

Fifty years of the Journal of Educational Thought

IAN WINCHESTER
University of Calgary

This issue is the first issue in the 50th year of publication for The Journal of Educational Thought. The very first issue was under the editorship of H.S.Baker, the then Dean of the Faculty of Education in the University of Calgary, Volume 1, Number 1 was published in April 1967 and consisted of 60 pages. It was in origin an entirely English language publication and was characterized in its blurb to potential authors in the following manner:

The Journal welcomes articles and communications about articles. These may deal with the following matters, among others: examination of educational theories or assumptions underlying these theories, examination or re-examination of the contributions of important educators, enquiry into the ethical implication of past or present educational practices, exploration of the educational implications of social trends or of research endeavours.

In his editorial Baker tells us that for a number of years the Faculty of Education, University of Calgary, has been considering the publication of a journal for the discussion of educational ideas. "There is, of course, no doubt that the improvement of public education depends substantially on research. But there is equally no doubt of the need for a complementary kind of activity---for studies of a more speculative or philosophical kind, directed to a broader kind of readership than usually pertains to research publications. Hence The Journal of Educational Thought---for academicians, teachers, administrators and the general public as well."

By and large the journal has continued on this vein, though empirical research has also found its way into its pages.

In the initial phase of the journal the sponsorship consisted of a wide range including: The Alberta Advisory Committee on Educational Studies, The Board of Governors, the University of Calgary, The Government of the Province of Alberta, The Alberta School Trustees' Association, The Calgary Public School Board, The Calgary Separate School Board, Calgary Power Limited, W.J. Gage Limited, The Medicine Hat School Board, Mobil Oil Canada Ltd., and the Western Business Research Institute.

For most of its history, however, the Faculty of Education at the University of Calgary sponsored the publication and the annual sale of journal issues, at \$4.00 per volume of three numbers, covered the rest. Prices have now risen as inflation took hold.

By 1978, some eleven years later, the editor had changed to R.L. Schnell. The journal also characterized itself as welcoming articles in French as well as English. And its description of what it wanted to promote and publish had changed. Here is what the blurb describing the journal's emphasis then read:

The Journal of Educational Thought promotes speculative, critical thought about the theory and practice of education in a variety of disciplines: administration, comparative education, curriculum and instruction, history, philosophy, psychology and sociology. Readers' views about previously published articles appear in a communications section, which also contains papers of a more informal nature. The book section includes short book reviews as well as extended book review essays. The Journal is international in scope, and serves a readership: specialists in the disciplines mentioned, scholars in general and the public.

By 1994 the journal had a new editor, F.T. (Abe) Johnson, a professor of educational administration. As the incoming Dean I was added to the editorial board, and the journal published articles in both English and French. Johnson came on as editor for Volume 28, Number 3 in 1994. The practice of having the abstracts for each article translated into the other official Canadian language was already in place. And the journal had grown from its initial sixty pages to over 100 a number. Johnson remained editor until his untimely death from cancer in 1998.

In 1998 the position of editor was offered to those potentially interested in the task but there were no takers. As I was already editing another international journal and was planning to leave the deanship I took on the job. With Linda Lentz as the editorial assistant and Garth Benson as the book review editor it was relatively easy to maintain the journal. The Review Board had become a national, no longer a local, group and was to some degree international. The journal has remained under my editorship from 1998 until the present, but with a variety of editorial assistants after Linda Lentz ultimately retired from the task.

The Internet and its possibilities for instant publication, for the penetration of journals from China and India, and the notion that a journal could be simply an on-line journal with no hard copy had not yet developed. But since 2000 or so the reality of journal publication has changed. The international scope of JET has

increased. The frequency of French language articles has diminished. The willingness of the Faculty of Education, now the Werklund School of Education, to fund the journal has diminished. The necessity a of increasing an annual subscription from \$4.00 per year to over \$100.00 per year just to maintain the journal has strikingly affected subscription as has the startling growth in specialist journals that the Internet has made possible.

In its first fifty years The Journal of Educational Thought has fulfilled its mandate as it described it. It has published important articles on speculative, critical and historian thought relating to a wide variety of educational issues, concerns and sub-disciplines. It has had an international readership and authorship. It continues to receive manuscripts with regularity in both English and French. We may hope it will have another fifty years of useful contribution to the scholarly community in education, worldwide. But this is not an easy time for journals. We now publish our articles and past issues in JSTOR for access to past writing. We have not yet gone to an electronic format for each issue as its primary mode of publication. But that increasingly seems inevitable. But let us raise a glass to the first fifty years.

Ian Winchester
Editor