

Towards the essence of adult experiential learning
A reading of the theories of Knowles, Kolb, Mezirow, Revans and Schön

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Review

In this book the author offers a conceptual analysis of the essence of adult experiential learning which she considers to be at the core of adult education. The term “experiential learning” is broadly defined within the area of adult education giving rise to a plurality of paradigms characterized by an overall lack of consensus among them regarding what constitutes the foundations as well as the realm of adult experiential learning. As an attempt to bring an integrative coherence to the broad spectrum of views, the author conducts a thorough examination of the work of the five chief exponents in the area of adult experiential learning applying hermeneutic text interpretation and grounded theory methodology. The selected five landmark theories are: the andragogical approach of Malcolm Knowles, the experiential learning theory of David Kolb, the transformation theory of adult learning of Jack Mezirow, the Action Learning approach of Reginald Revans and the ‘reflection-in-action’ theory of Donald Schön.