

**Book Review**

# Disrupting Adult and Community Education: Teaching, Learning, and Working in the Periphery

Mizzi, R. C., Rocco, T. S., Shore, S. (Eds.)  
Albany: State University of New York Press, 2016

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*Disrupting Adult and Community Education* is an edited book that aims to challenge the dominant assumptions of how educators and researchers view adult and community education. This publication straddles between the theoretical and the practical very well, while advocating for the disruption of the current state of adult education. Noted by the editors, the purpose of this book is “to examine how people as educators, researchers, and learners take up opportunities for teaching and learning individually and collectively as they are simultaneously positioned by decisions and forces that place them, and the people with whom they work, on the periphery of social and economic decision making” (p. 2). To accomplish this goal, the editors intentionally divide the book into four sections. The editors and contributors of this publication successfully allow for readers to feel discomfort, as they disrupt our preconceived notions of what it means to practice adult and community education. Inherently, the authors argue “that while much of the world has changed, enduring patterns of marginality and oppression of sensibilities in quite diverse corners of the globe persist” (p. 6), which proves to be a primary motivation for the book.

Contributions in Section One, *Rethinking Locations of Adult Education Practice*, focus on those who find themselves in the periphery of educational policy, procedure, and curriculum, contributors in this section of the book force readers to redefine how they view the periphery and what that means for their practices. Andre Grace (p. 17) and Naomi Nichols (p. 35) analyze how Neoliberal economics affects LGBTQ and “youth-at-risk” respectively. Joshua Collins, Lincoln Pettaway, Chaundra Whitehead, and Steve Rios (p. 51), using a Foucauldian lens, address how incarcerated people with HIV/AIDS in the United States and Jamaica have their community learning opportunities affected by intimidation techniques within the prison system and how those have changed over time (p. 51). Shannon Deer and Dominique Chulup (p. 65) examine how sex work as an occupation is “constituted as marginality to suit the institutional convenience of education theorists” (p. 7). Finally, Hilary Landorf and Eric Feldman (p. 83) look at study abroad programs, international students, and the notion of “global citizenship” while “paying attention to the nature of knowledge and positionality inherent in such programs” (p. 6). It is important to note how all of these contributors drew on a variety of marginalized populations and how in both formal, and informal settings, the current state of adult education continues to perpetuate their oppression and marginalization.

In Section Two, *Educator's Work with Peripheral Spaces of Engagement*, contributors within this section focus on redefining preconceived notions about what we consider to be the "periphery" and how we can use the experiences of those in this social location to change our understandings of the periphery. Robert Mizzi, Robert Hill, and Kim Vance, "argue the need to interrogate the dominance of formal schooling and other western inventions that refuse to acknowledge sexual and gender minority knowledge" (p. 8). Politics of Liberation is a theme that spreads wide and far across this book in the discussions surrounding the periphery that we will see more of shortly. Shuchi Karim continues to address those on "the edge," by investigating women with disabilities in Bangladesh, and their invisibility when it comes to education, employment opportunities and citizenship in the country (pp. 8-9). Carlos Albornoz and Tonette Rocco, look at the "impact on local places where the transnational power and resources of corporations are not shared with countries, or local citizens create conditions where localized forms of microenterprise are increasingly threatened" (p. 9). Matthew Campbell and Michael Christie's chapter outlines the interconnecting workspaces of Australia's national training system in which they argue it is the generative process of "delivery" that they navigate tensions both ways teaching as an espoused pedagogy work for Aboriginal learners, teachers, and youth (p. 9).

Finally, Sue Shore's chapter illustrates the possibilities and limits of preparing vocational educators for living in these racialized worlds by invoking a contrapuntal pedagogy that prompts educators to re-read their racialized histories through the lens of contemporary studies of whiteness and privilege (p. 10). Through identifying a variety of spaces within adult education, contributors to this section continue to shine a light not only on populations but also marginalized areas.

In Section Three, *Immigrant Experiences of Work and Learning in the New World Order*, the politics of liberation continue to be a driving force within section three. Contributors to this section, expand on the perspectives of immigrant workers and their attempts to utilize education as a credentialization tool to achieve new world success in the neoliberal age. Susan Brigham draws on the history of Canada and Jamaica and the challenges that face undocumented Jamaican workers in Canada. These workers are underrepresented in literature, and their precarious and unique situation makes these workers all the more important to discuss. Aziz Choudry, continuing with absences in the literature, argues that social movement activist and scholars alike have downplayed incidental learning and informal education in activist miles (p. 10). Shibao Gao draws on the "Triple Glass Effect" or the three barriers that are common to the process of integration of qualifications: The Glass Door, The Glass Gate, and the Glass Ceiling (pp. 222-223). The Triple Glass Effect is a straightforward and articulate way to portray the struggles of immigrants in the workforce.

Finally, Fabiana Brunetta and Thomas Reio argue that workplace incivility obscures deep-seated behaviors that foster conditions of aggression, blame, and harm in a place of work, in particular against immigrant workers (p. 10). Since most often we see adult education associated with "for work" programs, section three illuminates the issues that marginalized groups face regarding wage jobs and credentialization.

Section Four, *Transnational Adult Education and Global Engagement*, contributors in this section concentrate on the importance of recognizing neoliberal globalization and how it shapes our understanding of adult education in a non-western context. Peter and Marilyn Kell draw attention between liberal views about education and the economic priorities of industry and business activated during the Sputnik crisis of 1950s America (p. 11). Bob Boughton offers a

critical view of the internal elision of knowledge associated with the field of adult education by drawing on the Cuban Literacy Campaign under Fidel Castro and Ernesto “Che” Guevara in the early 1960s as one of the most successful popular education campaigns of the 20th Century while arguing that increasing professionalization and specialization in the field has instantiated a periphery by arguing of the decline in socialist movement activism over recent times (p. 12).

Mark Weber and Michael Brown further support the need for historical and intergenerational perspectives on learning about anti-racism. Weber and Brown note the importance of paying “considerable attention to family matters,” including issues of intergenerational transmission of experience, framing, and interpretation” when teaching awareness about the Holocaust (p. 285). All of the contributors to this section articulated the importance of transnational learning in very different and complex contexts. Section four contributors connected the current state of neoliberalism within a transglobal, adult education context allowing readers to view this trend outside of a national context like we were witness to in the first two sections of this book.

In the final chapter of the book, the editors offer three provocations for educators and researchers who aim to continue the work of disrupting the normative ontologies of periphery as ever deficit (p. 12). They “draw attention to structures of ‘feeling’ that have played such an important role in shaping adult education as a field, a professional discipline, and a social movement (p. 12). The editors end off the publication with three provocations, to sum up, the discussions that happened in the book. Their first provocation “challenges researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to ask how governing texts, the ‘boss texts’ of our field re-anchor contemporary adult education in the problematic development roots identified by Youngman (2000)” (p. 314).

The second provocation posits that “adult education is inescapably caught up in Western notions of children” (p. 315). Finally, the third provocation stated is that “the importance of a particular kind of reflexivity—an inner pause—not intended to paralyze, but rather a pause that activates a new relationship to the theory building for a social transformation in increasingly conservative times” (p. 315). These provocations help to enlist a call to action that the editors have towards the readers of this publication—in hopes of disrupting adult education to the point of social change.

Overall, this publication did much to disrupt my notions of ontology and who I considered being on the periphery. It was valuable to have many contributors from different contexts to illustrate how the current state of adult education is disrupted throughout the world. However, it was difficult to make connections between some of the contributions and my context and research. I appreciated the three provocations that concluded the publication. They summed up the book nicely, and leave readers with a sense of agency with a call to action of sorts, to take these provocations back to our disciplines and continue to work to disrupt adult education as we know it. I would highly recommend this publication to any colleagues within the field of Adult Education.

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