

## Foreword

*Competency-Based and Social-Situational Approaches for Facilitating Learning in Higher Education* is another collaboration in the critical works of the Metagogy Project, initiated by Drs. Strohschen and Elazier in 2009. This collection offers reflections on experiences in higher education settings by the voices of students and teachers alike. Implicit in these voices are visceral responses to the varied praxes of education, explicitly grounded in instructional and administrative models for a vast variety of learners, though not always intentionally aligned to the metagogical framework.

Ironically, competency-based education within a context of socially-situated formats, such as community-based learning projects are revisited by Higher Education as something new to be explored. Although it has been implemented and practiced by numerous entities in one form or another across the globe for decades, these voices lend their credence to a time-proven model of instruction to promote its expansion in the field as much as they speak to the growing awareness in academia about civic and community engagement. Benefits of gaining competences in the context of serving community needs are multi-faceted. They optimize and bring resources of the education institutions and students to address community needs; undergird community development with researched evidence of strategies; create practice settings for authentic and performance-based learning for students; and increase cross-cultural communication. As faces of the student population in higher education change, the time has come for institutions of higher learning to listen to the students' desire to leave with more than a collection of learning experiences that have little connection to their realities after the courses are completed.

The many voices echo throughout the pages with the call for more authentic and relevant learning. Adults seek knowledge and skills for a variety of reasons and motivations: job and career advancement, personal growth, and yes, even the joy of learning for its own sake. They know this comes at a cost of time, money, foregoing family time, delaying work opportunity, etc. The authors in this selection of perspectives on practices share the view that this situation places a tremendous obligation on the shoulders of educators. The underlying common ground the authors

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describe intersects at the belief that it is time to veer off the well-trodden paths of program design conventions and embrace the collaborative road-building mindset that was modelled by adult education programming of the past.

This book offers a panorama of innovations in the design, delivery, and administration of teaching and learning in higher education. This landscape of practices is presented through the lenses of practitioners, educationists, community activists, funders, educators, and, most importantly, adult students, who are ultimately the very stakeholders to carry forth the work of an educated citizenry: competent in critical basic and advanced knowledge, skills, and attitudes that our world needs.

*Victor Wang*  
*Liberty University, USA*