

themselves a desire to look beyond their specific endeavors to understand the larger scope of the field. Sheer intellectual curiosity is the spur for some of these people; others seek new ways to improve their present performance; still others glimpse larger horizons or opportunities. As a result of this broader perspective, some practitioners redefine themselves as teachers, planners, administrators, providers, counselors, or mentors of services for adult learners. For want of a better term, they usually call themselves adult educators, or (when considered in contrast to learners) leaders. Though their numbers are still comparatively small, they are the chief figures in defining, establishing, and maintaining the field.

This chapter deals with books about some of the central concerns of those who look above daily practice to discern the essential nature of adult education. What are its basic philosophical conceptions? How can it best be defined as a body of knowledge and practice? How can adult educators be prepared to fulfill their responsibilities? How do they attract and retain learners? How are their accomplishments appraised? What are the national and international patterns of their work? As the literature reviewed in this chapter indicates, such topics as these have been considered by many writers.

The Philosophy of Adult Education

The term *philosophy* is as variously applied in adult education as it is in other fields of knowledge. Some writers merely voice a purpose and leave all other aspects of theory and practice to be inferred; an excellent collection of such statements was made by Ely (1936). Other people view the field from a special vantage point—community needs, the development of individual potentiality, liberal education, social and economic reform, or some other—and build a general construct that fits that orientation. Still others adopt a rigorous analytical approach, almost geometrical in its nature. Examples of these and other approaches are considered here. The literature also abounds in what has been called “good old-fashioned homely philosophy,” but this book mentions few such unrooted advocacies and speculations.

In the mid-twentieth century, two writers—Eduard Linde-

man and Paulo Freire—gained numerous followers as philosophers of adult education. Both believed adult education to be an instrument of social reform, though their approaches differed greatly. Lindeman, whose biographies were mentioned in Chapter One, came from a humble, rural background and entered adult education, as many others did, through employment in the Cooperative Extension Service. Ultimately, he became a member of the New York liberal establishment. He argued that complex, urban societies needed to develop and purify themselves, a task that he believed could best be accomplished by adult education. His book *The Meaning of Adult Education* (1990), first published in 1926 by New Republic, expresses the values of the field in a sweeping and exuberant fashion. His approach is within the tradition of John Dewey and also, and more profoundly, of Walt Whitman. This book greatly reinforced the acceptance of the fundamental ideas of adult education and has been read and valued ever since its publication. Brookfield (1987) presents a selection of Lindeman's other writings on adult education, as well as a comprehensive expression of his philosophic position.

As also noted in Chapter One, Freire developed an adult literacy program based on the need to encourage political self-awareness in adults belonging to almost destitute segments of society. His highly structured methodology has been most fully explained in English by Brown (1975); his theories on adult learning, which are linked to but rise far above his methodological practice, have attracted worldwide attention, particularly after he changed his base of operations to the international world centered in Geneva. Books by and about him are numerous and have been published in many languages. His best-known work, vividly called *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* ([1970] 1984) has gone through many editions (the one cited here is the twenty-first). In it, he focuses on people at or near the bottom of the economic scale, who he feels are oppressed by dominating elites. The task of education, according to Freire, is to give the oppressed an awareness of what they have lost and are losing, to teach them the skills of literacy, and to show how it can be used to improve their health, their way of life, their occupational competence, and, especially, their participation in social

affairs. In this process, they become conscious of themselves as individuals and as a class of people.

Freire's language is so difficult and complex that it is often hard to puzzle out its meaning. He has himself given many further interpretations and elaborations of his thought. For example, Freire (1978) makes clear his belief that adult education should be placed within the context of revolutionary thought and the overthrow of authoritarian regimes. Freire (1985) provides additional information about his ideas and his reflections on his own reputation.

Freire has had many interpreters. Mackie (1981) presents a collection of supportive essays on Freire's life and work that help to explain his ideas about the purposes and pedagogy of his approach to the teaching of adults. Elias (1976) explores the ideas of both Freire and Ivan Illich, another radical theorist. Elias believes that their work has not been sufficiently interpreted in light of the Roman Catholic traditions from which they spring, and he proposes in his book to fill that void in the literature. Kirkwood and Kirkwood (1989) provide a detailed account of how they carried out the ideas and principles of Freire in a densely populated part of the city of Edinburgh. Of particular value is the description and interpretation of Freire's ideas as they might apply to an urban European situation. A useful glossary of Freire's terms is also provided.

At least nine additional authors have put forward more or less systematic philosophical approaches to the whole field of adult education. They will be presented here in the order of their books' appearance.

Kallen (1962) offers four essays written in the 1950s that express the Dewey-derived, pragmatic philosophical views of a long-time supporter of adult education. He examines the central ideas of the people in that field; and though his references are to the issues of the period in which he wrote, his general approach is timeless.

Barton (1964) puts adult education, particularly that which is self-directed, at the apex of organized learning efforts. Barton's writing is so compressed, aphoristic, and cryptic that his argument is hard to follow, but the persistent reader gains insights and finds categories useful for dealing with some of the more difficult aspects of knowledge.

Bergevin (1967) asserts his belief that "one purpose of a phi-

losophy is to establish a common point of reference, an integrated viewpoint, toward certain beliefs, ideas, attitudes, and practices" (p. 3). He seeks in this book to explicate such a philosophy based on twenty-two propositions, but his work is not so much a closely reasoned demonstration as it is an assertion of beliefs, some of them evangelically stated.

More (1974) has written a highly personal volume, growing out of his experiences and feelings and with almost no citations of other sources or appeals to authority. He argues strongly that emotions are dominant in learning and teaching and shows how their primacy influences all aspects of practical education and the theories on which it is based—from the simplest skills to the most profound truths.

Drawing from deep wellsprings in both ancient and modern writings, McKenzie (1978) bases his analysis on the field of philosophy itself. For those who have not accompanied him in his quest for knowledge, he reviews sources and fundamentals before coming to his own complex position. Though rooted in existentialism, his ideas are distinctively expressed in seven propositions that are stated in clear and precise terms. In the manner of the Scholastics, he then states the key arguments against his own position and gives his responses to them. He presents his work, not as an accomplished position, but as an exercise in inquiry.

Paterson (1979) desires to establish a rigorously defined, theoretical way of thinking about adult education. He reasons carefully, starting with definitions and building basic principles of action and interpretation upon them. R. S. Peters, the editor of the series in which this book appears, points out that its author's ultimate conclusions are "controversial and unlikely to be popular both with many of his colleagues in adult education and with many philosophers of education. He is, for instance, uncompromising in his refusal to harness education to practical or social purposes. Education, he claims, is concerned with the development of 'the person in his person-hood.' He vigorously defends the importance of subject-matters and their intrinsic criteria of worth" (p. viii).

Gelpi (1979), an Italian, offers a two-volume work translated by English proponents of the author's philosophy (particularly Ralph Ruddock); they view him as an emerging world theoretician

of adult education who seeks the reform of social injustice without recourse to revolutionary concepts. Gelpi, who speaks several languages, was chief of the lifelong education unit at Unesco at the time of the publication of this book. As he seeks to address the whole world, his writing is highly theoretical and abstract, without direct guides to action. A collection of essays rather than a single unified work, the book sometimes seems to be a series of pronouncements. Yet the reader has the sense that, given more space, the various points in his philosophic statements could be translated into practice.

Lawson (1979) attempts to provide a truly philosophical analysis rigorously applied to the leading terms and concepts of adult education. He believes that the field has not been adequately concerned with modern conceptions of linguistic analysis and also that the philosophers of education have not taken adequate account of the distinctions between the teaching and learning of children and that of adults. He argues that adult education can appropriately be defined as "something specifically and uniquely related to adulthood in terms of what is taught, how it is taught, and how it is organized" (p. 114). The effort to demonstrate that proposition is perhaps the major purpose of this book. In another work, Lawson (1982) presents a collection of papers concerned with the philosophical underpinnings of adult education and particularly with the relationship between theoretical constructs in the field and active practice in it. These papers are subtle and closely reasoned. The background of the book is English, though some reference is made both to other European authors and to such world figures as Freire and Illich.

Wain's work (1987) is a serious philosophic treatment. He identifies lifelong education as being a Unesco invention, flowing from Faure, Lengrand, Gelpi, Dave, and other sources. The author's thought, however, springs from the deep tradition of the philosophy of education that includes Dewey and emphasizes the ideas of humanism.

The intention of the foregoing books has been to analyze all of adult education. Others seek to build a philosophy in which some learning goal or body of content is paramount. The first such major effort was that of Yeaxlee (1925), in a massive two-volume

work entitled *Spiritual Values in Adult Education*. Yeaxlee was a distinguished leader of the Church of England and a member of the committee that produced the *1919 Report*. His book is deeply scholarly and written with broad humanity, clarity of expression, and an unusual command of resources. His references rest on classical and British traditions. The author's intent is nothing less than to explore all the religious, spiritual, and nonmaterialistic dimensions of adult education as they may be observed both historically and analytically. His central ideas are summarized in a chapter entitled "Ad Unum Omnes," which is found about halfway through the second volume (pp. 201-216). Here Yeaxlee argues eloquently that the true end of adult education is the "harmonized personality" of the individual, a harmony that must be based essentially on the spiritual values required for personal growth, as well as for productive interaction and institutionalization.

Another broad approach to adult learning is treated philosophically in a small cluster of works that seems likely to grow in size and significance. Brookfield (1988a) identifies and describes what he calls critical thinking, the habit of examining experiences reflectively to assess their truth or value so as to transform ideas and beliefs. His emphasis is on adulthood, as it is during the mature years that the most varied and responsible of such experiences occur. The book is celebratory and definitional rather than prescriptive. Brookfield (1990) carries these ideas further by discussing how a teacher may best bring about such changes within many instructional settings. The author pays a great deal of attention to lessons learned from his own experience. Mezirow and Associates (1990) treat this same broad theme, in a series of essays by scholars, chiefly American. Some are concerned with how critical thinking and transformative learning happen naturally. Others examine its application in psychiatry, social movements, women's consciousness raising, the workplace, and elsewhere, but always within the context of achieving profound educative changes in the individual. Mezirow (1991) presents the fullest expression of the nature of transformative learning yet developed. This book is intended as a companion piece to his 1990 work but goes much beyond it in its theoretical depth and its incorporation of the work of Habermas, other social theorists, and various analysts of aspects of general

perceptual and interactive processes. Direct reference is made throughout to the theory and practice of adult education. Collins (1991) suggests the distinctiveness of this general approach by observing, "From the viewpoint of a transformative pedagogy, the growing irrelevance of contemporary mainstream adult education as a distinctive field of practice stems initially from its unquestioning compliance with the imperatives of an ideology of technique" (p. 118).

A recurrent theme in the literature of adult education has been the fostering of creativeness. Davis and Scott (1971) assess the general philosophical basis of this goal. The twenty-three annotated papers included in the book also describe various theories and techniques, such as synectics, bionics, and brainstorming.

Brockett (1988) edited a group of papers written by academic adult educators that consider questions of ethics in the field as a whole or some part of it, such as planning, administration, evaluation, counseling, or research. Each author deals with the major moral questions, dilemmas, or issues to be found in the topic under discussion, in some cases making the reader aware that behavior and practice have ethical dimensions not previously perceived.

Livingstone (1944) centers his book on the importance of the classical conception of liberal education, especially in adulthood, in creating the well-rounded person. This work, written in England in 1941 during the darkest days of World War II, identifies liberal study as the keystone of education in the postwar era and suggests the Danish folk school as a model for British adult education. Livingstone was a distinguished classicist, and his book gives perhaps the clearest brief explanation of the traditional aims of liberal education to be found anywhere in the literature.

Powell (1949) develops the point of view that maturity is the time when inquiry can best be fostered, especially by book-based discussion. He gives lengthy illustrations from several institutions, particularly the School of Social Studies founded by Alexander Meiklejohn in San Francisco.

For many adult educators, the *community* has been the concept around which thought and activity have been focused. Though this term has many definitions, it ordinarily connotes some definable unit separated from the rest of the world by geography, polit-

ical system, or a complex interaction between people and groups. Some authors argue that in the analysis of the nature, needs, concerns, and desires of this unit are to be found the goals of education and that in the separate and collective activities of its institutions are to be found the means of accomplishing them. Seay (1974) presented a comprehensive treatment of the ideas and practices that he developed during his years, stretching from the 1930s to the 1980s, as a leader of community education. Galbraith (1990b) uses a different approach, extolling the idea of the community as a reinforcement of learning, particularly in settings in which education is allied with other functions. In addition to a general discussion of the idea of community, attention is given to the specifics of social and fraternal organizations, libraries, religious institutions, museums, and human services organizations. Many other community-oriented works will be mentioned throughout the later pages of this book.

A number of authors (for example, Freire and Illich) have been ardent advocates of change in the social order. Boyd (1969) reports on a conference held to explore the philosophical position that the aim of adult education is to change society and that the adult educator is best viewed as a change agent. In recent years, some interest has been expressed in examining forms of radicalism as philosophical systems. Youngman (1986) offers a sustained and rigorous analysis of Marxism as it applies to adult education—to which (the author contends) the basic theories of Marx, Lenin, and Mao have a natural and desirable application. The author himself favors the Marxist approach, but he does not proselytize or denigrate the ideas of dissenters. Though the book was published in England, the author draws on the worldwide literature in the field. Evans (1987) writes more generally about radical adult education. He makes it clear that he is for basic change in society; yet because his immediate frame of reference is practice in the United Kingdom, his study focuses on the shaping and execution of national governmental policy, not structural change in the government itself.

Collins (1991) urges that the adult educator should have a vocation, a sense of mission. He examines the ways by which it may be achieved by providing a wide-ranging survey of the North American and European literature on social and political theory, as well

as on adult education. As yet the only rigorously comparative study of philosophies of adult education is that provided by Elias and Merriam (1980). They identify six conceptions of adult education and show how they apply, both analytically and practically. The six are liberal adult education, progressive adult education, behaviorist adult education, humanist adult education, radical adult education, and analytical adult education. These are sketched rapidly. The book approaches its topic from the field itself, thus moving inductively, rather than starting with basic philosophic propositions and working toward their application. In 1984, Merriam published a collection of substantial segments of a number of authorities' writings on education, so chosen as to present a picture of the breadth of philosophic viewpoint characteristic of the field. Lowy and O'Connor (1986) establish themselves as humanistic in orientation (in terms of the Elias and Merriam definition) and then, in an elaborate literature-based analysis, make the case for the importance of lifelong learning.

In recent years, the attention of some scholars in the field has turned to basic philosophical ideas and movements. Bright (1989) includes papers by several American and English authors who explore adult education, employing epistemology as a form of analysis. The editor summarizes these contributions by saying, "The major conclusion . . . is that the study of adult education does represent serious epistemological issues and problems and that these are all concerned with its postulated lack of rigor in relation to the conventional disciplines" (p. 174). Stanage (1987) applies the *phenomenological* approach to adult education, using Spiegelberg's definition of the key term as being "the name for a philosophical movement whose primary objective is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as consciously experienced, without theories about their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions" (p. 43). Stanage explores the movement in its various manifestations, especially as it may be used as a way of viewing adult learning. The reader has a sense that this is a work in progress, not a final summation of its author's beliefs. It is not easy reading for those unfamiliar with technical philosophical approaches.

The effort to develop a personal philosophy has been at-

tempted by many educators of adults. Apps (1973) reflects on the ways by which he went about working out a basis for thought and action in the field. He examines many principles and systems and takes from them the ideas that he finds creative and useful. He does not espouse any fundamental system, while always working, he says, for consistency in his beliefs. Long, Apps, and Hiemstra (1985) write three substantial essays on the same theme: what are the essential meaning and the ultimate dimensions of the term *lifelong learning*? The authors' analyses differ, but all three focus on adult education, giving little attention to learning in infancy, childhood, and youth. Jarvis (1987b) draws together thirteen essays by various authors, each devoted to the ideas of a leading twentieth-century author, ranging in time from Albert Mansbridge to Ettore Gelpi.

The effort to build a complete and coherent framework for education at all ages has probably been realized most fully by Dave (1973). In presenting and defending twenty propositions about lifelong learning, he has established a sound basis for emerging conceptions. Knowles (1980b) expresses the distinction between the study of the education of children (pedagogy) and the study of the education of adults (which he calls andragogy). This differentiation is also made in other books by Knowles and is extensively discussed in the periodical literature.

The relationship between the theory and the practice of adult education has long been of interest and is now coming to the forefront. As already noted, Lawson (1979 and 1982) deals with this topic. Squires (1975) offers an interesting case study of how a philosophy of adult education can be worked out in an innovative program; the Learning Exchange embodies the basic idea of Ivan Illich and Everett Reimer that society should be "deschooled," so that learning becomes spontaneously sought and provided. Kreitlow and Associates (1981) show how different viewpoints are brought to bear on some of the major controversies now present in the field. Should the adult educator be involved in social intervention? Should the continuing education of the members of professions be made mandatory? Should adult education require support from learner fees? Each of these questions, as well as others, is examined by two authorities; these do not give positive or negative

answers but express complex viewpoints, with qualifications and distinctions arising from deeper philosophic positions.

Merriam (1982) has edited a group of papers about the relationship between general conceptions of the way life is or ought to be (philosophy) and the actual ways that lives are planned or occur (practice). This symposium delves deeply into the relationship between thought and action, but the central concern of the authors is with adult educational activities. The heart of the work consists of seven case examples; in each, practice is analyzed according to a fundamental idea of what it should be in broad theoretical terms. Among these examples are the outreach of a women's liberal arts college, the training division of a large insurance company, a program for improving life in primitive villages, and the continuing educational activities of an urban community college.

Usher and Bryant (1989) enlarge the discourse about theory and practice by introducing research as a third consideration. The authors believe that these three elements are not linear in nature but exist as an interrelated triangle; if there is one that dominates, the authors argue that it lies within practice and particularly in the mind of the adult educator. Though caught up in the specifics of a situation, this educator tries reflectively both to advance theories about work practice and to discover or undertake the research that will test theory and illuminate the processes being undertaken. This book is highly theoretical and requires study, rather than simple perusal, to be fully comprehended.

Adult Education as a Body of Knowledge and Practice

The works cited earlier in this chapter provide ways of thinking about the total nature and scope of adult education. The works to be noted here report inquiries into key elements of the field in order to define it, to indicate its research boundaries, and to show its linkage with other (usually better-established) bodies of knowledge.

Many founders of the field were administrators or faculty members of universities. It seemed natural to them that the creation of sound theory and practice required the establishment of graduate departments that could conduct research in adult education and prepare the men and women who could carry forward the respon-