

## **ADULT EDUCATION: TRANSFORMATION OF THE LIFE-WORLD**

My purpose in this paper is to outline a philosophic orientation for the practice of adult education that is consistent with the developmental nature of adult experience and involvement in an intersubjective world. Drawing upon the frameworks of existential phenomenology and hermeneutics, we will argue that the liberal education of adults must take as its starting point man's primary and irreducible need for meaning. The capacity for meaning-making through the lifespan is contingent upon the growth of (1) perception of novelty in experience and (2) self-transcendence, the act of going beyond one's own self-enclosed meaning-perspective. Both of these processes are fostered by a collective model of learning, in which self-reflection and dialogue within a community of interpreters penetrate the taken-for-granted and sedimented meaning structures of its individual participants. The expansion of the individual horizon and the growth of interpretive skills permits the ongoing constitution of meaning and construction of self within the social context.

A brief critique of the goals, methods, and assumptions of current adult education models will demonstrate the need for a philosophically oriented theory of adult education. While the burgeoning adult education movement in the United States is an ostensibly promising sign, the goal of "lifelong learning," touted by new journals and professional associations, seems more to reflect the needs of colleges and vocational schools to find new markets to counter dwindling enrollments and the demands of the private sector for personnel with increased literacy and the skills to meet new and changing technologies. The adult education industry has responded with an arsenal of needs assessment instruments, behavioral objectives schemas, and a barrage of pre-packaged instructional models. While we are not denying that such education has its place in equipping adults for successful careers, we are concerned that this model is so pervasive that it has become synonymous with adult education itself, and that no genuine alternatives exist. For example, course offerings in High School Equivalency and Continuing Education programs, not to mention industry-sponsored training, focus on skills and information, while few are theoretical or conceptual in nature<sup>1</sup>. In literacy education, reading and writing are perceived as the content of instruction rather than as the tools to discover meaningful ideas. A pedagogy that divorces skills development from "content" robs people of the capacity to unify theory and practice, to find and make meaning for themselves, and to transform their conditions by envisioning new possibilities. It leads to a confusion of mere means with meanings. This functional perspective based on narrow economic interests has resulted in a predilection for instrumental learning -- the mastery of techniques and survival skills necessary to meet the objectives of the workplace and to maintain the structures of the status quo.

What are the epistemological and ideological presuppositions implicit in such functional models of adult education? One glaring observation is that the practice of adult education is highly individualized. The most prevalent theme in the literature of the last decade is "self-directed learning," wherein adults collaborate in structuring and evaluating their own learning<sup>2</sup>. The learning design and the "learning contract," however, are facilitated and managed by experts in institutional settings. Hence, the one-on-one model of novice and authority maintains the structure of dependency, while the privatization of education vitiates against a genuine liberatory education. It is based furthermore on the assumption that individuals can be fulfilled by developing the competencies necessary to increase their economic power, and consequently, that the way of curing social problems is through such individual development rather than cooperative learning and action<sup>3</sup>. Even its concept of the individual lacks any coherent theory of the person; since the self is defined by social roles and cultural prescriptions, it is not

surprising that it ignores the subjective nature of experience and the intersubjective nature of knowledge and meaning.

The instrumental model of education presupposes a one-dimensional world in which brute facts exist independently of the knower. This positivism easily translates into the classroom, wherein knowledge is less a matter of participation than of observation and the adoption of the objective standpoint of those in authority<sup>4</sup>. By severing knowledge from the learner's experience, it denies the contextual, historically situated nature of human knowledge, and as a consequence, it views education as "things to be acquired" rather than as a process of helping learners to organize experience into more meaningful and integrative perspectives and to respond to existential situations in a more intelligent manner.

An adequate philosophy of adult education would first recognize the practical character of adults involvement in the everyday world and their need to make sense of ongoing experience and life events. Second, it would acknowledge the domain of subjective experience, and the role of enabling adults to reflect upon their own thinking, feeling, and judging, and willing as a component of learning to learn. Finally, it would establish the community as (1) a condition for the development of self and (2) a foundation for the understanding and interpretation of the multiple perspectives of its members.

An investigation of adult experience reveals several characteristic features. In general, adults have more experience than do children, and this accumulation of experience leads to more habitualized ways of thinking and acting. Since their categories of thought have been shaped and solidified by the regularities of events and patterns of experience, adults generally have firmer convictions, more fixed meanings, and more ingrained ways of relating to others than children. Adults have quite reliable, although unexamined, strategies or recipes for dealing with various situations and people. Yet as a stock of interpretational patterns develops, flexibility of thought and the capacity to respond to new possibilities in experience decreases.

This characterization of adult knowledge within everyday experience and practical activity corresponds to what the phenomenological tradition calls the "lifeworld".<sup>5</sup> The lifeworld is the intersubjective world of meanings and interpretations into which we are born, known to us pre-theoretically, as the taken-for-granted background of all our needs, goals, and projects. The unexamined, or self-evident character of the lifeworld is maintained by interpersonal communication, by which taken-for-granted meanings are affirmed. The lifeworld as the unquestioned ground of our common pursuits and activities, is made possible by socially constructed and transmitted meanings, what Alfred Schutz calls "the stock of knowledge." Only part of one's "stock of knowledge" comes from the individual's own experience; the bulk of it is handed down by the prescriptions and interpretations of others. This web of meanings has a high degree of credibility and coercive power, since it is often institutionalized through various means of social control, such as roles and status, accepted means and ends.

The stock of knowledge is structured by systems of "relevance," which determine the relative importance (and unimportance) of things in the lifeworld. What we perceive to be relevant causes us to attend to certain features of experience and ignore those which are not important for our motivations, interests, and goals. Relevance serves as the unexamined context from which themes and problems arise, determining how situations will be interpreted and experiences explicated.

One of the main structures of relevance is typification, the process whereby we typify things into classes and categories that enable us to order past experience and to predict future occurrences. Typification creates a set of expectations that future experience will reveal the typical traits that we have come to associate with their occurrence. Thus, experiences become "shoehorned" into fixed categories or types that have become

sedimented from past experience, so ultimately, while the processing of experience is rendered more efficient, the possibilities of free interpretation are limited by the primacy of the category itself. "The old orders the new."<sup>6</sup>

Relevance is the central organizing element of experience. Of course experience itself would be impossible without some means of selecting and ordering the flux of ongoing sensations. Meaning arises only reflectively, as thought emerges from its prereflective conditions, and hence, some kind of interpretive scheme is a precondition for reflection.

But the most salient point about the structures of relevance in the lifeworld, however, is that the structures themselves are not consciously grasped by the naive or "natural attitude." The underlying assumptions, conceptual categories, implicit rules and criteria for judging, accepted usages of language, in short, all the elements which integrate and funnel experience itself, are hidden from view. Relevance thus functions as a perspective of and through which the world is made available to the individual; it is a frame of reference through which the world is interpreted.

The stock of knowledge is never free from contradictions. Various elements within it, built up from discrete situations, are incompatible, yet as long as everything goes along smoothly, these gaps are usually ignored. We only become aware of the deficiency of our stock of knowledge if a problem arises or a novel experience occurs that does not fit the "taken-for-granted valid reference scheme."<sup>8</sup> We can either try to ignore the discrepancy and fall back upon a stock interpretation, or we can move to an examination of the situation and its incongruity with our perspective. When stock interpretation patterns fail and contradictions become manifest, old meanings are destabilized, and the self-evident lifeworld is threatened. The taken-for-granted is a kind of kernel of determinacy which exists against a much more vague background or "horizon" of indeterminacy. This surrounding horizon, which changes with the focus of a perspective, can always be explored or explicated. If we choose to explicate the horizon and examine the interrelationships of our elements of knowledge, we may succeed in revising the relevance and typification structures as well as the objective conditions of the situation. The lifeworld is then transformed by our autonomous act of making meaning for ourselves.

The notion of the self-evident lifeworld, which can be threatened by anomalous events and problems and potentially transformed by our free and creative appropriation of meaning for ourselves, has particular application to the field of adult education. Adults experience many kinds of events and changes in their personal, family, and professional life which can trigger dislocations and disruptions. Marriage, childrearing, divorce, employment and unemployment, the loss of a spouse or parent, middle age--all can lead to a threatened lifeworld wherein taken-for-granted meanings and recipes no longer work. Similarly, the routine and boredom of everyday life can also lead to a recognition of the inadequacy of deeply entrenched but unreflectively held interpretational schemes.

Which course individuals take regarding the threatened lifeworld depends on a number of factors within the educational context, including psychological, dispositional, and environmental. Growth depends on the capacity for transforming the static and devitalized meanings of one's perspective via the expansion of the horizon and the change of perspective. But how does this occur? A new interpretation or perspective must not simply lead to the solution of a problem, but must lead to new meanings and satisfactions. As Dewey says, life is series of "disorientations and reintegrations," but the return to equilibrium should not be a mere return to a prior state, but to a new level wherein life is further developed and enriched. "If the organism merely repeats in the series of its own self-enclosed acts the order already given without, death speedily closes its career."<sup>10</sup> So when we rely on assumed meanings and routinized responses, the reintegration may be mechanical and fail to lead to new understandings and levels of autonomous activity in

transforming outer conditions. As the product of a continuous and cumulative integration of self with world, experience reflects the ongoing, fluid, and novel character of life. Growth, it seems, is coterminous with life itself.

If the capacity to respond to new possibilities in experience and to apprehend previously ignored considerations is essential to continued growth, it would seem that education should help us to develop our individual capacity for perception.<sup>11</sup> Learning then would involve some kind of reconstruction of the past and projection of the future by means of a vital experience of the present. The prevailing models of education, to the contrary, encourage a mechanical approach to experience through their formulaic and programmatic curricula. Relying on the "accretion" model of learning, they insure that knowledge and skills are acquired by means of the accumulation of past selections and rejections. They reinforce the kind of learning in which the sedimentation of the past inhibits openness to new experience, so that the perspective of the learner becomes rigid, impermeable, and habituated. By making the past dictate the future, they devalue the present moment and the unique possibilities of each situation.

If meaning has something to do with the act of making connections between different parts of one's experience, between past, present, and future, between means and ends, parts and wholes, then education must promote a reflectivity that looks backwards as well as forwards, that constitutes meanings from the configuration of the whole. The education of adults must encompass the notion of the narrative character of lifespan development,<sup>12</sup> emphasizing movement and growth rather than fixed goals, recognizing that in the historic movement of human life we are never<sup>13</sup> bound to any one perspective.

Our primary need for meaning, posited at the outset,<sup>13</sup> propels us to go beyond our own self-contained perspective, to take the perspective of others, or some generalized other. We are essentially open to the world and must project beyond ourselves to find meaning. In subscribing to an interactionist view of the self, we maintain that the self arises out of involvement with the world.<sup>14</sup> The self is not prior to such interaction, but is generated with and through the other in the same communicative act. Therefore, self-knowledge is possible only through involvement with others, and I can remake myself only to the extent that I engage in the making of meaning with others. Further, since the nature of human experience and reality involves constant process and transformation, no perspective remains fixed, but the horizon constantly moves with experience; hence, there is no single, objective standpoint which guarantees truth and absolute knowledge. It follows that all knowledge is knowledge from a perspective and that knowledge consists of multiple perspectives and acts of interpretation.

This calls for an educational framework that structures opportunities for the intersubjective determination of meaning and thereby, the reformulation of self. Genuine communication, or dialogue, permits us to transcend our own perspectives, for in speaking and being spoken to, I necessarily speak from and to a perspective--the one I am in and the the one I seek to understand. I thus become more critically aware of my own perspective, for much of it is opaque to me and can only become transparent as I encounter other perspectives which force me to reflect upon my own. Every act of understanding the other involves a dimension of self-understanding,<sup>15</sup> in which my own meanings and perspective become clarified through interpretation.

To understand another, I must take her perspective, see things from her point of view. While I may engage in some kind of analogical reasoning and/or empathy, I am not involved primarily in role-taking. The act of perspective-taking is not primarily an individual process of inference and imagination, (a subjectivistic assumption which reifies the self and views perspectives as private, self-contained monads), but rather a process of communication, in which perspectives are shared and meanings are constituted between individuals.<sup>16</sup>

The objection could be raised that the bare admission of multiple perspectives and

ongoing interpretive acts as ingredient of knowledge results in an unbounded relativism in which no knowledge is possible. Let me make three points. First, a perspective is not a dualistic notion. As Gadamer explains, "A perspective is not merely a subjective coloring or reality that we can somehow enter into at will. Rather a perspective, like a horizon, is something larger than the subject. It occupies a domain between the subject and its object and preserve the open region within which they can encounter each other."<sup>17</sup> There is both an epistemological and an ontological dimension to the perspective. It is both a paradigm made of individual experience and socio-cultural traditions, assumptions, etc., and it is also the way in which reality appears to us. As Dewey said, we don't experience experience, we experience nature; we might add that we can only do so by means of a layer of conceptual schemes imposed by language, culture, and history.

Second, a dialogue is always a dialogue about something. It is never the mere self-expression of the speakers but always refers "to something." Each person brings to the dialogue his own perspective and horizon, his own tools and experiences, so each will be able to contribute something to the clarification of the subject of the inquiry. The hermeneutic act of interpretation is always a "double encounter,"<sup>18</sup> in which we transcend ourselves toward both the person and subject of the dialogue.

Third, in order to understand a person, I have to determine what he means by his utterance. I cannot accept a "mere opinion" without going beyond it to relate it to a conceptual system of some sort. I ask questions such as, "Why would she make such a statement? What assumptions is she making? If she thinks this about X, what must she therefore think about Y?" In the course of communication, I necessarily raise some validity claims. As Habermas says, "When interpreters bring to mind the reasons with which a speaker would, if necessary, and under suitable conditions defend its validity, he is himself drawn into the process of assessing validity claims."<sup>19</sup> So while the interpreter is bound to bring some prejudices of his interpretation to the dialogue, this does not preclude him from examining the validity claims raised by the various perspectives on a given topic or situation.

Finally, individuals must develop some criteria for the examination of perspectives themselves. For while every perspective is a source of meaning and potential truth, perspectives may contain distortions; some may in fact be "better" or "worse." The movement to a new perspective might be a mere change if it were as insulating and self-enclosed as the previous one, whereas genuine growth would be movement to a perspective that ultimately allowed for more meaningful and fruitful experience. A superior perspective is more integrative, inclusive and discriminating of experience and also is "sufficiently permeable to allow access to other perspectives."<sup>20</sup> The main value is growth which leads to more growth.

It is only insofar as the individual perspective is related not only to the perspective of another individual, but to the horizon of the community that any claim can become the subject of inquiry. In fact, it is only through the Community of Interpreters that the claims of each of the various interpretations can be validated at all.<sup>21</sup> Perspectives are shared and rendered more objective through translation and comparison. Each individual achieves transparency to himself and to others only through the constant translation and acts of successive reinterpretation of the community. Hence the community itself forms the horizon of each hermeneutic act. Yet even the community is not independent of other communities of interpretation, but is related to them by means of broader frames of reference which are themselves distinguished by being more inclusive, differentiated, and integrative of human experience.

Let me by way of offering some conclusions roughly sketch the lines of convergence between the practice of adult education and Philosophy for Children.

The education of adults must facilitate a reflective awareness of the historical nature of one's self and one's situation. Philosophy for Children does this through two

interrelated processes: first is a phenomenological approach to examining one's conscious experience, one's acts of thinking, believing, doubting, assuming, knowing and learning, and to the phenomena and events of the world as they present themselves to consciousness. Learning to think for oneself means becoming aware of one's assumptions and the conclusions that follow from them; it means developing concern for consistency between one's thoughts and actions. It means grasping the complex relationship between thought, language, and reality. It means asking such questions as: How and why have I come to believe what I do? How do the things, events, and relationships in my world come to have meaning?<sup>22</sup> The second aspect of Philosophy for Children is the hermeneutic approach to the examination of one's own and others' viewpoints and ideas within the same communicative act. A critical sense develops in a nonthreatening context that values individual perspectives but promotes their examination and objectification within broader frameworks.

The Philosophy for Children experience ideally develops an awareness of the collaborative nature of knowledge, an appreciation for the richness of multiple perspectives, and an acknowledgment that looking at a subject from different perspectives always enhances comprehensiveness and objectivity. The realization that one's own perspective is not absolute and that all perspectives are open to further determination strengthens the disposition for self-correction. An unbounded relativism ("everyone has his own perspective; one is no better than another") is countered by helping learners to develop more conscious criteria for judgment and sensitivity to context.

Since the examination and elucidation of one's own perspective is possibly only the dialogical context of translation and interpretation, education must involve collective learning. The Community of Inquiry or Interpretation provides a collective learning framework so conspicuously absent from adult education practice in America. It may also be more flexibly applied to a range of adult populations than the Freirian model, which is more limited because of its perceived political agenda. Nevertheless, the Philosophy for Children framework may need to assume a greater role in helping adults to critically reflect upon the social and cultural structures that condition their thinking. The ideological issue cannot be separated from the aim of empowering people to shape their social conditions and redefine their relationship to society.

The format of Philosophy for Children texts is particularly useful in adult settings. The novel is not a determinate object with fixed meanings, but rather invites interpretation from multiple perspectives and evokes the participation of the subject in the creation of meaning. It provides opportunities for interacting with a text (something doubtless foreign to most adult students)<sup>23</sup> and with others in a community of interpretation. Still, if education of adults is to begin with everyday experience, the context of the existing novels might not be accessible to all populations, and the creation of new novels for many types of learning communities may be necessary.

Finally, and perhaps most important, Philosophy for Children develops the concept of oneself as a learner, as one who is aware of what he knows and what he doesn't know, as one possessing an implicit horizon that moves and expands with the growth of perspective. Learning in a philosophic community prevents the ever-shifting horizon from crystallizing; in the words of Ortega, we must<sup>24</sup> "avoid the eventuality of a malleable and expansible horizon hardening into a world". Education that promotes an awareness of the contextual and perspectival nature of knowledge invites cooperative inquiry and the mutual reconstruction of self and world.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Reed, H. B. (1988). Programmatic adult education in the context of lifelong learning. Adult Education Quarterly, 38, 177.

<sup>2</sup> Collins, M. (1988). Prison education: A substantial metaphor for adult education practice. Adult Education Quarterly, 39, 107.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion of critical literacy see Reed, H. B. (1988); & Giroux, H. A. (1988). Literacy and the pedagogy of voice and political empowerment. Educational Theory, 38; & Kretovics, J. R. (1985). Critical literacy: Challenging the assumptions of mainstream educational theory. Journal of Education, 167, 2.

<sup>4</sup> For a postmodernist educational critique, see Murphy, J. W. (1988). Computerization, postmodern epistemology, and reading in the postmodern era. Educational Theory, 38.

It is interesting to note the parallels between postmodern critique of foundationalism and recent research on cognitive changes in older adulthood. The Piagetian model of post-formal operations is being challenged by those who question its adequacy to describe adult reasoning. Researchers hypothesize that as adults get older, their thinking becomes "more open, dialectical, related to content and experience, contextual, hierarchical, adaptive, concrete, pragmatic, and autonomous," Leadbeater, B. (1986). The resolution of relativism in adult thinking: Subjective, objective, or conceptual? & Kramer, D., & Woodruff, D. (1986). Relativistic and dialectical thought in three adult age-groups. Human Development, 29, 280-301.

The thesis presented in this paper would tend to support the prevalent view that late adolescence and early adulthood is characterized by stereotypic, dualistic, authoritative thinking (cf. W. Perry), but we have argued that such thinking is largely due to the failure of education to counter the tendency for stability and predictability by allowing for the growth of perception and meanings; we might also question whether the purported move to greater contextualism and multiplicity in older adulthood is a specifically experiential and developmental phenomena, or is also related to a progressive distancing from educational practice which emphasizes such dualistic thinking.

<sup>5</sup> The pertinent literature is Schutz, A., & Luckman, T. (1973). The structures of the life-World. Evanston: Northwestern University Press; Wagner, H. R. (Ed.). (1970) Alfred Schutz: On phenomenology and social relations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press; & Berger, P. L., & Luckman, T. (1966). The social construction of reality. New York: Doubleday.

<sup>6</sup> A discussion of typification and relevance, especially as common theme in Dewey and Schutz, is found in Webb, R. B. (1976). The presence of the past. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 65.

<sup>7</sup> The origin of meaning is found in the prereflective conditions of experience. For Dewey and Schutz, we cannot transcend our habits of thought, but we can achieve a "cultivated naivete," which is aimed at understanding not only what is known, but the genesis of knowing itself. See Webb, R. and the works of Gadamer on prejudice. A comparison of Dewey and Husserl on this topic is found in Arrison, J. W., & Shargel, E. I. (1988). Dewey and Husserl: A surprising convergence of themes. Educational Theory, 38.

<sup>8</sup> Schutz & Luckman, 8.

<sup>9</sup> The paradigm of the self-evident, threatened, and transformed lifeworld is adopted

from Wildemeersch, D., & Leirman, W. (1988). The facilitation of the life-world transformation. Adult Education Quarterly, 39. A related framework incorporating Habermas' critical theory, can be found in the works of Jack Mezirow, Teachers College, Columbia University: See Perspective transformation. (1978). Adult Education, 2, & A critical theory of adult learning and education. (1981). Adult Education Quarterly, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Dewey, J. (1962). Experience and nature. In R. J. Roth, (1962). John Dewey and self-Realization. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall. See especially Ch. 2, "Nature, Man and Experience," pp. 23-33.

<sup>11</sup> Dewey, J. (1963). Experience and education. New York: Colier. Dewey says, "The idea of using the present simply to get ready for the future contradicts itself . . . . We always live at the time we live and not at some other time, and only by extracting at each present time the full meaning of each present experience are we prepared for doing the same thing in the future. This is the only preparation which in the long run amounts to anything," p. 49.

Also Kallen, H. M. (1962). Philosophical issues in adult education. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas. Kallen says, "[Learning] consists in changing the past by suffusing and enlarging it with a future which never comes as only a repetition of the same, but if of the same, with some contingent and unpredictable variation joined to it." In much of traditional education, "getting older consists in acquiring a more and more rigid past, in tending to live on more as a repeater of same than as an alterer of them. Thus unlearning becomes harder and harder . . . . Aging is here progressive immuration in a fixed past," pp. 41-42.

<sup>12</sup> Freeman, M. (1984). History, narrative, and life-span developmental knowledge. Human Development, 27, 1-19. Freeman calls for a "life-span developmental anthropology" which abandons the conception of a universal telos in favor of a "self-constructed and perhaps perpetually revised telos that emerges out of one's 'personal narrative' . . .," 15.

<sup>13</sup> See Gadamer as well as the classic treatment of logotherapist Frankl, V. (1978). The unheard cry for meaning. New York: Washington Square Press.

<sup>14</sup> Mead, G. M. (1962). Mind, self, and society. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. This edition has an introduction by Charles. W. Morris

<sup>15</sup> Gadamer, H. G. (1985). The principle of effective-history. In K. Mueller-Vollmer, (Ed.). The hermeneutics reader. New York: Continuum, 267-274.

<sup>16</sup> A critique of role-taking from a hermeneutical perspective is found in Arnett, & Nakagawa, The assumptive roots of empathic listening: A critique, & Stewart, J. (1983). Interpretive listening: An alternative to empathy. Communication Education, 32, 368-391.

<sup>17</sup> Corrington, R. S. (1987). The community of interpreters: On the hermeneutics of nature and the Bible in the American Philosophical Tradition. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 32.

Also Ortega y Gasset notes that in overcoming a dualistic epistemology in a post-Einsteinian universe, perspective is one of the component parts of reality itself. "A reality which remained the same from whatever point of view it was observed would be a ridiculous conception . . ." (p. 90) and "The sole false perspective is that which claims to be the only one there is. In other words, that which is false is utopia, non-localised truth which cannot be seen from any particular place" (p. 92). See the chapter, The doctrine of



the point of view. (1961). The Modern Theme. New York: Harper and Row. Similarly, central theme of the American pragmatists was that experience was constitutive of reality itself, not something opposed to it.

<sup>18</sup> Ott, H. (1967). Hermeneutics and personhood. Interpretation: The poetry of meaning. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 14-35.

<sup>19</sup> Haberman, J. (1981). Reason and the rationalization of society (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press, 116. A thorough discussion of the relationship between human experience and normative structures is beyond the scope of this paper but ultimately needs to be included in a theoretical framework of adult education.

<sup>20</sup> Mezirow, 1978, p. 9. An interesting parallel to the growth of individual perspectives is Dewey's description of the form of community. Each community is characterized by (1) likemindedness and (2) interaction and cooperative intercourse with other groups. The valuation of a community is found in the freedom and extent of its intercourse with other communities. Democracy and Education (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1944), 83. I am indebted to Ron Reed for pointing out this description.

<sup>21</sup> To my knowledge, the "Community of Interpretation" was first used by Royce, J. (1968). The problem of christianity. Chicago: Henry Regnery. See also Robert Corrington, cited above.

<sup>22</sup> While this paper has relied primarily on the framework of existential phenomenology, transcendental phenomenology offers a rich field for educational investigation. See Stanage, S. M. (1987). Adult education and phenomenological research: New directions for theory, practice, and research. Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger.

<sup>23</sup> Kazemek, F. E. (1988). The self as social process: The work of George Herbert Mead and its implications for adult literacy education. Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 12(1). Kazemek notes that most instructional materials used with adult students do not reflect "meaning-centered psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic processes. Thus they do not provide "Opportunities for interacting with other persons and for examining and reconstructing the self."

<sup>24</sup> Ortega y Gasset.