

Reviews / Comptes rendus

The Role of Time Consciousness in Lifelong Learning: A Theoretical Framework for Adult Education

by Keith W. Krasemann (Queenston, ON: The Edwin Mellen Press, 2006, 225 pages)

Time, like the journey through adulthood, is experienced personally, individually, and collectively. Subsequently, our understanding of time and adulthood is constructed out of these experiences. Time is cited as a gift, a teacher, a healer, an arrow, a river, a passage. Adulthood metaphors, typically situated along the continuum of time, refer to a journey, chapter, season, stage, and a pathway of awakening and cultivation. Clearly, there is an intimate interplay and relationship between time and adulthood metaphors. Both refer to a sequencing of events and experiences, to intervals between something and another, to years gone by, and to that which is anticipated and yet to come. Indeed, there are powerful and pervasive metaphors to reference time and adulthood; yet, crisp and congruent definitions of either continue to elude us. Regardless, held notions, beliefs, and experiences of time and adulthood continue to inform adult education theory and practice. Although we have developed metaphors and mechanisms to reference, chart, monitor, and measure time, what do we actually compare time to? How is time explained? These are some of the questions that inform Krasemann's metaphorical analysis of time and adulthood.

The Role of Time Consciousness in Lifelong Learning is an intelligent and thought-provoking text that seeks to "weave together aspects of time, adulthood and metaphor in adult education" (p. v). Krasemann begins by challenging adult educators in the Eurocentric world to revisit and rethink conventional, tightly held notions of time; he maintains that by responding to this challenge, there is potential to co-creatively understand time more intelligently and critically. Krasemann's metaphysical exploration of time seeks to challenge competing myths and visions, boundaries, principles, and practices of adult education that guide contemporary adult education praxis. Only in this way, according to Krasemann, will the boundaries of adult education be transcended and transformed.

Citing the challenge of formulating a distinctive philosophy of adult education, coupled with a radically shifting landscape that characterizes the realities of the adult world, Krasemann addresses two critical problems by conducting a phenomenological exploration of time consciousness. First, is it possible to have a distinctive philosophy of adult education? And second, how can adult education help individuals and institutions understand and deal effectively with the high-speed and radical changes that now characterize the dynamic structures of the adult world?

Drawing from the philosophical views of Kant, Husserl, Heidegger, and Sartre, Krasemann maintains that "a phenomenology of time and consciousness goes to the heart of the dynamic structuring and ordering principles of the adult world and of individual lives within that world" (p. 50), arguing that phenomenology resides at the core of the lived and experienced world of the adult. Advocating for a shift in temporal perspectives about time, four master metaphors are presented: 1) time represented as number; 2) time represented as space; 3) time represented as activity; and, 4) time represented as *telos*. Temporality, then, is the underlying metaphor that unites all of these. Concerned that "most adult development researchers uncritically accept time metaphored numerically as the dominant (or only) correct conception of time" (p. 152), Krasemann encourages venturing beyond a numerical understanding and approach to time, in support of a being-becoming-belonging adult education philosophy and practice. Only in this way, according to Krasemann, can adult educators help people to transition through this time of turbulent and continuous change. This analysis of time consciousness concludes with a proposed critical and creative framework for rethinking some important issues in adult education and lifelong learning.

I appreciated Krasemann's inclusive acknowledgement and process that were evident throughout this study. Specifically, the important work of some key pioneers and contemporary adult educators were cited, namely, Brookfield, Dewey, Elias and Merriam, Freire, Jarvis, Lindemann, and Merriam, to name a few. Krasemann recognized the significant contributions of his colleagues and sought to add to the discourse by extending and deepening our understanding of time, time consciousness, and the positioning of adult education within this context.

I was curious as to why, in spite of having been published three years ago (in 2006), I was unable to locate any reviews of Krasemann's text. Having the potential for broad appeal and readership, this deep exploration of time consciousness was certainly deserving of a more timely review. Intending no slight to Krasemann, I recalled more recent scholarly contributions on adult education, not available when this work was published. Specifically, Field and Malcolm (2007) elaborated on the role of historical and generational time and "the place of different kinds of learning...in the various phases of people's lives" (p. 68). Merriam and Brockett (2007) added to the discourse and referred to online technologies and virtual worlds having blurred our understanding, concepts, and boundaries of geography, space, and time (p. xvi). Indeed, the rapidly shifting landscape continues to significantly impact adult education and adult learning, as well as contribute to the reframing of paradigms of how space and time are constructed and to how the lifelong learning needs and challenges of adults are regarded and responded to.

I look forward to future publications by Krasemann. I am also encouraged by his authentic invitation to engage in a deeper, cross-/inter-disciplinary discourse that extends beyond our tightly held Western world view(s) and agenda. Only in this way, might "establish[ing] a basis for critical cross-cultural understandings" (p. 195) be realized.

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REFERENCES

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- Merriam, S., & Brockett, R. (2007). *The profession and practice of adult education: An introduction*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.