

# **Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning**

Volume 8

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This series is introduced by the International Association for Knowledge Management ([www.IAKM.net](http://www.IAKM.net)) with an aim to offer advanced peer-reviewed reference books to researchers, practitioners and students in the field of knowledge management in organizations. Both discussions of new theories and advances in the field, as well as reviews of the state-of-the art will be featured regularly. Particularly, the books will be open to these contributions: Reviews of the state-of-the art (i.e. syntheses of recent studies on a topic, classifications and discussions of theories, approaches and methods, etc.) that can both serve as a reference and allow opening new horizons Discussions on new theories and methods of scientific research in organisational knowledge management Critical reviews of empirical evidence and empirical validations of theories Contributions that build a bridge between the various disciplines and fields that converge towards knowledge management (i.e.: computer science, cognitive sciences, economics, other management fields, etc.) and propose the development of a common background of notions, concepts and scientific methods Surveys of new practical methods that can inspire practitioners and researchers in their applications of knowledge management methods in companies and public services.

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Monica Fedeli • Laura L. Bierema  
Editors

# Connecting Adult Learning and Knowledge Management

Strategies for Learning and Change in Higher  
Education and Organizations

 Springer

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ISSN 2199-8663

ISSN 2199-8671 (electronic)

Knowledge Management and Organizational Learning

ISBN 978-3-030-29871-5

ISBN 978-3-030-29872-2 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-29872-2>

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The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

### *Marketing Text*

*This multidisciplinary book is the first attempt at connecting adult learning and knowledge management in theory and practice. This volume equips faculty, learners, and professionals of organizational development with new strategies and resources to develop active and effective pedagogy for preparing learners and practitioners to manage knowledge in organizations and higher education. This book collects contributions and case studies from a diverse set of authors worldwide and provides a theoretical and practical outline of new strategies and methods for facilitating adult teaching and learning. It also provides a fresh reading of active learning methods, by adopting a knowledge management viewpoint that is applicable, whether helping students master content in university courses or helping organizations learn and change.*

*The book is divided into three parts: Part I—Adult teaching and learning methods and theories; Part II—Knowledge*

*management in education; and Part III—  
Case studies and best practices that  
consider classroom learning, higher  
education change, and organization  
development.*

# Acknowledgment

We want to thank Fulbright for helping us to create this book by providing a context for great collaboration and initiating a warm and lasting friendship between us!

Monica and Laura

# Introduction

Learning is the process of acquiring knowledge through programmed instruction, experience, study, or trial and error. Knowledge is ideas and skills attained through learning. Learning and knowledge are *not* synonyms. They are complementary processes needed by both individuals and organizations so they can thrive. Learners and organizations do not necessarily meet their goals when learning occurs. Learning must translate into knowledge that is created and shared with others and applied to improve lives and organizations. Dependable knowledge is imperative for people and organizations to build mutual relationships, identify wise choices, make good decisions, and solve challenging problems. Providing outstanding learning opportunities is not enough. The task is to help learners and organizations translate and transform learning into new knowledge that informs private, public, and professional spheres of adulthood and organization life.

This volume explores and connects two main themes: adult learning and knowledge management related to people and organizational development. It is divided into three main parts. The first part focuses on adult learning and its applications in different contexts. The second part develops the concept of knowledge management and its practices. The last parts presents four case studies demonstrating how knowledge can be developed and applied through active learning and teaching strategies in higher education and in adult education. Contributions collected in this volume propose interpretative frameworks, innovative teaching practices, and original case studies centered on fusing *adult education, higher education, and knowledge management*, in ways that promote human and organizational development and support professional development.

As coeditors of this volume, we took on the task of setting the stage for exploration and discussion by authoring and coauthoring five chapters. The challenge we faced in curating this volume was to create an international, multidisciplinary group of scholars representing diverse disciplines spanning pedagogy, engineering, and economics. Authors were invited to contribute to the topics and intersections of adult learning and knowledge management and introduce readers to innovative practices and strategies for learning and change in multiple contexts.



Chapter “Adult Learning Theories and Practices,” by Laura L. Bierema, defines and introduces a framework of adult learning that focuses on the educators, learners, processes, contexts, and methods that contribute to adult learning in formal education. Effective teaching is critical in an age where problems are difficult to solve and require deep learning and collaboration. Bierema continues her focus on formal learning in chapter “Incorporating Active Learning into Your Educational Repertoire” with her discussion of how educators can shift away from instructor-centered education and embrace pedagogical alternatives to make learning more engaging, participative, and enduring so as to better support knowledge creation. Active learning is defined with recommended activities to involve learners. Strategies for improving participation and learning are presented that are grounded in adult learning principles. In chapter “Linking Faculty to Organization Development and Change: Teaching4Learning@Unipd,” Monica Fedeli considers improving teaching and learning through faculty development. She profiles the program *Teaching4Learning@Unipd* as a strategy for using faculty development to impact organization development and create a higher education culture that promotes optional learning. She offers strategic actions and practices to promote change and research linked to faculty and organization development. Chapter “Student–Teacher Relationships: The Elephant in the Classroom” features Edward W. Taylor on the importance of teacher–student relationships. He explores the complexities that confound and confront student–teacher relationships and what is known empirically about their impact on learning and introduces key theoretical frameworks and core constructs used to make sense of these relationships, including the connection between knowledge management in the classroom and teacher–student relationships. Chapter “Linking Active Learning and Capstone Projects in Higher Education,” by Tullio Vardanega and Monica Fedeli, presents multi-year experience of running a capstone project in a bachelor’s degree program in computer science, at the University of Padua, Italy, designed and implemented using interactive learning methods. This study supports the fact that active learning strategies create a very productive context for better teaching and learning.

The last two chapters of the first section aim to speculate on strategies related to organizational development. Chapter “Teaching for Globalization: Implications for Knowledge Management in Organizations,” by Maria Cseh, Oliver S. Crocco, and Chilaney Safarli, focuses on globalization in teaching and working and how systems should consider how adults with various national and ethnic backgrounds learn and share knowledge. The authors argue that learning and knowledge management can be enhanced by incorporating both the professional and technical knowledge in organizations and the diversity of thought and worldviews held among employees. They discuss the perspectives of global systems thinking and global mindset and how to cultivate this global system in teaching for globalization. Chapter “Knowledge Management for Organizational Success: Valuing Diversity and Inclusion Across Stakeholders, Structures, and Sectors,” the final chapter of the first section, by Tomika Greer and Toby Egan, offers knowledge management as a core source of energy for any organization, arguing it is a critical element for organizational survival in our increasingly dynamic world. The authors promote

the use of communities of practice as a tool to leverage human diversity and structural diversity to optimize knowledge management and improve organizational outcomes in a variety of organizational contexts. This chapter connects the first and the second part of this volume linking adult learning, communities of practice, and knowledge management.

Part II of the book begins with chapter “Knowledge Management: Theories and Practices” by John S. Edwards on knowledge management and its history over the last 30 years. The author reviews theories and practices that have developed under that name placing emphasis on the links between knowledge management and learning and on the area known as personal knowledge management. He discusses knowledge management practices using the three aspects of people, process, and technology. In chapter “Using Social Networks and Communities of Practice to Promote Staff Collaboration in Higher Education,” Niall Corcoran and Aidan Duane address the use of community-based knowledge management techniques, such as using communities of practice to manage knowledge, particularly when coupled with enterprise social networks to create online communities. The lack of community of higher education institutions has led to a breakdown of collaboration and knowledge sharing among staff. A number of strategies for practice and specific tactical approaches for organizations to use are presented. Chapter “Knowledge Management for Adult and Higher Education: Mapping the Recent Literature,” by Ettore Bolisani, is the last chapter of the second part and presents a recent literature review on connecting knowledge management to adult and higher education. The author argues that knowledge management concepts, models, and practices may be beneficial to teachers, learners, and university managers. This chapter proposes a systematic analysis of the literature to shed light on the intersection between the fields of knowledge management and adult and higher education. The main research trends are detected and highlighted. The analysis shows that there are promising applications of knowledge management to higher education and university management.

The third and last part of this volume presents four case studies that aim to connect learning practices in higher education that develop knowledge management and knowledge sharing among staff, students, and university managers with the aim of fostering teaching and learning for change. Chapter “Sharing Active Learning Practices to Improve Teaching: Peer Observation of Active Teaching in a School of Engineering,” by Stefano Ghidoni, Monica Fedeli, and Massimiliano Barolo, presents the successful faculty development program *Teaching4Learning@Unipd* and how it fosters collaboration among instructors. Paralleling these activities, the school of engineering developed a “peer observation of active teaching” (POAT) process which was conceptualized, designed, and tested in a small group and finally proposed to the entire community of engineering instructors through a call for volunteers. The chapter presents how the POAT process was developed and put into practice and discusses some lessons learned after one year of experimentation. Chapter “Comparative Studies, the Experience of COMPALL Winter School,” by Monika Staab and Regina Egetenmeyer, focuses on comparative studies presenting the project Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership “Comparative Studies in Adult

Education and Lifelong Learning—COMPALL” which developed a joint module in study programs related to adult education and lifelong learning. Through its innovative teaching and study program, which is based on blended learning mobility, COMPALL became a forum for knowledge sharing and creation. Over three years, seven European universities designed innovative learning and teaching strategies that foster the exchange of knowledge, cultural understanding, and knowledge creation by conducting comparative research. Chapter “Fostering Knowledge Sharing Via Technology: A Case Study of Collaborative Learning Using *Padlet*,” by Daniela Frison and Concetta Tino, describes a collaborative learning experience in higher education carried out through the use of the additional collaborative tool *Padlet*. The authors present the design process of an online activity based on the use of *Padlet*, an online whiteboard that offers space for multiple participants to collaborate in real time. Students’ feedback about the *Padlet* experience has been collected and analyzed. The last chapter, “The Peer Observation: “Mentore” Project at University of Palermo,” by Marcella Cannarozzo, Pierluigi Gallo, Alida Lo Coco, Bartolomeo Megna, Pasquale Musso, and Onofrio Scialdone, shares a faculty development project of the University of Palermo called “MENTORE” (“Modifying and ENhancing Teaching through peer Observation and Reflections with Experts”). The objectives of the project are to help teachers improve their teaching, through the help of two mentors; to experiment new approaches in pilot courses to extend, if useful, to other ones; and to change the traditional model of academic teaching based on one single teacher with the class to go toward a model where there is a group of teachers working together in search of improvements. This chapter describes the aforementioned peer observation practice adopted at the University of Palermo and focuses on the role of mentors describing their activities during the peer observation process.

This international, multidisciplinary book represents a first attempt at connecting the fields of adult learning and knowledge management in theory and practice, collecting chapters from diverse authors, and highlighting the different perspectives of research and practices to equip professionals, instructors, academic managers, and learners with new strategies to teach and learn and innovative resources to prepare managers to create and manage knowledge in organizations and in higher education. We are pleased to offer this volume that connects adult learning and knowledge management and hope it inspires readers to improve lives and organizations.

University of Padua, Padua, Italy  
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USA

Monica Fedeli  
Laura L. Bierema

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