

Symposium: Perspectives on Marginalized Adult Populations in Education

Abstract

The adult student population is more non-traditional than ever, with students from numerous backgrounds entering adult education and post secondary institutions. This symposium represents an effort to explore the concerns and barriers of some of the marginalized populations. Marginalization includes putting or keeping someone in a powerless or lesser position within a society due to any number of factors. Some educational settings have been more accessible and inclusive than others. Sites of adult education vary widely and have differing levels of availability to marginalized populations. This session will discuss various sites of education and the issues faced by marginalized populations.

Description of the initiative or activity

This discussion of attitudes and concerns related to marginalized adult populations in education seeks to enhance the professional development and awareness of instructors, professors administrators. This session will begin by presenting an overview of marginalization and education settings, as well as gathering information from the attendees on their concerns with regards to marginalization in their class or schools. The session will then have speakers provide details and concerns of three specific marginalized groups in a traditional presentation format. The session will then have group discussion activities in which the participants will be asked to respond to a set of questions, then report their views back to the larger group. The session will conclude with the opportunity for attendees to share experiences, raise questions and provide some answers on marginalized adult populations in education

Goal(s) of the symposia

This symposium is designed to achieve the following goals. Participants will:

- understand varied marginalized adult populations
- be familiar with the current national conversations and issues related access to education
- provide input and feedback on adult education and concerns for marginalized populations, including foster youth, sexual minorities and alternative sexualities.

Format of the Symposium

Chairperson: Introductions & Overview (10 minutes) Chaundra L. Whitehead

First Speaker: (10 minute) Lori Ann Gionti

Second Speaker: (10 minutes) Carolyn Meeker

Third Speaker: (10 minutes) Gisela Vega

Group Discussion, Questions and Answers (10 minutes)

Small group or pair and share discussion

Large group discussion

Questions, concerns, comments

Presentation Summaries

Chairperson: Introductions & Overview (10 minutes)

Chaundra L. Whitehead is a doctoral student in Adult Education and Human Resource Development at Florida International University.

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Overview of the session including the format of the session, rationale for the panels, definitions of key terms, goals of the session. Each presenter will also be introduced as well as time for attendee introductions, if the number of participants permits.

First Presentation:

Lori Ann Gionti is a doctoral student in Adult Education and Human Resource Development at Florida International University.

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Title: Foster Youth Education and Employability

Each year in America, there are approximately 500,000 children residing in foster care (ACF, 2008), who experience many disruptions that place them at risk for educational delays and employment problems (Blome, 1997; Pecora et al, 2006). This presentation will address educational and employment assistance currently being offered to this population and what is being done from an HRD and social services approach to aid underemployment and underutilization problem.

Second Presentation:

Carolyn Meeker is a doctoral student in Adult Education and Human Resource Development, Florida International University

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Title: Bondage, Dominance, Submission, Sadism, and Masochism (BDSM) Education Practices

An estimated 5-10% of the population “engages in sadomasochism for sexual pleasure on at least an occasional basis” (Reinisch, Beasley, Kent, & Kinsey Institute, 1990, p. 162). Adults engage in and seek to learn about BDSM, despite being marginalized and stigmatized by mental health professionals and society. BDSM education offers numerous opportunities for adult learning in informal ways, through every-day and unstructured interactions; in non-formal ways, such as community gatherings and conferences; and potentially in more formal ways, such as courses currently recognized within the BDSM community.

Third Presentation:

Gisela Vega is the Associate Director for LGBTQA Initiatives in Multicultural Programs and Services (MPAS) as well as a doctoral student in Higher Education at Florida International University.

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Title: Finding the Academic Rainbow: Meeting the Needs of Sexual Minorities in Education

Heteronormativity in Higher Education inhibits a sexual minority's ability to learn and succeed in an education setting. Attempting to follow rigid gender-based/biased roles limits relationships sexual minorities have with members of one's own gender, disrupts friend and family relationships, communication and hinders individuals from develop an authentic self-identity. This presentation will present barriers and the initiatives being implemented to lessen these obstacles.

References:

Administration for Children and Families (ACF), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2008). The AFCARS report #14 (preliminary estimates for FY 2006). Washington, DC: Available at: http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/afcars/tar/report14.pdf

Blome, W. (1997). What happens to foster kids: Educational experiences of a random sample of foster care youth and a matched group of non-foster care youth. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 14(1).

Pecora, P. J., Kessler, R. C., O'Brien, K., White, C. R., Williams, J., Hiripi, E., Herrick, M. A. (2006). Educational and employment outcomes of adults formerly placed in foster care: Results from the Northwest Foster Care Alumni study. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 28, 1459-1481.

Reinisch, J. M., Beasley, R., Kent, D., & Kinsey Institute for Research in Sex, Gender, and Reproduction. (1990). *The Kinsey Institute new report on sex: What you must know to be sexually literate*. New York: St. Martin's Press.