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Editorial

Michael Osborne, University of Glasgow

This issue of JACE encompasses contributions from a diverse range of fields of adult education, that include adult literacy, learning cities, continuing professional development, workforce development, organizational change and widening access.

The first article from Olomukoro and Adelere considers the political empowerment of women through literacy education programmes in the Edo and Delta States in Nigeria. Using a sample of over 1000 participants the authors reveal a correlation between participation in such programmes and women's roles in political and leadership roles. Other dimensions considered in the article include decision-making process and social interactions at home, community engagement, and self-esteem and self-confidence, all of which seem to change positively as a result of involvement in literacy programmes. Citizen engagement and its relationship to adult learning is a key component of efforts in the field of learning city development, not least the contemporary work of UNESCO, who have recently held their second International Learning Cities conference in Mexico City, and it is this topic that receives focus in Yarnit's contribution to the journal. His article considers the case of England where despite considerable investment in learning city development in the 1990s, there is little apparent visibility of such initiatives now. Yarnit suggests, however, that 'the essence of the idea lives on, as an integrated dimension of urban development'.

Laitinen also makes his focus the city, but in his case from the perspective of structural reform of public services. His case is Helsinki and his argument is that in this context, organizations themselves are required to be flexible and capable of networking because expertise is no longer built on the competence of an individual employee. Rather he argues that 'competence is seen as the ability of networks and organizations to resolve challenges in working life together'. The evidence from his study of managers in the city suggests that in this context there is a belief that continuous/lifelong learning for employees is a vital element in the paradigm shift. Holland considers another aspect of the workforce development in his article within which he proposes a based on systems thinking and analysis. He provides a generalised model from a systems perspective of how adult and continuing education within post-compulsory education (in his case community colleges and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)) could support more effectively the workforce development of the unemployed. Franz and Feld consider continuing higher education with German universities through a case study of two institutions. They suggest that in Germany the development of continuing education in universities within the country has been modest in relation to other European and North American counterparts. Readers in some of these countries might think that their governments are doing their best to reach German levels. The focus of their paper from a theoretical perspective is the use of metaphor and how this guides the options for action and the thinking of managers when implementing continuing education.

This issue of JACE is completed by a paper from Burnell on widening the participation to Higher Education. She using Bourdieu's theoretical framework, his 'thinking tools' to examine the experiences of ten working class adult students in modern UK HEIs. An interesting suggestion from her work is that Bourdieu's concept of habitus may not be as longstanding as much previous work has suggested.