

Julia Preece

Lifelong Learning and Development

A Southern Perspective



CONTINUUM STUDIES IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

Lifelong Learning and Development

Also available in the Continuum Studies in Educational Research Series:

Education in Hegel – Nigel Tubbs

Childhood and the Philosophy of Education – Andrew Stables

Rethinking Citizenship Education – Tristan McCowan

Citizenship Education in Japan – Norio Ikeno

Learning Communities and Imagined Social Capital – Jocey Quinn

Children's Lives, Children's Futures – Paul Croll

Teaching Creativity – Derek Pigrum

Lifelong Learning and Development

A Southern Perspective

Julia Preece

Continuum Studies
in Educational Research



Continuum International Publishing Group

The Tower Building	80 Maiden Lane
11 York Road	Suite 704
London, SE1 7NX	New York, NY 10038

www.continuumbooks.com

© Julia Preece 2009

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publishers.

Julia Preece has asserted her right under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be identified as Author of this work.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN: 9781847062918 (hardcover)

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Preece, Julia.

Lifelong learning and development: a southern perspective/Julia Preece.

p. cm. – (Continuum studies in educational research)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-84706-291-8 (hardcover)

ISBN 978-1-4411-4334-1 (e-book)

1. Adult education–Economic aspects–Developing countries.
2. Adult education–Economic aspects–Southern Hemisphere.
3. Continuing education–Economic aspects–Developing countries.
4. Continuing education–Economic aspects–Southern Hemisphere. I. Title. II. Series.

LC5261.P74 2009

338.4'337491724–dc21

2009003133

Typeset by Newgen Imaging Systems Pvt Ltd, Chennai, India
Printed and bound in Great Britain by

I dedicate this book to my father Peter Preece. He probably
does not agree with one word of what I have written but
it is partly thanks to him that I made my first journey to
Africa some ten years ago, a continent that
has captured my heart.

This page intentionally left blank

Contents

<i>Foreword</i>	ix
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xv
1. Introduction	1
2. Postcolonial perspectives	17
3. Historical and philosophical foundations for lifelong learning: perspectives from the South	33
4. Development and lifelong learning	50
5. Globalization – implications for lifelong learning in the South	67
6. Lifelong learning in the South in the digital age	84
7. Feminist perspectives on lifelong learning	101
8. Case studies – Pakistan and India	117
9. Case studies – Tanzania and Lesotho	135
10. Lifelong learning and development – moving forward	153
<i>Notes</i>	164
<i>References</i>	165
<i>Index</i>	179

This page intentionally left blank

Foreword

In his recent publication *Gentle Action: Bringing Creative Change to a Turbulent World*, physicist and philosopher David Peat (2008) puts a powerful but compelling case for gentle action as a more effective, non-invasive way of bringing about positive, engaged and sustainable change. Peat also highlights the many cases in which rigidity and failure to understand complexities have resulted in disastrous results from well-meaning interventions from local to international levels.

This book on Lifelong Learning and Development evokes a similar case for engaged social action without any pretensions to providing ultimate solutions. Throughout the book, Julia Preece holds our hands and walks us carefully through a complex array of standpoints: globalization, postcolonial theory, African Renaissance, regional and international development protocols, gender and feminist perspectives, African indigenous philosophies and values, a critique of development, open and distance learning . . . All in an effort to take us into the inside of a case she is determined to make . . . which is a case for the social purpose of lifelong learning.

The book acknowledges that lifelong learning is not an easy topic, and has, in many instances been quite an elusive one. Paradigmatic shifts and switches between education and learning have often occurred when many countries in the global South are still locked in higher and more complex battles with the highly invasive, and still overwhelming presence of the western paradigm that continues to determine the apparatus for value-coding in every capillary of their lives. Somewhere between the tensions in citizenship as civic knowledge for electoral purposes, and effective, lived capability to propose and demand action lies the critical intellect of this author who presents us with this theoretical and conceptual critique of the core discourses surrounding and shaping the lifelong learning discourse.

Doing this from the perspective of the global South no doubt posits its own challenges at this point in time. In generational terms, the twenty-first century is one in which the voice of human agency is emerging from the

margins, forcing into the mainstream both critical and constructive perspectives that are facilitating the gradual transformation of ethos, ethics and practices. Strong development perspectives on the relationship between the North and the South, between mainstream science systems and the suppressed 'others', and a distinct tone of defiance and impatience begins to ring out at the default drive in contemporary practices that endorsed indifference as its core philosophy.

In many parts of the global South, there is an emerging realization that new directions in the philosophy and sociology of development, of science, and of intellectual practice today are emerging, not from the academia but from questions raised by grassroots movements, making knowledge an intrinsic part of democratic politics. It is within these emergent perspectives that propositions for indigenous directed partnerships, an integrative paradigm shift, and renegotiation of human agency are being articulated (see Odora Hoppers 2008, Fatmowna and Pickett 2002, Prakash 1995).

This cannot make it easy for an academic whose blood identity is not from Africa or the global South. The question then becomes, how does a human being with a different origin enter an arena of evident marginalization and participate fully in the project of human emancipation? To me, the answer lies in Martin Luther King Jr's assertions that change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through struggle. Human progress is neither automatic nor inevitable. Every step towards the goals of justice requires sacrifice and struggle, tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals. It is here that we find Preece's dedicated commitment to stand on the side of the dispossessed, the subaltern, and from there, invest in this profound exploration around the question of life-long learning and development at this point in time.

She of course recognizes the impact that colonization and the inherent violence of dispossession have had on people's identities, cultures and life experiences. But what she does is to posit this understanding against the complexities of institutional structures, textual representations and power relations that are responsible for reproducing that vicarious domination, and that works to consistently make its true cruelty appear as benevolence under the rubric and pretensions of 'development'. How then can indigenous values, ways of knowing and seeing enter into the play in a manner that can influence the contemporary moment?

The answer to this lies in undertaking a comprehensive and multifaceted exploration in which both the structural and the personal, the philosophical and the pragmatic can be tossed into one stage, and made naked so that the citizen can at last begin to understand their true dimensions. It is only

when this mask is removed that authentic contemplation of the possibilities can be undertaken.

Postcolonialism then becomes more than post-structuralism. It is simultaneously a political philosophy and a strategic project of re-historicizing the lived worlds of the dispossessed millions and insertion of new texts, registers and discourses. In Julia Preece's ever conscientious and optimistic eyes, contemporary positions are neither monolithic nor static. They are fluid and ever changing. The challenge for lifelong learning in the global South, is for it to not only recognize the degree to which education systems in the former colonies are still dominated by ideologies, curricular orientations, pedagogies and policies that are compliant with the colonial Metropole but also to undertake systematic efforts to dislodge this default drive.

As she has stated, citing Audre Lorde: The master's tools can never dismantle the master's house. In this book, she has definitely made her choice. Revitalization of the mind requires a revitalization of language as the pathway to revitalizing thought and contributing to the ecology of mind in a different dispensation. This book on lifelong learning and development is an exercise in precisely this!

Catherine Odora Hoppers

References

- Fatnowna, S. and Pickett, H. (2002), 'The place of indigenous knowledge systems in the post-postmodern integrative paradigm shift', in Odora Hoppers, C. (ed.), *Indigenous Knowledge and the Integration of Knowledge Systems: Towards a Philosophy of Articulation*. Claremont: New African Books Ltd., pp. 209–236.
- Odora Hoppers, C. A. (2008), *Education, Culture and Society in a Globalizing World: Implications for Comparative and International Education*. Keynote address at the British Association for International and Comparative Education annual conference on Internationalisation in Education: Culture, Context and Difference. Kelvin Conference Centre, University of Glasgow. 4–6 September 2008.
- Peat, D. (2008), *Gentle Action: Bringing Creative Change to a Turbulent World*. Pari: Pari Publications.
- Prakash, G. (1995), 'Introduction: after colonialism', in Prakash, G. (ed.), *After Colonialism. Imperial Histories and Post-Colonial Displacements*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, pp. 3–20.

This page intentionally left blank

Preface

My motive for writing this book derives from several different sources. In 2003 Maria Torres wrote a powerful critique of the way lifelong learning appears to be promoted as an educational discourse for the 'North' (those advanced industrialized countries that are commonly characterized as OECD countries) while the educational discourse for the 'South' (those formerly colonized countries that are at the bottom of World Bank development index league tables)¹ is largely confined to basic education. The second stimulus came from my reading of a text from the Southern African Development Community's Technical Committee on Lifelong Education and Training. Its definition of lifelong learning seemed to offer a distinctive perspective that I felt was missing in documents such as the European Memorandum on Lifelong Learning. A further stimulus came from various literatures related to the African Renaissance and traditional lifelong learning histories of continents like Africa and South Asia. These observations were enhanced by reading the literature that documents ongoing tensions between a broad, social purpose concept of lifelong learning and the narrower skills-for-human-capital focus, manifested throughout academic and policy documents in the 'North'. Finally, while some of the social trends that have prompted the lifelong learning agenda are identified as relevant beyond the northern hemisphere (see, for instance, Youngman 2002), there are a number of distinctive development issues that require more focused and context specific attention to how lifelong learning should be developed in different regions. Lifelong learning does exist in the South and is constantly changing informally, but it needs to take different forms to enable people to participate more effectively in their own and wider societies. In recent years, there have been some efforts, largely through UNESCO, to begin to formulate ideas about a lifelong learning policy agenda for formerly colonized countries. This debate has been further stimulated as we approach the preparation phases for the sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) to be organized by UNESCO in May 2009.

However, many of the publications related to countries classified in the Human Development Index as ‘developing’ have been criticized for not providing a conceptual analysis of lifelong learning that is grounded in theoretical or philosophical underpinnings. This book is a response to those concerns. It is based on my own perceptions that the spiritual and philosophical traditions of some southern nations that embrace concepts such as the collective and interconnectedness rather than individualism auger an inherently different vision for lifelong learning. This vision may also resonate with many writers in the global ‘North’. But it may be easier to capture in societies whose philosophical heritage is grounded in a different history. Perhaps there is potential to draw on this heritage to argue for a distinctive perspective for lifelong learning that acknowledges the present realities of globalization and development, but which also recognizes the influence of pre-colonial, colonial and postcolonial experiences on current identities. In so doing, maybe a more relevant and self-sustaining vision for lifelong learning can emerge.

In writing this book I must, however, acknowledge one obvious caveat. I am a white European. Although I have now either lived or worked in Africa since the year 2000, and listened to arguments and debates at international conferences from the formerly colonized countries, I cannot pretend to truly ‘know’ or speak for the multitude of voices in the global South.

This book is an interpretation, an attempt to contextualize and theorize some of the concerns and debates that are currently simmering among the more marginalized populations. In the process of writing, I am conscious that there are tensions between embracing indigenous philosophical world views and the hybrid nature of the contemporary world that evoke many contradictions and questions. I have tried to recognize these tensions, but my focus is primarily on drawing attention to perspectives that are less frequently acknowledged.

Finally, a point of semantics. Shorthand terms such as ‘developing countries’ the global ‘North’ and the global ‘South’, ‘low income’ countries, ‘advanced industrialized’ countries all create their own hidden agendas for meaning. In the absence of any universally agreed term for those countries which have been colonized and continue to be subjected to dominance by international donor agencies I prefer to use the terms ‘South’ and ‘North’ or ‘West’ since these are the words that Maria Torres and others from the South use most frequently. These terms have symbolic representation, rather than geographical accuracy. I use the term more in a political sense – to illustrate different perspectives and to highlight the need to recognize diversity and marginalization.

Acknowledgements

A book is never a single author endeavour. I would like to express my gratitude to colleagues in the Department of Adult Education at the National University of Lesotho for generously granting me time, during my first year of appointment, to write most of the chapters. In particular I wish to single out Manthoto Lepphoto who kindly read each draft chapter in turn, providing valuable feedback and encouragement.

Chapters 8 and 9 would have been impossible without the support of particular individuals. First, Salma Maoulidi from Tanzania who so kindly posted a range of literature that provided the basis for my analysis of the Tanzanian context; and second Shaheen Attiq-ur Rahman from the NGO Bunyad in Pakistan, along with her family and colleagues who shared with me their time, humanity and resources in order to ensure I had a comprehensive understanding of this remarkable project.

My appreciation also goes to Shirley Walters of the University of the Western Cape in South Africa and Stanley Mpofu of the University of Zimbabwe who both so willingly agreed to read the full set of drafts before I made my final manuscript submission. Any errors remaining are of my own making.

My special thanks goes to Catherine Odora Hoppers, a writing giant in the area of indigenous knowledge and African perspectives, for so unwaveringly agreeing to write the foreword for this book before she had even started to read the chapters. That is trust indeed, and a great honour for me.

Lastly I wish to express my thanks to Anthony Hayes of the Professional and Higher Partnership. Without his invitation to produce the book in the first place, coupled with prompt feedback after every chapter, I doubt I would ever have considered such an undertaking. It has been a rewarding experience for me. I have learned a lot and very much enjoyed the writing process.

This page intentionally left blank

Chapter 1

Introduction

Lifelong learning (LLL) has been acknowledged as a need and a principle for education and learning systems worldwide, and is being actively embraced by the North for its own societies. However, LLL remains an uneasy topic for national governments in the South and for international cooperation agencies which continue to prescribe narrow basic education ceilings for poor countries.

Torres 2003:20

The essence of this book is to respond to the above concern, expressed by Maria Torres in her study of the status and current trends in adult basic education in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. Adult education is not the only aspect of lifelong learning, of course, but it is the locus for much of the literature on this topic. In this opening chapter I outline the context and discussion arenas in the South for lifelong learning. I start by briefly summarizing how lifelong learning evolved in the North and some of the semantic tensions surrounding ongoing debates. I then review some lifelong learning discourses in the South, and the core concerns that those debates highlight, including some key conferences where these issues are discussed.

I critique the World Bank's recently articulated agenda for lifelong learning and development vis-à-vis voices from the South that identify the need to respect broader development challenges. In the last section I summarize how the book will position its own agenda for lifelong learning through the theoretical and conceptual positions of the ensuing chapters.

My core argument is that in spite of the influence of international aid agencies for pursuing narrow, neo-liberal, market-focused goals for lifelong learning, it should be possible for countries in the South to articulate a coherent vision for their own learning societies that embrace indigenous philosophical world views, but in a way that also recognizes the hybrid nature of the contemporary world. In so doing, perhaps countries in the

South can have a voice on the world stage that contributes to both theorizing and operationalizing lifelong learning for all.

Lifelong learning in the North

The conceptualization and operationalization of lifelong learning has evolved over a number of decades. Literature from Europe claims a long pedigree of ownership over the concept itself, dating back to a British policy document for adult education by the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1919, where education was identified as a necessarily continuing aspect of life. Two key texts, among others, are often cited, starting with Lindeman in 1926 and Yeaxlee in 1929 as being the first people to write about learning for life. More recently two UNESCO commissioned reports: Faure et al.'s (1972) *Learning to Be* (with a focus on lifelong education 'for both developed and developing countries' p. 182) and the DeLors (1996) Report *Learning the Treasure Within* (denoting the conceptual transition to lifelong learning) are seen as instrumental to progressing this topic during the latter part of the twentieth century. These reports are still cited globally in defence of a broad vision for lifelong and life-wide learning on the grounds of equity and quality of life (see Medel-Añonuevo 2001 for example, in relation to South Asia, and 2006 in relation to Africa). The reports denote learning that takes place from cradle to grave and that occurs across the whole spectrum of life experiences, encapsulated in the De Lors Report concepts: learning to be, to do, to know and to live together.

These documents advocate lifelong learning for both 'developed' and 'developing' countries. However, Medel-Añonuevo (2006) points out that while the nineties saw a re-emergence of lifelong learning discourses in the North they coincided with a UNESCO world conference *Education for All* in Jomtien in 1990. This conference introduced a range of goals which came to be known as the EFA goals. They followed the principles of lifelong learning by identifying targets for early childhood education, universal primary education, life skills, literacy and gender equality. However, since many of the targets specifically related to countries receiving international development aid, EFA became the discourse for the South, while lifelong learning was adopted as the discourse for the North. This chapter will refer later to this phenomenon in its analysis of some key conferences.

The impetus for these UNESCO documents holds true today. They were based on an identified need for continuous learning to equip people with the resources to deal with a fast changing and uncertain world: the need to

update skills, knowledge and understanding in response to changing labour markets, new technologies and the increasing economic competitiveness of this globalized world. The UNESCO publications followed a broadly social agenda designed to embrace equity and capture the notion of all kinds of learning for all ages and beyond formal provision, for economic growth and social development. Lifelong learning would be a key instrument for developing a learning society which would embrace new forms of learning and ways to formally recognize that learning.

Documents from the Organisation for Economic Community Development (OECD) during the 1970s, (for example OECD 1973) however, promoted the term recurrent education in support of economic growth and particularly the preparation of workers through on-the-job training and the idea of full-time education in later life, though by 1996 the OECD was also using the term lifelong learning.

When the European Memorandum for Lifelong Learning came onto the scene in 2000, lifelong learning and its dual relationship to citizenship and employment were synergistically combined. The definition in 2000 was as follows:

[A]ll purposeful activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skill and competence . . . To adjust to the demands of social and economic change and to participate actively in the shaping of Europe's future. (Commission of the European Communities (CEC) 2000:3)

The two purposes are 'promoting active citizenship and promoting employability' (p.5). Moreover: 'high quality basic education for all, from a child's youngest days forward is the essential foundation' (p.7). But in spite of the purported dual thrust of page five, page seven elaborates:

Basic education, followed by initial vocational education and training, should equip all young people with the new basic skills required in a knowledge-based economy. It should also ensure that they have 'learnt to learn' and that they have a positive attitude to learning.

The overall emphasis of the Memorandum is strictly European, and in a competitive economic relationship to other strong economies. As a result of this memorandum, all members of the European Union were required to produce their own national policy documents. In the United Kingdom responsibility for lifelong learning was located in the Ministries of Trade