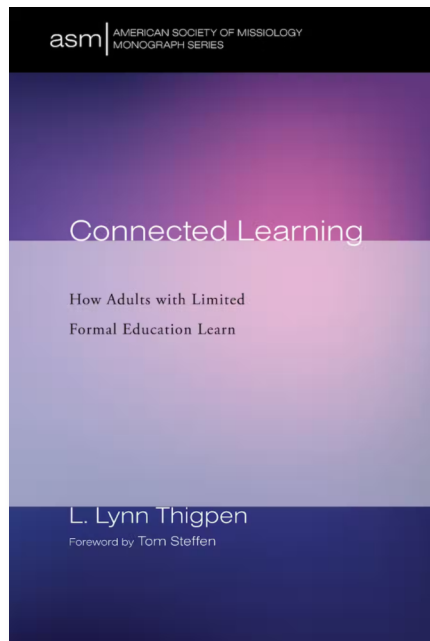


REVIEW: *Connected Learning: How Adults with Limited Formal Education Learn* by L. Lynn Thigpen

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In the context of a pedagogical clash between the literate teacher and ALFE (Adults with Limited Formal Education), Thigpen pursues one question: how do ALFE learn? Through an in-depth study of Cambodian adults, Thigpen's goal is to find a more positive descriptor for this group of learners in contrast to descriptors such as illiterate or oral. Moreover, she seeks to provide strategies to address this gap in pedagogy and reception. The descriptor that Thigpen provides as a replacement for orality is "connected or relational learning."

From this central idea stems further, more particular, conclusions on how ALFE learn. Of particular note are her findings that showed that shame acted as a barrier to life-long learning.

Shame as a barrier contrasted with a sense of purpose and hope, stemming from Buddhist or Christian communities, that provided other adults with the ability to persevere in life-long learning.

Based on the idea of connected learning, Thigpen provides a range of suggestions to differing groups in society, from teachers to theological institutions and policymakers, as well as ideas for further research. Her recommendations seek to address the dividing wall between education provision by the literate to those who require a more holistic approach to learning. She rightly urges a view of education that goes beyond teaching literacy to finding the various ways that people learn despite not being able to read.

The key insight from Thigpen's research, in addition to the in-depth description of Cambodian life and culture, is the reminder that all learning is personal, whether by

print or other. At times she does push the dichotomy of people versus print too far, muting the fact that even print was written by a person. Notwithstanding this, the framework of learning through people provides a more robust structure to working with those who can't learn through print. Furthermore, working in theological education in Cambodia, reading remains hard for those Khmer that are literate. The pedagogical approach that Thigpen is advocating—going beyond just literacy—is key, even among literate Cambodians. Thus, within this framework of the personal, education is bound to be responsive to the varying needs of different groups in society, rather than seeking to force learners into the one print mold. Educators, not only in Cambodia, but across the board will benefit from interaction with Thigpen's research on how ALFE learn.

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