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Lifelong learning as a chameleonic concept and versatile practice: Y2K perspectives and trends

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Abstract

This essay focuses on contemporary lifelong-learning discourse as it was reflected in deliberations during three events held in Australia, Canada and the UK during 2000–01. Through the dialogical lenses of these Y2K events that brought together an array of international participants, it examines lifelong learning as a chameleonic concept and versatile practice in education and culture. It considers how participants at the three events framed lifelong learning's parameters and complexities as they discussed perspectives and trends shaping lifelong-learning discourse, policy-making and practice. In doing so, three pervasive Y2K-event themes are discussed: (a) lifelong learning encompasses instrumental, social and cultural education; (b) lifelong learning involves mediation of public and private responsibilities; and (c) lifelong learning occupies a precarious and paradoxical position in a world that desires to position it as a

permanent global necessity. The essay concludes with a perspective on lifelong learning as a critical practice in a world where culture as knowledge and culture as community vie for space. It locates this practice in inclusive, holistic terms, suggesting that a critical practice of lifelong learning is guided by a key aim: to help persons become responsive and responsible citizen learners and workers who are able to think, speak and act in life, learning and work situations.

Notes

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