries that exist throughout Africa and most specifically in Nigeria. For example, during the colonial era, the Yoruba were those who became more educated. The Hausa, who lived in the North (where I lived), had fewer schooling opportunities, and the same was true for the Kanuri—the indigenous people of Borno State. The Kanuri had become the nondominant and marginalized people of the region. Many of the university faculty were Yoruba; some were East Indian and Pakistani expatriates; very few were Kanuri. This diversity, although valuable in my mind, was full of tense undercurrent for the Nigerians. For example, sometimes critiques about teaching technique were veiled discriminatory remarks towards ethnicity or tribe. A large number of the literacy supervisors were Kanuri and Hausa. One of the simple, but important, elements in our program design was to include an ice breaker that used both Hausa and Kanuri folk sayings.

As a result of my work in international settings, I have learned the power of nonformal education to profoundly change adult lives and the future of nations.

Much of what we in the United States take for granted as services provided by the state are addressed in developing countries by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), for example, provision of water to rural communities, anti-HIV education, and care for orphans. NGOs also perform a key role in promoting and sustaining human rights. NGOs are often funded by multilateral donors, such as the United Nations or Canadian International Development Association (CIDA) or United States Agency for International Development Association (USAID).

In Kenya, I initiated a Women In Management (WIM) seven-day long workshop for women directors of NGOs. The workshop was offered through the continuing education arm of USIU where I was teaching. Attendance at this program was sparse—about eight women in all. We did not seek external funding and participants had to pay the fees themselves. I teamed with a trainer from ABANTU, an NGO in Nairobi, Kenya, that specialized in women's economic and capacity building training. The program we designed included a section on ethics, management practices with a focus on special challenges for women managers, and fundraising. A goal was to allow our learners to apply the new tools we provided in the classroom at their respective workplaces for a week and then to return for the final two days where we would together reflect on and refine the management practices. External donor funding had begun to decrease in 1995, especially for small operations like the ones our participants managed. Our closing speaker—a Kenyan graduate of USIU working in the corporate sector—provided recommendations about how to fundraise locally. He was well received and pummeled with questions.

In addition to my two year-long stints in Africa, I managed a research project that included six different African countries (Republic of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Côte d'Voire, Burkina Faso, Ghana, and Senegal) in an analysis of the relationship of NGOs to the public sector. (For more detail regarding parts of this work, see Closson, Mavima & Siabi-Mensah, 2002). We learned through

our collaborative work that there was a rise in nonformal education activity as development work was increasingly devolved from the state to NGOs. Moreover, we saw an increase in the number of private-for-profit organizations participating prominently in the provision of nonformal

In my international experience, there are multiple layers of politics and power struggles about which the expatriate will never know or fully understand.

education, especially in Ghana where nonformal organizations taught business and technical skills. Our work on this project was funded by USAID.

Lessons Learned and Relearned

Although, as practitioners, we have the opportunity to continuously learn from our activities, when working in another country, we may question what we believe we know because of the difference in cultural context. In my experience, the result is that we have an opportunity to learn the deeper nuances of any concept (e.g., program planning) which can/should inform what we do and how we do it in the future. The nuances of program planning politics provided important learning that I want to pass along to other adult educators. Political struggles are ever present in program planning activities (see Cervero & Wilson, 1994 for more on this topic), and in my international experience, there are multiple layers of politics and power struggles about which the expatriate will never know or fully understand. In international settings, one is always working in a socially ad hoc situation (Cervero & Wilson); therefore, "satisficing" and "bargaining" will become necessary strategies. The salience of the programming politics was crystal clear in Nigeria even if I did not always understand the basis.

As a result of my work in international settings, I have learned the power of nonformal education to profoundly change adult lives and the future of nations. I do not believe we, in North America, can fully appreciate this force. I have also learned the web of relationships required to provide these types of programs, and the political jockeying and the covert power struggles that are often present. And finally, I believe I have been reminded that there is no perfect process to do this work; there is only putting forth one's best effort to employ principles and theory "on the ground" where the outcome is almost always an experiment.

Teaching in Africa

For those interested in international adult education, I suggest volunteering with the International Foundation for Education and Self-Help (IFESH). A program founded by the late Reverend Leon Sullivan and funded by USAID, IFESH sends faculty for an academic year to African countries to train teachers in participatory teaching techniques in schools and through courses on university campuses. See www.ifesh.org for additional information.

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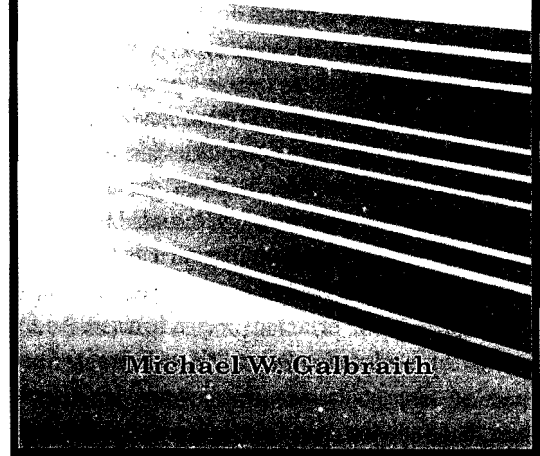
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NEW RELEASE

COLLEGE TEACHING

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Michael W. Calloway

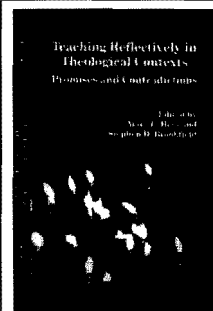
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College teaching is more than what happens in the classroom. It is about what occurs before, during, and after the classroom that sums up the experience.

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Reaching Beyond the United States: Adventures in International Adult Education and Human Resource Development

Travel adventures originated way back in my life when I was a young grade school boy in Southwestern Michigan. My father and mother talked about our family making an automobile trip to California; this was immediately after World War II. The closest we came to California was traveling to Kansas City for the purpose of bringing my oldest sister home for the summer from college. However, on the way home, the boxes of her belongings fell off the top of the car in the middle of the night. We stopped to pick them up and went on home—quite an adventure it was!

Developing an International Interest

In high school, my two sisters and I traveled as a musical evangelistic team to various churches in six Southeastern United States. I also traveled to Chicago many times to visit my sisters during their time in college. During my college days in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, I went on a wonderful month-long choir tour in 14 Western states and Mexico—my first international venture. Through my theological seminary male chorus and quartet, I toured in six Midwestern states. I also heard about my seminary professors' international study visits to the Holy Land. My honeymoon travels took my wife and me to 13 Eastern states in the United States and to Canada. Our pastoral

ministry also found us in other new places.

My preparation for becoming an adult educator moved us from central Illinois to Boston University, and my curiosity was piqued as I heard adult educators and human resource developers describe their international work. All these adventures stirred my penchant for travel and interest in international adult education, but my inclination incubated for a number of years.

Highlights of My International Work

After many years in the field, I was afforded my first and second international opportunities in adult education (AE) and human resource development (HRD). The year was 1985, and the countries were Brazil, through the Partners of the Americas; and Germany, through the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education (AAACE) and The German Adult Education Association. In the ensuing 22 years, exponential growth of my international AE and HRD work has taken me on 30 different journeys to 14 countries, where I primarily focused on andragogy—the art and science of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1980). I have also had numerous foreign students in my adult education courses at the University of Missouri. Thus, I have worked with adult learners from 76 countries.

My international AE and HRD work in multiple formats includes presenting papers

By John A. Henschke

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at international AE and HRD conferences and presenting papers about my participation in international AE and HRD at conferences in the United States. I have facilitated numerous AE and HRD courses, workshops, seminars, conferences, concurrent sessions, and keynote addresses in various international countries, as well as conducted adult learning courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences for various foreign delegations coming to the United States. Furthermore, in 2004 and 2005, I chaired the Commission on International Adult Education (CIAE) Pre-Conference of AAACE. I am a member of the International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame (IACEHOF) and serve on its Strategic Planning Committee.

Countries and Learner Organizations With Whom I Have Worked

I have been fortunate to work in numerous countries, including Brazil, Germany, Peoples' Republic of China, South Africa, Canada, Slovenia, Egypt, Jordan, Cyprus, United Kingdom, Thailand, Hong Kong, Australia, and Italy. Groups I have worked with in various countries include university and college faculty, corporate AE, HRD, and health care professionals, correctional educators, municipal judges, community, church, and other religious leaders, public and private school teachers, and business and industry executives, just to name a few.

My work has enabled me to present on a number of topics, such as methods and techniques for helping adults learn, leadership, principles, theories, practices, and other aspects (i.e., history and future trends) of AE and HRD in the United States and the world. In addition, I have covered topics on program development marketing, curriculum theory and development, distance learning, Malcolm S. Knowles, lifelong learning, and andragogy. To see a more complete list, visit www.umsl.edu/~henschke.

One of the most interesting international projects in which I have been continuously involved is research and publication on the international foundation of the theory, research, and practice of andragogy. I launched this inquiry after Malcolm S. Knowles' death in 1997 to honor his legacy. To date, my colleague, Dr. Mary Cooper, and I have collaborated in this for eight years at this writing. Thus far we have identified more than 300 English language documents from the cultures and contexts of 30 countries. In addition, there are more than 200 doctoral dissertations and about 30 master's theses focused on this topic. The themes of andragogy's international foundation include evolution of the term; historical antecedents shaping the concept; comparing the American and European understandings of andragogy; popularizing and sustaining the American and worldwide concept of andragogy; practical applications of andragogy; and, theory, research, and definition of andragogy.

One iteration of this ongoing research (Cooper & Henschke, 2007) appears in the first textbook in the AE and HRD field, edited and published on the broad topic of comparative international adult education (King & Wang, 2007). They note that Cooper's and Henschke's chapter on andragogy "does not skirt the issues that have embroiled the concept and theory of andragogy. Instead, the controversy is presented full force and most valuably it is fully referenced and documented in order for the

readers to seek out the original literature firsthand" (p. 283). They further state it is a "robust contribution," "develops substantial insight," and provides a . . . "much needed perspective on the ongoing development of what many erroneously consider a static concept" (p. 6).

Lessons Learned

I have learned that adults learn quite the same everywhere around the world. The only difference I detect and have observed is how their learning relates to their context. Adult educators around the world are very generous and kind people who are interested in knowing and using everything they may find out about the benefits of how to help adults learn. International ventures have been some of the most exciting and learning-filled aspects of my career in AE and HRD. My involvement in international AE and HRD has motivated my increasing interest and research on andragogy—the art and science of helping adults learn. See my andragogy Web site, www.umsl.edu/~henschke/andragogy.htm, for more information.

If you desire involvement in international adult education, first, follow your inclinations. Second, with the ever-present Internet availability, do a "search" and learn from: a) The International Adult and Continuing Education Hall of Fame, b) Partners of the Americas, c) international adult education, d) international human resource development, and e) other related topics that come to mind. Third, consider the suggestions from each author in this issue. Fourth, think about the major theme of your work and how you may turn that interest into exploring and pursuing some work internationally. Fifth, make contact with those interested in international AE and HRD at the CIAE pre-conference that is held just prior to the annual AAACE Conference. Sixth, look up the CIAE and AAACE conference dates and location each year at www.aaace.org.

Using This in Your Setting

My encouragement to you is a number of things. Think how you may include international aspects of AE and HRD in your work. Glean from these articles one or two ideas you may like to try in your program. In the courses, seminars, workshops, etc., that you conduct, ask the participants to think and share about the international AE and HRD they may be interested in or of which they have heard.

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