



<http://www.diva-portal.org>

This is the published version of a paper published in .

Citation for the original published paper (version of record):

Hachem, H. (2023)

Depolarising and restating the principles of educational gerontology: a late modern rationale

*International Journal of Education and Ageing*, 5(3): 105-118

Access to the published version may require subscription.

N.B. When citing this work, cite the original published paper.

Permanent link to this version:

<http://urn.kb.se/resolve?urn=urn:nbn:se:oru:diva-109532>

# Depolarising and restating the principles of educational gerontology: a late modern rationale

**Hany Hachem**

**Department of Education, Örebro University, Sweden**

## **Abstract**

Today, it is no longer sensible to envisage older learners as complacent, naïve, oppressed and oblivious of their oppression, that their motivation to learn is precisely either a natural desire or the fruit of their non-conscious involvement in class struggles, or their emancipation requires a teacher-liberator. It is even less so to exonerate older adult education from its empowering and emancipating mission. These contentions and others polarise what came to be known as a humanist-critical philosophical debate embedded in three notorious statements of educational gerontology principles, offering one-sided explanations of educational and social realities from the sole vantage point of agency or structure. Partaking in this unfinished debate, this paper aims to depolarise it and devise a fourth statement of educational gerontology principles based on Anthony Giddens's critical social theory, thus serving educational gerontology with an alternative, dualistic take on agency and structure. Giddens's work inspires a timely late modern rationale for answering central questions in the teaching and learning of older people, including older learners' profiles, motivation to learn, the educational goal and outcomes of their learning, and the role of their teachers

## **Introduction**

This paper restates the principles of educational gerontology. It proposes a late modern rationale for tackling central questions in the teaching and learning of older people: *When* do older individuals start learning? Those who do that, *who* are they? *Where* do they pursue learning? For *what* reasons should they learn? *Why* do they want to learn? Finally, *how* do they benefit, and *how* should their teachers enact their role?

Intending to depolarise it, this paper partakes in the divisive debate manifesting itself in three previous educational gerontology statements, one humanist and two critical. Thus, it begins by analysing initial and consensual answers to central educational questions, followed by a summary of the debate of opposites embedded in the three statements released subsequently, leading up to a much-needed restatement of the principles of educational gerontology. This fourth statement mobilises Anthony Giddens's (1984; 1990; 1991) critical social theory and its late modern application for its ability to overcome agency-structure dualisms in explaining social and educational realities.

### **Initial answers to central questions**

This section summarises initial answers to central questions (when, who, where, what, why, and how) on educating older people to highlight their consensual nature. Having founded and named the field of educational gerontology, Harold McClusky baptised the first doctoral programme in older adult education at the University of Michigan in the United States of America, and Peterson (1976) bestowed his vision on the nascent field in the first-ever issue of the journal *Educational Gerontology*. Subsequent oeuvres in psychogerontology (see Agruso, 1978) were tell-tale of the newly proven educability of healthy older people contingent on non-age-related variables. They prompted calls on educational programme designers and teachers to cater to older learners' environmental contexts, not *a priori* their mere age.

To satisfy the educational demands of older people, programmes have pondered two ways of making sense of them as diverse individuals or as a homogeneous group. According to Walker (1990), educational provisions for older people must strike a balance, arguing that these two views are not mutually exclusive. As educable as older people are, the timing and reasons for their learning were also studied by Havighurst (1972; 1976) and Houle (1974), who suggested that education should accompany retirement plans and help older people adapt to role changes and health deterioration. Havighurst separated educational demands and their satisfaction into expressive and instrumental needs (see also McClusky, 1982; Peterson, 1981) but did not frame them as opposites.

Educational goals and the teachers' role in engaging older people, too, received early attention, not least in the distinguished works of Harry Moody. For Moody (1978), the goal of self-actualisation is undergirded by the political participation of older people and the mutation (raising) of their consciousness, especially noticeable when they emerge as different kinds of people "with new and enlarged sense of values and deepened understanding of who they are" (p. 15). To this end, Moody (1976) assigned a challenging role to teachers as providers of profound educational experiences that touch on the humanities and social sciences, including philosophy, religion, literature and psychology, to an audience of older people who bring a lifetime of experience to the classroom. As a result, education not only accompanies their disengagement but leads them to 'resynthesise' themselves outside expected social roles and norms, growing armed with unique and rich perspectives on the life cycle (Shea, 1995). According to Shea, this resynthesis is based on a life course of events

supplemented by readiness for continuous development that may nurture wisdom, psychological growth, identity integration and maturity. Thus, the self-actualisation of older people is sewed together with their socio-political participation, flirting with consciousness-raising as an educational goal and citing self-actualisation as a potential praxis.

The above account of initial answers to central educational questions reflects harmonious rather than divisive formulations. These formulations have become divisive through the advent of the humanist-critical debate embedded in three statements of principles of educational gerontology, summarised below.

### **Polarised statements of principles**

A humanist and two critical statements of principles largely dominate the debate. The first posits that late-life learning is a natural process contributing to older people's self-actualisation. The critical statements consider older adult education as a collective emancipating endeavour and a tool for social change; anything short of that is rejected. The competing statements devise principles, i.e., epistemologically aligned answers to central questions about the teaching and learning of older people, condensed below.

#### ***Why we need educational gerontology: A statement of first principles***

Critical social gerontology emerged in the early 1980s and remains the oldest ageing rationale to engage critically with "apocalyptic constructions of ageing" (Doheny & Jones, 2021, p. 2325). Its expansion kindled the development of the first statement of critical educational gerontology (CEG), in line with a general shift towards sociological theories in adult education and the popularisation of Freire's (1972) critical pedagogy. CEG's ethos centres on mobilising adult education to fight social inequality, oppression, sexism, ageism and racism and solicited prompt favourable engagement and resistance.

Frank Glendenning and David Battersby (1990) co-authored CEG's first statement of principles (see also Battersby & Glendenning, 1992). They addressed the when, who, where, what, why, and how of older adult education and maintained it for decades. The duo rejected a functionalist approach to educating older people, which views them as a social problem. Instead, they argued for a political *economy* rationale for educational gerontology, which problematises society's treatment of older people. Thus, CEG should transform society and engage with empowerment, emancipation, and transformation against social and hegemonic control. In the first statement, Battersby and Glendenning (1992) perceive older people as oppressed, complacent and unaware of their oppression; they are said to endure class-based inequalities. Thus, their teachers must strive to liberate them by mobilising Freire's critical pedagogy and applying his praxis of critical reflection and action towards the social empowerment and emancipation of older people. Boosting this first statement, Finsden (2002; 2007) promoted Freirean pedagogy and further elevated its position within CEG.

### ***The future of educational gerontology: A second statement of first principles***

The second statement of educational gerontology, written by Percy (1990), responded to the first critical statement with a humanist vision of older adult education. Percy (1990) drew on Malcolm Knowles' andragogy and Abraham Maslow's self-actualisation to argue that the aims of educational gerontology

*are not a transmogrification into critical educational gerontology but falling back into line with the humanistic, liberal intrinsic purposes of all educational processes' (p. 238).*

As such, education for older people should be no different than for any age group since learning is an intrinsic quest. Anchored in positive psychology, this second statement objected to the critical assertions that all older people are powerless and lack freedom and that education must aim for their empowerment and emancipation. Most importantly, Percy (1990) raised serious concerns over the role of teachers as liberators since it presupposes that their worldview is more accurate than that of their students.

### ***Critical educational gerontology: A third statement of first principles***

Three decades after the first statement, Formosa (2011a) released his third statement of CEG principles. He reminded his readers that a critical agenda for later life learning is ever relevant and suggested that even the most inner drives of humans under capitalism are only culturally embedded forms of domination serving the status quo. However, Formosa added that CEG has to become more modern, since Marxism "has gone out of fashion" (p. 324), and human agency's record levels have led to the fading of some social inequalities under neo-liberalism. Adhering to Bourdieusian notions of power as differences in capital through which social inequalities manifest themselves, Formosa (2011a) (re)coupled CEG to the Freirean pedagogical tradition as a countermeasure to persisting inequalities. He argued for a transformative rationale which uncovers and mitigates social injustice and (re)affirmed the need for teachers as liberators. In this case, teachers are knowledgeable and capable of raising the consciousness of their students by resorting to listening, love, and tolerance and fostering solidarity and Freirean dialogue in their classrooms.

### ***Why is a fourth statement imperative?***

Several reasons justify a fourth statement of educational gerontology principles. First, the current debate replicates tensions in general educational research, described by Nesbit (1998) as competing explanations of social realities that rely heavily on either agency or social structures. The first explanation stresses voluntary actions and the latter type searches for the origins of behaviours in covert structural forces and public policies. Meanwhile, addressing increasingly complex educational gerontology begs for a different theoretical anchoring.

Second, continued engagement with CEG cast doubts on the relevance of grand narratives to times characterised by risk and rapid societal changes. Applying the concept of longlife learning, Withnall (2010; 2012) argued that learning is essentially individual, and its experience is highly interpretive since older people's willingness and abilities to learn are ambiguously affected by previous learning experiences. As such, her take invites education that enhances personal development and touches upon social justice goals since it may simultaneously benefit older individuals and societies, and considers the everchanging external environments in postmodernity. Seeing its continued relevance (Withnall, 2022), longlife learning leaves room for highlighting older learners' reflexivity.

Last, older learners' reflexivity is overlooked in the logic of emancipation promulgated in the third critical statement, which has recently been scrutinised (see Hachem & Westberg, 2023). Even Formosa (2011b) himself contemplated breaking with the Freirean logic of emancipation and argued

*CEG must accept that social empowerment in later life is also possible through educational activities promoting autonomy and self-actualisation, both of which can influence individuals to improve their social and personal well-being (p. 85).*

Meanwhile, Formosa's postmodern appraisal was not an actual restatement of CEG and, to date, remains overshadowed by his weighty third statement.

The reasons above have set the scene for the restating the principles of educational gerontology. Hence, it is proposed that a fourth statement adopts Anthony Giddens's (1984; 1990; 1991) structuration theory and its late modern application, which allows agency and structure to enter a recursive relationship in which social structures are the outcomes of individual actions and, simultaneously, the media where such actions are enacted. This theoretical move conceives of action as neither wholly and historically predetermined nor entirely rational and conscious, to date, missing in educational gerontology.

### **Educational gerontology: A fourth and late modern statement**

Older adult education can no longer run on grand narratives split across two levels of reality. One, ensuing from a humanistic statement, celebrates the agency of older individuals in what seems to be a social vacuum (see Formosa, 2011a). At the same time, another reality reflects structural victimisation, as if older people are docile bodies subjected to external events, which they are incapable of fathoming and addressing independently of a liberator (Hachem, 2023a). This fourth statement of principles, outlined in Table 1, depolarises the debate and provides a dualistic rationale on agency and structure in answering the when, who, where, what, why, and how of the teaching and learning of older adults in the following principles.

**Table 1**

***A comparative table showing the main features of the statements of educational gerontology principles***

<b>Feature</b>	<b>A statement of first principles</b>	<b>A second statement of first principles</b>	<b>A third statement of first principles</b>	<b>A fourth and late modern statement</b>
<b>Academic worldview</b>	Critical social theory (Marxism) and critical pedagogy (Paolo Freire)	Positive psychology and andragogy (Abraham Maslow and Malcolm Knowles)	Critical social theory (Pierre Bourdieu) and critical pedagogy (Paolo Freire)	Critical social theory (Anthony Giddens) and identity-based transformative learning (Knud Illeris)
<b>Older learners</b>	Are powerless, oppressed and naïve	Have more leisure time and fewer responsibilities	Are oppressed and possess differential power levels	Are heterogeneous and have complex identities, and unprecedented levels of agency
<b>Motives for learning</b>	Class struggles and false consciousness	Natural intrinsic needs	Class struggles and habitus	Reflexivity, which may draw on habit
<b>Educational goal</b>	Empowerment and emancipation	Self-actualisation	Empowerment and emancipation	Self-actualisation and emancipation (life politics)
<b>Teacher's role</b>	Liberator	Facilitator/orchestrator	Educator/leader	Non-coercive and reflexive facilitator of knowledge

***Principle 1: Older learners are reflexive individuals***

Instead of perceiving older learners as an oppressed group or as individuals with more leisure time on their hands, as the previous statements do, a fourth statement emphasises their heterogeneity and reflexivity. Adults over 45 experience

physiological and mental changes as they encounter the 'life turn', which is "a mental phenomenon concerning the perception and acknowledgement that the remaining lifetime is not unlimited" (Illeris, 2014, p. 90). Many factors engender it, including personal and social events and crises, not restricted to health events, divorce, the death of a loved one, retirement, civil unrest, pandemics and global threats. In late modernity, characterised by risk and the detraditionalisation of society (Giddens, 1991), older people must navigate different retirement pathways, including refraining from it. Their reflexivity on modern social life is fuelled by

*the fact that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very practices, thus constitutively altering their character* (Giddens, 1991, p. 38).

The more detraditionalised the ageing process, the more reflexive older people may become (one event feeding the other).

Having been through decades of life experience, (older) people may be 'expert sociologists' (Giddens, 1984, p. 26) and may discursively and reflexively justify their actions. Knitting in their living rooms around their grandchildren, watching television all day, or playing Bingo are no longer their only retirement scenarios, to the extent that the cessation of work and retirement are currently questioned. Older people can liberate themselves from the normativity of preassigned identities as they reflexively make identity-defining (also identity-inspired) choices. Learning, for whatever reason, is naturally one of these choices and is intimately connected to older individuals' identities (see Illeris, 2014), habits and consumption patterns.

This reasoning leads to the belief that older people in industrialised societies and possibly elsewhere may no longer be perceived as oppressed, complacent and naïve. On the contrary, they respond to personal and social crises by displaying incredible courage and knowledgeability about their social realities, including ways to address them (Hachem & Westberg, 2023; Kulmus, 2021). Moreover, older learners engage in political action via small interest- or identity-based groups and drive social action, perhaps as Walker (1990) and Formosa (2011b) have imagined. However, they may also decide to resign into strategic idling to avoid anxieties and constraints accompanying political activism or for lack of interest. Finally, even beyond the life turn, older people in their fourth age remain educable and perceive themselves as engaged agents in learning processes (Ingebrand, Samuelsson & Hydén, 2021).

### ***Principle 2: All reasons for learning are equal under the sun***

Myriads of explanations for why older people continue learning exist. Parting with the previous statements' overvaluing of intrinsic motives and expressive learning rationales, the fourth statement implies that functional and intrinsic motives are not mutually exclusive. Reasons for action exist in different forms and are primarily unconscious, but they become more conscious when routines – created reflexively on a practical consciousness level – are compromised. In this case, motives transform into consciously experienced pangs or promptings (Giddens, 1990)

mobilised to restore ontological security, which is threatened upon the emergence of a life event, akin to the life turn. Thus, reflexivity and knowledgeability (Giddens, 1990) are at the heart of older people's decision to learn and persist, whether functional or expressive. Although learners' habitus affects their readiness for starting their studies, history alone fails to explain why older people with a non-academic background decide to study or those who interrupt their studies do so despite its supposed relevance to their class habitus (Hachem, 2023b). As such, a so-called non-conscious class struggle, which professedly evades older learners' awareness, forms an unintended consequence (Giddens, 1984) of the action of learning in older age rather than a mere motivational reason, the deconstruction of which is nevertheless a must.

Older people learn in different contexts: formal, informal and non-formal. For example, social movement learning in older age illustrates the attractiveness of informal learning and social activism to older people, especially women, who, as one in a group, realise glimpses of desirable futures for them (Giddens, 1991). An example of this is the Australian Raging Grannies (2023), who engage in identity-based activist and transformative learning. Additionally, older people attend non-formal educational activities at universities for the third age and other lifelong learning institutes, continuously appealing to a clientele of like-minded learners seeking self-actualisation. More recently, formal education for older people started gaining ground via age-friendly universities (see O'Kelly, 2022) that aim to mainstream older learners with traditional students and (re)skill them to counter dire labour shortages, strengthening silver economies; a welcome event, not least since on average only 24% of adults aged 55-65 participate in job-related training in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries (OECD, 2023).

All reasons for learning are equal under the sun as long as they satisfy older learners' reflexive project of themselves. As such, even intrinsic values of learning, such as gaining new insights and widening perspectives, reflectivity, enrichment, meaningfulness, enjoyment, peacefulness, existential awareness, and a sense of community (Schoultz, Öhman & Quennerstedt, 2022) are not jaded by functional goals for learning the likes of socialising and making friends, reskilling and career shifts, and political action.

### ***Principle 3: Life politics, a pathway for self-actualisation and emancipation***

The three statements cleave to self-actualisation or empowerment and emancipation as a goal for older adult education. Thus, the fourth statement dissolves this division and combines both goals via Giddens's concept of 'life politics'. Life politics deliberately avoids the dualism between the humanist goal of self-actualisation and the critical goal of emancipation, which initially were fused (see Moody, 1978). Life politics

*concerns political issues which flow from processes of self-actualisation in post-traditional contexts, where globalising influences intrude deeply into the reflexive project of the self, and conversely where processes of self-realisation influence global strategies (Giddens, 1991, p. 214).*

On the one hand, the personal and global are interconnected; on the other hand, life politics extends beyond the disputed logic of emancipatory politics.

Traditional emancipation may lose its orientation, replicating a hegemony it supposedly aims to destroy. Giddens (1990; 1991) regretted that emancipatory politics work best when emancipation builds on divisions between human beings (including teachers and learners), as it aims to eliminate exploitation, inequality, and oppression based on these divisions. He argued that it moves ‘away from’ not ‘towards’ (1991, p. 213); consequently, its ethos of ‘freedom from’ instead of ‘freedom to’ others individuals (1990, p. 156). For example, framing ageism as oppression is based on but also reinforces generational divisions on the premise that older people are victims of the youth instead of conceiving it as a relationship between actors, which requires constant and active dialogue. Henceforth, with Giddens’ sociology in mind, redefining important but divisive concepts for educational gerontology, including emancipation, consciousness-raising, and oppression, becomes possible. As such, emancipation would rather mean freedom *towards* and would be attached to a notion of critical consciousness as one’s active awareness of one’s agency and role in creating social practices and maintaining (dis)empowering relationships, for example, (self)ageism.

Life politics are political decisions allowed by freedom of choice and generative power, which may lead to morally justifiable pathways promoting self-actualisation in a context of global interconnectedness (Giddens, 1991). Political choices are influenced by self-identity, which in late modernity is reflexively constituted. Consequently, it is reasonable to cross-fertilise educational gerontology with identity-based transformative learning theory and practice (Hachem, 2022; Illeris, 2014), not only encouraging self- and social questioning but also promoting the development of ethics concerning how older people should live in a post-traditional order and against the backdrop of risk and uncertainty.

#### ***Principle 4: Teachers’ role as reflexive knowledge facilitators***

Teachers as revolutionary leaders in late modernity and post-truth contexts risk reinforcing teachers canonising themselves as individuals of superior intelligence to that of learners; hence, reflexivity on their part is an asset. In this fourth statement, the role of competent and knowledgeable teachers reaches beyond facilitating objective information to older learners. It, likewise, avoids convincing them that their perception of reality is false but seeks ways in which knowledge production and acquisition is healthily and reflexively unpacked. A reflexive teacher helps learners realise they can always ‘act otherwise.’ This teacher is cognisant that power and action are bound through the dialectic of control, whereby social systems embed relations of autonomy and dependence between actors in social interactions (Giddens, 1984). For example, the dialectic of control illuminates the possibility that “freedom from oppression – whether from work, government, debt, or the responsibilities of the household – may be rather more available to the older retired population than to most working age people” (Higgs & Gilleard, 2022, p. 5). As such, Giddens’s plea for a notion of liberation away from ‘master and slave dialectics’ is sound, not least

since the Freirean logic of emancipation may offhandedly eternalise unsolvable divisions between intelligent teachers and less critical older students (Hachem & Westberg, 2023; Percy, 1990), whereas such divisions were initially meant to be abandoned.

Older learners may enjoy much generative wisdom (Shea, 1995). It can be argued that this wisdom, coupled with an awareness of constraints, stops them from 'liberating' themselves (a la Freire) despite having the necessary knowledge (or critical reflection) ideally conditioning this liberation (Hachem & Westberg, 2023). Instead, teachers should emphasise the 'structurationist' nature of human action, i.e., that social practices are but the product of and the medium for agency (Giddens, 1984), and that is where learners may be enticed to induce change starting within the classroom setting if and when they desire it. For example, teachers can invite learners to question themselves and the social realities wilfully, examine their identity reflexively, their life course as finished and unfinished events (see Moody, 1978), and, most importantly, ponder and deconstruct unintended latent consequences of their actions via horizontal dialogue. Teachers simultaneously approach their role in education as being for enjoyment, critical inquiry, and resocialisation (Schoultz, 2023) since one and all are essential educational functions.

## **Conclusion**

Since Havighurst's (1976) claim that education in older age is a phase of adjustment and, three decades following the first statement of principles, we live in times where it is safe to say the future is 'older.' By 2050, the world population is expected to reach 2.1 billion 60+ individuals (WHO, 2022), while the European Union expects 30% of its population to be 65+ (Eurostat, 2020). A demographic rationale will continue serving the expansion of educational gerontology. However, apart from demographic projections favouring older people, this future, which already unfolds today, forewarns of global risks that funnel down into drastic changes in older people's intimate lives. These are being galvanised by, among others, pandemics, climate events, wars and nuclear threats, food shortages and pervasive social injustice. Here lies the relevance of educational gerontology to individuals and societies. Current labour and skills shortages (OECD, 2023) call for measures towards reframing retirement, improving the age-friendliness of work and learning environments, and, most importantly, reskilling older people — tasks worthy of extensive efforts by policymakers, educational providers and practitioners, employers as well as older learners.

This paper proposes a fourth statement of educational gerontology principles and draws the contours of a late modern philosophy of learning, which mobilises Giddens's social theory to depolarise the current debate. First, it emphasises the heterogeneity and reflexivity of older people. Second, it attributes equal value to the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects of learning as long as they serve the meaning that older learners themselves attribute to their education. Third, it promotes life politics combining self-actualisation and emancipation, and last, it calls on teachers to be reflexive practitioners who engage in self- and social questioning alongside their

students via a genuine dialogue of equals. This statement is particularly germane when later-life learning involves negotiating and reconquering positions alongside younger generations in labour markets and classrooms. Older people are de facto partners in transforming their world into a sustainable and age-friendly one for their sake and that of the coming generations.

*No conflict of interest arises from authoring this paper.*

*This work has been partly funded by the Nationella Forskarskolan i Tillämpad Utbildningshistoria (PEDASK) at Örebro University.*

## References

- Agruso, V. M. (1978) *Learning in the later years: Principles of educational gerontology*. New York: Academic Press.
- Battersby, D., & Glendenning, F. (1992) Reconstructing education for older adults: An elaboration of the statement of first principles. *Australian Journal of Adult and Community Education*, 32, 2, pp.115–21.
- Doheny, S., & Jones, I. R. (2021) What's so critical about it? An analysis of critique within different strands of critical gerontology. *Ageing & Society*, 41, 10, pp.2314–2334.
- Eurostat (2020) Ageing Europe - statistics on population developments. Available <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/en/web/products-statistical-books/-/ks-02-20-655> (accessed 8 September 2023)
- Findsen, B. (2002) Developing a conceptual framework for understanding older adults and learning. *New Zealand Journal of Adult Learning*, 30, 2, pp.34–52.
- Findsen, B. (2007) Freirean philosophy and pedagogy in the adult education context: The case of older adults' learning. *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, 26, 6, pp.545–559.
- Formosa, M. (2011a) Critical educational gerontology: A third statement of first principles. *International Journal of Education and Ageing*, 2, 1, pp.317–332.
- Formosa, M. (2011b) Rethinking empowerment: A postmodern appraisal of critical educational gerontology. ELOA 2nd conference: Elderly, education, intergenerational relationships and social development, Braga, pp. 84–96.
- Freire, P. (1972) *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. London: Penguin Books.
- Giddens, A. (1984) *The constitution of society: Outline of the theory of structuration*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1990) *The consequences of modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in late modern age*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Glendenning, F., & Battersby, D. (1990) Why we need educational gerontology and education for older adults: A statement of first principles. In F. Glendenning, & K. Percy (Eds.), *Ageing, education and society: Readings in educational gerontology*. Association for Educational Gerontology, pp.219–231.
- Hachem, H. (2022) Zooming in on Life Politics: Identity and Reflexivity in a University for the Third Age. *Adult Learning*, 33, 1, pp.32–39.
- Hachem, H. (2023a) Educating older adults: Theoretical and empirical examinations of the learning philosophies in older age (PhD dissertation, Örebro University).

Available at <http://oru.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1718479&dswid=6719> (accessed 23 September 2023)

- Hachem, H. (2023b) Ask them why: Older learners' motivational reasons for learning at a university for the third age. *Studies in the Education of Adults*, 51, 1, pp.82–100.
- Hachem, H., & Westberg, J. (2023) On older learners' naïveté: an examination of the emancipatory function of critical older adult education. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 42, 1, pp.101–116.
- Havighurst, R. J. (1972) *Developmental tasks and education*. New York: McKay.
- Havighurst, R. J. (1976) Education through the adult life span. *Educational Gerontology*, 1, 1, pp.41–51.
- Higgs, P., & Gilleard, C. (2022) Is ageism an oppression? *Journal of Aging Studies*, 62, 101051.
- Houle, C. O. (1974) The changing goals of education in the perspective of lifelong learning. *International Review of Education*, 20, 4, pp.430–446.
- Illeris, K. (2014) *Transformative learning and identity*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Ingebrand, E., Samuelsson, C., & Hydén, L. C. (2021) People with dementia positioning themselves as learners. *Educational Gerontology*, 47, 2, pp.47–62.
- Kulmus, C. (2021) Age images and learning in late life. Coping with crisis experiences as a potential in long-life societies. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 12, 3, pp. 267–280.
- McClusky, H. Y., (1982) Education for older adults. In C. Eisendorfer (Ed.) *Annual review of gerontology and geriatrics*. New York: Springer.
- Moody, H. R. (1976) Philosophical presuppositions of education for old age. *Educational gerontology*, 1, 1, pp.1–16.
- Moody, H. R. (1978). Education and the life cycle: A philosophy of aging. In R. Sherron & B. Lumsden (Eds.) *Introduction to educational gerontology*. Hemisphere Publishing Corporation, pp.23–39.
- Nesbit, T. (1998). Teaching in adult education: Opening the black box. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 48, 3, pp.157–170.
- OECD (2023) Retaining talent at all ages, ageing and employment policies, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available at <https://www.oecd.org/employment/retaining-talent-at-all-ages-00dbdd06-en.htm> (accessed 8 September 2023)
- O'Kelly, C. (2022) Developing the age-friendly university global network. In C. M. Gardiner, & E. O. Webb (Eds.), *The age-friendly lens*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp.74–88.

- Percy, K. (1990) The future of educational gerontology: A second statement of first principles. In F. Glendenning, & K. Percy (Eds.), *Ageing, education and society: Readings in educational gerontology*, Association for Educational Gerontology, pp.232–239.
- Peterson, D. A. (1976) Educational gerontology: The state of the art. *Educational Gerontology*, 1, 1, pp.61–73.
- Peterson, D. A., (1981) Participation in education by older people. *Educational Gerontology*, 7, 2–3, pp.245–256.
- Raging Grannies (2023) <https://raginggrannies.org/> (accessed 28 September 2023)
- Schoultz, M. (2023) Teachers' reflections on their practices in older adult non-formal education. *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research*, pp.1–15.
- Schoultz, M., Öhman, J., & Quennerstedt, M. (2022) Experiences of intrinsic values in education for older adults: Insights from a Swedish senior university. *European Journal for Research on the Education and Learning of Adults*, 13, 1, pp. 39–57.
- Shea, P. (1995) Ageing and wisdom. In F. Glendenning & I. Stuart-Hamilton (Eds.), *Learning and cognition in later life*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing Limited.
- Walker, J. (1990) The politics of provision and participation. In F. Glendenning, & K. Percy (Eds.), *Ageing, education and society: Readings in educational gerontology*. Association for Educational Gerontology, pp.96–113.
- WHO (2022) Ageing and health: Key facts. World Health Organisation. Available at <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/ageing-and-health> (accessed 8 September 2023)
- Withnall, A. (2010) *Improving learning in later life*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Withnall, A. (2012) Lifelong or longlife? Learning in the later years. In D. Aspin, J. Chapman, K. Evans, & R. Bagnall (Eds.) *Second international handbook of lifelong learning*, Dordrecht: Springer.
- Withnall, A. (2022) A global perspective on later life learning. In B. Findsen, H. Wei, & A. Li (Eds.), *Taiwan's senior learning movement*. Cham: Springer, pp.23–36.

## **Keywords**

Older adult education, lifelong learning, (critical) educational gerontology principles, late modernity, Anthony Giddens.

## **Correspondence**

[hany.hachem@oru.se](mailto:hany.hachem@oru.se)