

Editorial main title...

Contextualising ~~zation~~ of the struggle to improve Adult Education provision – global perspectives

Sharon Clancy (University of Nottingham)
Nalita James (University of Warwick)
George K. Zarifis (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki)

This issue of *Studies* highlights the importance of adult education and learning in a variety of locations and scenarios (from Africa, Asia, Europe, and Canada) that represent humanity's yearning for development and advancement. The topics interconnect, as do the numerous methodologies used by the writers to explore and contextually translate the many subtleties of a field that is still evolving. The intricacy of the classroom as a postcolonial interaction zone for example offers fresh knowledge to adult education research and the Gramscian concept of 'in and against'. Working in and against the classroom involves ideological conceptions of nation, race, ethnicity, gender, community, and identity. This governs anti-racist and decolonial teaching and classroom behavior. It affects unlearning and unlearning strategies. This is also intertwined in the battle to navigate neoliberal individualistic society with supposed individual responsibility for global, historical power structures (Mayo, 2009). Additionally, decolonial studies on the institutional and political prerequisites for popular educational participation and transnational cooperation are important. A continuing exploration of not only tensions and pitfalls in emancipatory adult education, but also the effects of embracing certain practices like personal development as not a goal in itself, but as a strategy to reach greater purposes of collective struggle for societal change ~~could be a suggestion for~~ **should be embedded in classroom interactions' social value**. This seems to be evident in adult literacy programmes and in particular for adult migrants and refugees. ~~Thus, the right to adult literacy is not only important for personal fulfilment, enhanced skill levels and social development, but is also a 'source for restoration and renewal'~~ (Benavot et al. 2022, p. 178).

Exploring new roles in new contexts, and linguistic challenges, ~~which Ellis & Shintani (2015) stress~~ are important for adult learning (Ellis & Shintani, 2015). Teaching ~~might can~~ also encourage students' language usage and meaning negotiation. ~~Due to students'~~ **Students can have** complicated motivations and abilities ~~to attend, so~~ pinpointing key attendance criteria ~~can be is~~ difficult (Wesely ~~Wesley~~ 2010). This may not be true though for older learners' desire to enter adult education and learning, where ontological stability and habitus have been criticized for their inability to adequately explain group and individual ~~behaviour~~ variations (Atkinson 2007, Nash 1990). ~~However~~ **Yet**, when combined, they describe older adults' learning motivations as neither deliberate nor programmed (Formosa 2019). Country studies on adult literacy and democratic principles show that basic, political, and functional literacy are mirrored in literacy policy content. However, as with gender discrimination, social inequities, and political mobility (Stites & Semali, 1991), adult literacy policy can only promote social progress and individual development when combined with other social policies. This necessitates rethinking mainstreaming adult literacy and societal collaboration (Kennedy, 2013), as well as the role of adult educators who must continue learning throughout their careers to meet national and institutional standards and student needs. ~~In this issue~~ **issue of Studies provides that opportunity to rethink and reflect, with some reports from papers from** Asia, Europe, and Africa, suggesting that pre-deployment orientation training for

Commented [GKZ1]: Suggestion. Feel free to change...

Commented [SC(2R1)]: Great title

Commented [JN3]: Not sure what is meant here - hope I have interpreted it correctly with my addition

Commented [SC(4R3)]: Really like the addition here

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Commented [SC(5)]: Sorry - it probably is Wesely! Ignore

Commented [SC(6)]: Are we using British spellings?

educators should be community and problem-based, to give them pragmatic experience with experiential education.

This need is further extrapolated through narrations of important chapters in the history of adult education. Beyond highlighting the value of comparative historical research, which is largely stressed in this issue with reference to the important yet underestimated significance of libraries as beacons of adult learning, several scholars have demonstrated this in studies of lifelong education policies and discourses during the 1950s (Hake, 2022) and the 1960s (Laot, 2010). This may also be reflected on by engaging with popular culture books that may make course-based learning more enjoyable and relevant. However, such education does not necessarily remove socio-material divides, eradicate inequality, or teach students to be critical in complex social contexts. According to Freire's (1998) idea of epistemological curiosity, education is merely a first step and may not be taken from classroom to real life; something that is also projected in the new ubiquitous learning paradigm that can conflict with coherence and freedom, yet it was pushed by the pandemic's distance education effects (Lockee & Clark-Stallkamp, 2022).

Commented [SC(7)]: Are you referring to online learning here?

Reflecting on the content of this multidimensional issue, Österborg Wiklund draws from a classroom research and interviews with facilitators and students on a traveling Folk High School course on global justice and development, which raises knowledge of colonial history and contemporary issues and calls for decolonization. Her study shows the complexities of criticizing global, structural, and institutional circumstances while using the same requirements to teach. It reveals how working in and against the classroom, as represented from-by the various intersectional places of the students and facilitators, involves resisting global and institutional material orders, dominant hegemonic knowledge, and a gendered, classed, and raced classroom. Wedin's article similarly examines speech production in two Swedish immigrant classrooms (SFI). Sociocultural views on language and education and language as multiple and dynamic resources underpin her study where students negotiated meaning and had space to attempt different speaker roles and speaking behaviors, such as starting, agreeing, disputing, debating, interrupting, and taking the floor. In a different take of the matter, Carter underlines absenteeism and attrition in government-funded adult ESL programmes with lower success rates. In this study, the author identifies institutional variables that reduce adult Hispanic ESL students' attendance. In a similar context Bouttell focuses on discourse analysis of policy papers from England and Scotland that expressly cover adult education, especially language acquisition, in a paper that advocates for an explicit policy for adult learning for refugees and asylum seekers, informal learning in policy, and future research in adult learning and migration.

Commented [SC(8)]: Demands?

Another interesting addition to this issue emphasizes the need for the humanistic and the critical in older adult education. Based on interviews from older learners at the Lebanon University of the Third Age (U3A) that were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, Hachem underscores that the U3A's reflexive and socially determined reasons for joining are beyond complex. Thus, a restatement of educational gerontology principles would help us understand how socialization and individual agency shape learning in older age. In the same context, Pihlainen's study examines why retired seniors learn digital skills. In a multiple case design in Austria, Finland, and Germany, the study found personal, social, and technical reasons for digital skills training.

In a socio-historical approach to adult literacy policy in China, Chen reports that the focus is shifted from political ideology, economic growth, personal development to a mixture of the three currently, although the policy influence is declining after 2011. In Fernández Corbacho's study,

we are provided with a systematic approach of the many conceptualizations of European civic and democratic principles used in mobility schemes. This research analyses qualitative data from EU mobility programmes that promote European civic awareness and democratic principles among adult participants in a Spanish region. Qualitative Comparative Analysis is used to compile, extract, and process project information. The co-existence of a few specific proposals for deliberate educational intervention to promote democracy and European citizenship abroad and the prevailing stance that values are spontaneously acquired through participation in transnational learning activities to develop communicative, intercultural, and digital skills is highlighted. Ngo's phenomenological approach to EFL teachers' requirements in the Vietnamese context indicates the need for content-focused, ongoing, collaborative, and career-stage-specific professional development (PD). The study further illuminates crucial considerations for academic management and PD planners when organizing, and conducting relevant activities. Along the same line, Sumani explores the various experiential education methods that educators use to contextualize farmers' learning and adoption of innovative farming practices in Uganda. The study shows how experiential educational approaches can be used to provoke farmers' critical reflection by connecting and correlating past experiences to current scenarios for effective learning and adoption of innovative farming practices. An analogous case study by Abate evaluates Ethiopia's integrated functional adult education (IFAE) program. This study found little synergy between policy initiatives and practice due to contextual factors, but also because of inadequate resources, lack of relevant curriculum contents, inappropriate teaching/facilitation process, and lack of clear responsibility and accountability system.

Adopting a micro-historical perspective McLean describes the demise of the Centre for Adult Education and Community Development at Laval University. The Centre that thrived in the 1950s created a humanist approach to adult education and worked intensively with co-operatives, unions, adult educators, community leaders, broadcasters, young farmers, and Catholic social agencies, was disbanded in 1964 and was removed from institutional history. This historical case study of a significant francophone adult education institution prompts thought on the alignment of adult educational philosophies, techniques, and programs, as well as often-unpleasant concerns about the life cycle of organizations and programs.

With self-reflective spirit Jubas discusses critical pedagogy, university-based professional education, and popular culture in adult education, based on personal experience with helping adult students become ethical, responsible, and reflective adults. Along a similar line, Fombona examines in the context of an international project, the application of innovative methodologies for adult training in a number of adult education providers in Poland, Spain, Finland, and Italy. The findings emphasize the relevance of the educational scenarios, developing new personal and social skills, a flexible, customized, and attractive teaching scope, and practical learning. Sapargaliyeva's study concludes this volume with a focus on the social and economic conditions that affect educational psychologists' professional training as helping professionals in Kazakhstan. This study uses quantitative and information-analytical methodologies to examine how to improve educational psychologists' professional training.

+++++++ concluding paragraph needed perhaps [here?](#)

Commented [JN9]: Hope this is a good start. Needs a bit more ?

There is a complex interplay between policy and practice in relation to adult education .Teaching is considered the heart of the learning process, especially in adult education, yet as many of these papers identify, pedagogy and practice can be at odds with both social and economic policies and institutional arrangements often leading to significant under-investment in adult teaching resource or professional development. What these papers also demonstrate are the ways in which local contexts of community, culture, knowledge practice and language need to be embedded into adult learning and education programmes, as it is these contexts that individuals, whether older adults, migrants or indigenous populations, must navigate. This reinforces the benefits of adult education programmes: experiential, flexible, integrative, engaged, individualised, and sustainable.

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman

Formatted: Font: Times New Roman

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 12 pt

Commented [SC10]: Excellent - I have nothing to add here 😊

References

Atkinson, W. (2007). Anthony Giddens as adversary of class analysis. *Sociology*, 41 (3), 533–549.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/0038038507076622>

Benavot, A., Hoppers, C.O. Lockhart, A.S., and Hinzen, H.(2022).

Reimagining adult education and lifelong learning for all: Historical and critical perspectives. *International Review of Education* (2022) 68:165–194 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11159-022-09955-9>

Ellis, R. & Shintani, N. (2015). *Exploring language pedagogy through second language acquisition research*. Routledge.

Formosa, M., (2019). *The university of the third age and active ageing: European and Asian-Pacific perspectives*. Springer.

Freire, P. (1998). *Pedagogy of freedom: ethics, democracy, and civic courage*. P. Clarke, trans. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Hake, B. (2022). Education permanente in post-war France, 1945–1960: Circulatory regimes and policy repertoires, *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 54 (1), 4-24.

Kennedy, R. (2013). The role of supranational identity in promoting democratic values. *European Union Politics*, 14 (2), 228–249. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1465116512466604>

Laot, F. (2010). Adult learners in France in the 1960s: a socio- historical approach to ‘the relationship to knowledge’. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 29 (6), 665-677.

Lockee, B.B., and Clark-Stallkamp, R. (2022). Pressure on the system: increasing flexible learning through distance education. *Distance Education*. 43(2), 342-348.

<https://10.1080/01587919.2022.2064829>.

Mayo, P. (2005). "In and against the state" : Gramsci, war of position, and adult education. *Journal of Critical Education Policy Studies*, 3(2), 66-90.

Nash, R. (1990). Bourdieu on education and social and cultural reproduction. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 11 (4), 431–447. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142569900110405>

Stites, R. & Semali, L. (1991). Adult literacy for social equality or economic growth? Changing agendas for mass literacy in China and Tanzania. *Comparative Education Review*, 35(1), 44-75.

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 11 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 11 pt

Formatted: Font: 11 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 11 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 11 pt, Italic

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, First line: 0 cm

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 11 pt

Formatted: Font: 11 pt

Formatted: Font: (Default) Times New Roman, 11 pt

Formatted: Font: 11 pt

Wesely, P. M. (2010). Student attrition from traditional and immersion foreign language programs. *Language and Linguistics Compass*, 4 (9), 804–817. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-818X.2010.00241.x>

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0 cm, First line: 0 cm