HOARE, C. (ED., 2006).

*Handbook of adult development and learning.*

New York: Oxford University Press.


*Handbook of Adult Development and Learning,* edited by Carol Hoare, attempts to unite the fields of development and learning. Useful and readable, it has a number of strengths but also some weaknesses.

Hoare proposes that an intricate connection between adult development and learning makes it difficult to consider one without taking into account the other. Her overarching goal with this book is to demonstrate this connection. Further, she describes a scaffolding effect between learning and development: that the attributes of one area lead to enhancements in the other. In compiling the chapters for this book, the editor has chosen different styles of articles that serve different purposes. Some articles are more theory-based, some focus on research methodology and analysis, while others present practical applications.

The book starts with basics and moves into areas that deal with the potential application of integration between learning and development. The handbook is divided by subject matter into six parts, each with three to four chapters. The first part, “Foundations,” presents the implications of combining learning and development, as well as a chapter on research design. The next part focuses on areas, including intellectual and emotional development, in which adult development and learning may potentially “fuel” each other. Three subsequent parts address such various concepts as self-efficacy, creativity, and even parenting. A final section explores the measurement and application of such concepts. The structure of the book is conducive to its purpose, and each chapter contains useful information related to integration of adult development and learning.

One of the major strengths of the book is its readability; each chapter is clear and concise. The writing is also sophisticated enough that while easy to read, it is still appropriate for the graduate level. Another asset is the depth of subjects related to adult development and learning. From methodology to autonomy and even an exploration of doctoral studies, this book is widely applicable. Furthermore, its progression from basic definitions to more theoretical ideas makes finding information easy.

Hoare provides concrete definitions of the constructs of both learning and development. These distinctions are important when attempting to integrate two typically unrelated fields. In addition, the definition of learning in this book has been expanded and is said to “blur a previous boundary” in how learning is viewed. To Hoare, learning involves not just the acquisition but also the restructuring of knowledge. By broadening the definition of learning, she allows for easier integration of the constructs of development and learning. For instance, as we learn, our knowledge is being restructured, a process that can be viewed as a part of cognitive development; thus the integration between the two constructs.

A final strength is the inclusion of potential implications for integrating adult learning and development. Such integration may play a role in reducing cognitive dementia and dependency among the elderly. Sharper minds may lead to improvements in worker retention, as more and more people can
remain in the workforce well into their seventies and eighties.

One identifiable drawback to the book concerns the scope and currency of information used in the chapters. As a training clinical neuropsychologist, one author of this review was especially interested in the chapter about intellectual development across adulthood but was disappointed by the lack of information on learning disabilities and the use of citations that are somewhat dated (more than 10 years old). For instance, the chapter discusses remediation of cognitive deficits through the use of cognitive training (i.e., education) but does not discuss other biological components that can play a role in cognitive deficits, such as B$_{12}$ deficiency and some medications. The lack of information in this chapter and the conclusions drawn from older publications leads us to question the reliability of the rest of the book.

In summary, the *Handbook of Adult Development and Learning* is intended to stimulate discussion for the integration of learning and adult development. With a readable, yet sophisticated text, Hoare has successfully demonstrated how these constructs can be integrated. However, relevant and current information is lacking within certain chapters.

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