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Book Review #2

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Title: Adult Learning: Linking theory and Practice

Author: Sharan B. Merriam & Laura L. Bierema

Publisher: Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, CA, 2014

ISBN: 978-1-118-13057-5

Pages: 302

Price: CDN\$ 57.58 (<https://www.amazon.ca/Adult-Learning-Linking-Theory-Practice/dp/111813057X>)

Overall rating: Excellent

Audience:

- Students in adult education and human resource development programs in the United States and Canada.
- Graduate students in professional preparation programs whose work may involve the education and training of adults.
- Students in undergraduate and graduate programs in other countries.

Summary:

This book first presents the present context of adult learning and the five specific theories of learning; behaviorism, humanism, cognitivism, social cognitivism, and constructivism. According to the authors, these theories are the foundations that led to the understanding of adult learning. Subsequently, three chapters are devoted to the specific theories of adult learning. They describe the concepts of andragogy, self-directed learning and transformative learning. In the next four chapters, the authors explore several dimensions essential to understand adult learning; experience and learning, body and mind related to learning, motivation and brain and cognitive functions. At the end of the book, three chapters explain in detail the importance of learning context. They include learning related to the ubiquity of technology in our lives, concepts of critical thinking and critical perspectives and finally the last chapter considers how culture and context influence learning.

Strengths:

This book is an excellent introduction to adult learning theory. The authors explain complex concepts in a clear and accessible language. They present important informations and avoid unnecessary details. This book can be read entirely or in part depending on reader's needs. In addition, although the book is written in a logical sequence, the chapters can be read in any order. Also, the authors offer several suggestions of activities and resources to help reader in his own learning and in his teaching experiences. The link between theory and practice is very important in this book. Finally, at the end of each chapter there is a summary and important points to remember.

Weaknesses:

I didn't find many weaknesses in this book as it totally met my expectations and it was tailored to my level of knowledge. However, for a more advanced reader in the field of adult learning, I don't think this book is the most relevant. Indeed, theories related to adult learning are not explained in depth, which is not appropriate for someone who wishes to increase his knowledge on this subject.

Recommendation:

I would highly recommend this book for anyone interested in adult learning and want to have a good overview of this subject.