The rise or fall of a nation depends on its well-informed workforce. Naturally, a nation’s workforce relies on workforce education (Career and Technical Education -- CTE) and lifelong learning. The history of CTE has paralleled humanity’s efforts from the Stone Age to modern civilization. The students of Confucius, Socrates or Plato were adults, not of children. Unorganized training existed before the Egyptian scribes emerged 6000 years ago; when Egyptians established their government, organized training for both children and adults emerged. During the Industrial Revolution, a large pool of trained workers was needed to meet the rapid development of a nation’s economy. After the term andragogy was first coined in 1833, both CTE and adult education had developed at an astonishing speed. By 1920s, both fields were firmly established in North America. After over 100 years’ development and refinement, both fields have emerged as mature fields of study. Almost every land-grant university in the United States offers post-graduate programs in CTE and adult education. More importantly, these two fields have produced giant scholars who have contributed enormously to the literature. Mention Malcolm Knowles, and people in other fields of study know that he is considered the father of adult education, as famous as America’s first educator/philosopher John Dewey. Frequently cited scholars are also from the fields of CTE and adult education: Roberts, Cranton, Merriam and Brookfield. Their books and journal articles have been highly influential even in other fields of study, and their books have been adopted as required textbooks by numerous universities worldwide. I still remember in 2004 when California State University, Long Beach offered a workshop about faculty training and development, the workshop organizers purchased Brookfield’s book regarding teaching and learning (adult education) for every workshop attendee.

CTE encompasses several components: agriculture education, business education, trade/industrial education, family and consumer science, health occupations education, technical education, technology education and vocational guidance. Doctors’ job would not be complete without the aid of nurses or technicians and technologists. Farmers’ job would not continue without effectively maintaining their farm machinery. Learning to speak English to become a translator or interpreter is part of CTE or adult education. In sum, CTE has become more and more important as our jobs have become more technical and more global. In a learning society, toddlers learn in pre-schools, and retirees learn in learning institutes and even nursing homes. With the advent of web 2.0 technologies, people learn anywhere any time in order to remain competitive in this globalization.

The 1983 Nation at Risk report indicated that U. S. students did not compare well with those from other industrialized nations. Has this situation improved? Now our students are faced with competition coming from newly emerged industrialized nations such as China and India where more engineers are produced by their research one universities on a yearly basis. China
has truly shocked the whole world by its recent technological feat: its newly developed trains “fly” at the speed of 353 kilometers per hour!

Would all the above mentioned be possible without the sound and meaningful CTE and adult education? Take a look at the nation’s oldest public university, The University of Georgia where the largest departments of CTE and adult education have been housed for decades! That university has produced numerous giant leaders in CTE and adult education. Merriam recently retired from that university and is still active in scholarship in the field. Their deans and professors have degrees in adult education. Nevertheless, the bleak reality has been that some unqualified administrators have never stopped trying to marginalize CTE or adult education. They have cut or repealed highly viable CTE and adult education programs where several hundred students eagerly retool their knowledge in order to return to permanent employment. Students may hear that their CTE and adult education programs are cut for political reasons. I encourage my students to become radical philosophers, overcoming the hegemony in Brookfield’s terms of some administrators:

1. Try to convince those unqualified administrators by your knowledge and skills in CTE and adult education.
2. If you fail, try to make adjustments yourself.
3. If you still feel suppressed, leave your static organization for a learning organization; many other organizations are learning organizations where they will welcome you with wide open arms as they believe CTE and adult education guarantee the rise or fall of a nation.

The conception that CTE or adult education is for someone else’s child— or should exist only at community colleges -- is truly outmoded in the 21st century. Because of job specialization, we need CTE and adult education throughout adult life. No society would be complete or would make any progress without CTE or adult education. The demarcation between a developed country and a developing country is that a developed country is a learning society whereas a developing country is not a learning society. China would not have emerged as a newly developed country if it had not invested billions of dollars in its workforce education or if it had not emerged as a learning society. China has nearly 1.5 million world class scientists and engineers, at the same time, it has billions of technicians and technologists. The number of people who speak some kind of English is greater than the native speakers of English put together. The way China has eradicated its illiteracy has set a shining example for the rest of the world.

Without a doubt, CTE and adult education will continue to thrive for many centuries to come. Let’s focus on the bright side of CTE and adult education. If you have unpleasant experience because of unqualified administrators, please turn to our giant scholars and all those land-grant universities for help. It is these scholars and places that set the stage for any further development of the two vibrant fields! With that, I encourage you to consider contributing quality articles this international journal as it is being circulated by IGI Global around the globe. Let me hear from you at vexwang@gmail.com. Your articles will reach more audiences and eventually touch more audiences including administrators who may have been “handpicked” because of their connections, not because of their qualifications.

IN THIS ISSUE

The first article explores the potential for fostering transformative learning in an online environment. It was written by one of our prominent scholars in the field, Patricia Cranton. It is the same Cranton I mentioned in the editorial preface. The uniqueness of this article is that Cranton brought in students’ voices to question how an educator’s style and strengths can be brought into online teaching, especially with a view to helping learners examine their meaning perspectives.
The second article addresses a new paradigm, that is, effective adult education involves not only information dissemination; but communication and collaboration among its participants, online learning activities and entire online courses influence how we view the adult education field itself. Parker indicates that it is impossible to discuss adult education without considering technology. Prominent theorists and practitioners in the field are considered as the foundation for the paradigm shift in adult education.

The third article reminds training and development practitioners to be aware of the relationship between job training and job satisfaction when planning and promoting workplace training programs. Schmidt argues that the effects of job training go beyond those that might be considered traditional: the acquisition of knowledge, the improvement of skill, and the increase of efficiency in the workplace.

The fourth article reports the results of a study designed to determine whether the teachings of Confucius (liberal and behavioral teaching approaches) or Western teaching approaches (humanistic, progressive, radical and analytic teaching approaches) shaped adult education in Taiwan. Historically, Taiwan has been influenced by a mixture of Confucianism and a Western culture in terms of educating and training adult learners in Taiwan. Wang and Farmer found while the Taiwanese adult educators employed Western teaching approaches to some extent, they clung dearly to Confucian methods of instruction, a finding that was consistent with reports in the literature of adult education in Taiwan.

**LOOKING FORWARD**

As the stream of creation and dissolution never stops, we are dedicated to creating a learning community via this vibrant international journal to help educate and train a nation’s workforce. We publish research articles written by well established scholars in the field; we also publish research articles by new scholars and graduate students. As long as your articles survive the blind review process, we will publish them and our publisher will distribute your articles all over the world. Once again, I invite you to share your research and understanding with our global academic community.

*Victor C. X. Wang*
*Editor-in-Chief*
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