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HANDBOOK OF

ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

EDITED BY  
CAROL HOARE

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Adult development and learning have always existed as two separate fields of study, with development falling under psychology and learning under education. Recent advances in theory, research, and practice, however, have made it clear that an important reciprocal relationship exists between them: advances in development frequently lead to learning, and, conversely, learning quite often fuels development. The synchronicity between development and learning is responsible for positive changes in many capacities, including insight, intelligence, reflective and meta-cognition, personality expression, interpersonal competence, and self-efficacy. This synchronicity is also leading to the growth of a new discipline at the borders of adult development and learning.

The HANDBOOK OF ADULT DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING is the first to bring together the leading scholars from both adult development and learning to explore what will form the foundation for this new discipline—the latest research at the intersection of these fields. It examines six major aspects of their intersection: foundations, key areas of integration, the self system, higher reaches of development and learning, essential contexts, and specific applications. An introductory chapter explains why it is so important to recognize and fuel the growth of this new discipline. Subsequent chapters review the latest theoretical and empirical literature and provide a rich itinerary for future research.

THIS HANDBOOK IS A MUST-READ FOR ALL WHO PROMOTE OPTIMAL AGING. IT WILL BE AN INVALUABLE REFERENCE FOR SCHOLARS IN DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION, AS WELL AS A RICH RESOURCE FOR POLICY MAKERS AND PRACTITIONERS, SUCH AS CORPORATE EXECUTIVES AND HUMAN-RESOURCE PERSONNEL.







# Handbook of Adult Development and Learning



HANDBOOK OF  
ADULT DEVELOPMENT  
AND LEARNING

*Edited by*  
Carol Hoare

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*To Jenny and Ray—  
Two wonderful children who are everything their Dad and I  
always thought they would be—and more.*

*In memory of my loving parents and grandparents—  
Mary Ann Matesevac Hren and Frank J. Hren,  
Mary Elizabeth Horvath Matesevac and Michael S. (Buddy) Matesevac,  
without whom . . .*



## Preface

---

The idea for this handbook began about 15 years ago when I started teaching concurrent graduate courses in adult development and adult learning. Rather quickly, material from one course bled into the other, and it soon became clear that it was artificial to consider adults in their development without including learning and equally artificial to treat adults as learners while suspending developmental attributes. At some point, I stopped trying to keep learning and development apart and integrated the two. As a result, this book came slowly into focus. In early 2003, Catharine Carlin of Oxford University Press encouraged me to consider editing a handbook on adult development, but then graciously acquiesced to a proposal for this integrated volume. Thus, the design of what is now in hand took root.

At the outset, I emphasize that the purpose of the volume is not to introduce a subfield in which one discipline is central and the other subordinate, but to begin what must become a conceptual integration of adult development and learning. Too quickly, the

human mind arranges material hierarchically in its mental file cabinet, and whether by preference or training, certain content and concepts become subordinate to others. That is not the intent of this text. Rather, the authors of this volume open the door to the possibility of a broader space in which many of the constructs we entertain separately—adult insight, intelligence, cognition, reflective thinking, interpersonal competence, self-efficacy, and others—are eventually known as a web in which development sponsors learning and learning fuels development.

The contributors to this volume offer rich theories, analyses, research reviews, practical applications, and conceptual itineraries. I roundly applaud their interest and sustained efforts. It is difficult to force one's thinking into boundaries, particularly when the intersecting disciplines are themselves rather young. Thus, each of us knows that an encyclopedic account of the many potential ways in which there is synchrony, or perhaps causal reciprocity, between learning and development is not yet possible. Yet we share a hardy

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conviction that adults grow and learn in unison. The internal and external contexts of adult life provide rich resources for learning and developmental change; although the great wealth of this territory is largely unexplored, we are pleased to risk stepping into its frontier.

Writing from different frames of reference and levels of analysis, each author considers the topical area of his or her considerable study. Clearly, the topics do not cover the complete landscape of adult development and learning. But together they do point toward a po-

tentially unified discipline of theory, inquiry, and practice. If this volume stimulates greater dialogue among those working within the respective disciplines of adult development and learning, it will prove useful. If it results in established, reciprocal connections between development and learning in adulthood and in synchronous theory, research, and practice in these currently dissociated disciplines, it will have been successful. We step briskly toward a future in which it is obvious that as we learn, so shall we develop, and as we develop, so are we better equipped to continually learn.

## Acknowledgments

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I am indebted to many persons who were vital in bringing this volume to completion. The few words I offer here are only a small tribute to their talents, work, and support. Without their commitment, this project would surely have faltered.

First, I thank each of the authors who contributed to this volume. Their contributions to thought are apparent in their individual histories of publication, research, and teaching, as well as in their chapters here. Some put aside their own work to write for this handbook, and I am most grateful. All were gracious in the revision process, some willingly rewriting several times to better address the juncture of development and learning.

Bridget Cooper was at my side from the beginning. I am deeply grateful to her. Her initiative, resourcefulness, and commitment made her much more than a research associate. Many were the times that she put aside work on her doctoral dissertation to advance the book's progress. Many were the times that her good humor kept me going. "Crazy is good,

but only in short spurts," is a Bridget-ism I will long remember. An enormously talented woman, she was a cherished friend throughout.

The anonymous reviewers who wish to remain unsung were extremely helpful to me and, I believe, to the contributing authors. Their careful reading of the chapters and their prompt feedback were unparalleled. Their gracious goodwill was an added bonus.

Diana Bermudez-Rodriguez helped me in the beginning phase of the project. I am grateful for her excellent work in ferreting out material and synthesizing research data. Diana's spirited good cheer and generosity of self infused the design phase.

Julie Nelson, entering the project near its completion, was a superior language editor, improving a number of chapters, including my own. Julie was highly competent and supportive. I value her many talents, as well as her grace and friendship.

My colleagues, too numerous to chronicle, were supportive throughout. Richard Lanthier, Honey Nashman, and Lynda West were always behind me,

x ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

cheering the project on. I have the good fortune of working in a program in which faculty and staff members alike care about each other. For me, this is an unprecedented experience.

At Oxford University Press, Catharine Carlin, a fine editor, was a resource from the volume's design phase to its publication. Her competence and interest were invaluable. Jennifer Rappaport was of great assistance in resolving a number of issues. Throughout, I appreciated her prompt responses to my questions. Across the board, the editorial staff has shown me once again that they are the very best in their line of work.

George Hoare III led me to Oxford University Press some time ago. I will always appreciate his generous goodwill and his insight into the publishing world.

I would have lost perspective without the humorous barbs of my daughter Jenny. Her love and caring

bolstered a sometimes lonely endeavor. I could not have brought the book to a timely completion without the computer expertise of my son Ray. His love and goodness were always with me. Charlie Lindsey and Shelley Hoare, children by marriage, put up with me throughout. Wonderful persons who I am privileged to know and love, they gave unique insights—serious and funny, thoughtful and witty. Five beautiful grandchildren, Wyatt, Julia, Ashlyn, Alex, and Rachel—teachers all—give joy to my life. As always, I could not have done without the love, commitment, and advice of my dear husband, Ray. An inspiration in his own field, he is the wind beneath my wings in all that I do.

Finally, I thank those at The George Washington University who granted my sabbatical leave to work on this book. Without the benefit of concentrated time, this project would have taken far longer to complete.

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Part I

Foundations



## Chapter 1

# Growing a Discipline at the Borders of Thought

*Carol Hoare*

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This handbook addresses a new question in asking how development and learning in adulthood are interrelated and reciprocal. That is, how might learning augment different forms of development, and how does qualitative, positive developmental change result in enhanced learning? This dual question does not imply universality, and it is not without risk. With respect to the absence of universality, adults do not develop uniformly in areas such as cognition, social relationships, and insight development. Some adults make greater excursions in their learning than others. As to risk, the joining of learning and development in adulthood may well be housed in a middle-class concept, one with connotations of resource-rich environments and of subjects' opportunities for and interests in adaptation, development, and learning. There is further risk in charting associations that are positive, sometimes skirting the bidirectionality of development in its positives and negatives, growth and decline. Although this volume's authors do not avoid the declines, our primary emphasis is on how one

force (development or learning) propels the other toward positive advances. This is in line with scholars who chart a terrain of "human strengths" (Aspinwall & Staudinger, 2003), those who ask how development can advance well-being and optimal aging (Baltes & Baltes, 1993; Bornstein, Davidson, Keyes, & Moore, 2003; Rowe & Kahn, 1987, 1998).

Furthermore, each of us writing in this handbook understands that the study of adult development itself is young. Using the *Psychological Abstracts* as an indicator, it was only in 1978 that *adult development* was first used as a subject heading. It is only within the past decade that scholars began seriously to consider how learning might be integral to development in adults. Indeed, adult development and adult learning have been the territory of two very different and non-integrated subfields (Cranott, 1998). This is partly because adult development is housed in psychological theory and research, whereas adult learning exists within the disciplines of educational psychology and adult education. Just as Smith and Pourchot (1998)

found for adult education and educational psychology, in the joint area of adult development and learning there are no shared professional societies, associations, or journals. Vehicles for discourse are thus lacking. A blend of interests in an area that is necessarily reciprocal will have to emerge from theorists and researchers who are willing to cross from one comparatively safe discipline and professional background into a hybrid area in which there has been limited attention, rather few data-based studies, and, until recently, little apparent interest.

#### THE NEGLECT OF CONCEPTS OF ADULT DEVELOPMENT

Before examining reasons for a future in which adult development and learning are seen as integral, we might look to reasons for this neglect. There are four key reasons for this neglect, all of which are apparent during much of the twentieth century. I have described these in some detail in a recent book (Hoare, 2002) and credit Erik Erikson's unpublished papers for many important insights.

First, prior to the twentieth century, psychologists had conceived of adulthood as a barren terrain for development. Freud was important in this, for he maintained that psychosexual development ends with entry into adulthood. Freud also led thinking along a path of developmental negatives. As Erikson said, using Freud's thought, all one might expect of healthy adults was the relative absence of the overriding id drives of infancy and of the guilt, fixations, and repressions of childhood. Thus, expectations for adult behavior were expressed in negatives, in terms of what adults should not be and do. By expressing development in terms of absence, scholars had failed to examine what adults *are* in their positive development and in their ongoing developmental potentials.

The second reason for inattention to development during maturity is found in earlier representations of adults. In addition to Freud's position that adulthood shows developmental absence, children of earlier times were seen as miniature adults. This led to a view of adults as completed products of their prior selves. In the twentieth century, social scientists no longer portrayed children in this way; however, until recently, adult attributes and achievements were constructed as though they exist on extension from childhood. In this "rubber band" fallacy (Hoare, 2002),

that of conceiving of developmental continuity as though a giant rubber band stretches between infancy and senescence, developmental traits and abilities are seen as fixed, albeit rudimentarily, at the band's beginning point. Theorists might have stretched that band out, but it always snapped back, in scholars' minds, to origins and developmental givens in infancy and early childhood. Today, this applies to many concepts of cognition and cognitive development, intelligence, mental maturity, social relationships, self-representations, and other constructs.

Although scholars posed a trajectory of increasing competence into maturity, that of the ways in which the adult is stronger, better, and more accomplished than the child, development was seen as origin-based. Experts were largely disinclined to consider adulthood as partly *sui generis*, that is, as a period of life that has its own unique content, abilities, and representations. Learning has been considered similarly. Until recently, scant attention has been paid to learning in daily environments and in work and personal roles of adults when thinking and learning are tied to contexts, problems, and change, and are bound up with values and emotions. Adult cognition, based on the development of reflective, dialectical, and relativistic thinking, has enjoyed somewhat more attention, due, in part, to William Perry's (1970) important contributions about the content and stages of intellectual development among college students (e.g., Baltes & Staudinger, 1993; Commons, Sinnott, Richards, & Armon, 1984; Kitchener & King, 1981, 1994; Kramer & Woodruff, 1986; Labouvie-Vief, 1992, 1994; Labouvie-Vief, Chiodo, Goguen, Diehl, & Orwoll, 1995). Much more research is needed and has begun. We now approach questions ecologically, looking, for example, not so much to psychometric intelligence but to adults' practical intelligence in their approach to various everyday experiences and problems (Schaie & Zanjani, chapter 5, this volume; Sternberg et al., 2000). We ask how discovery learning in adulthood leads to the development of new insights and fresh opportunities for growth (Merriam & Clark, chapter 2, this volume; Miller, chapter 10, this volume).

The third important facet in the earlier neglect of adult development resides in the prior inability to conceive of adulthood in other than a linear order and in terms of marker events. In this chronology dependence, adult development has been locked to the beginning and ending points of adulthood and adult periods, to the passing of time, and to sequence-

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