

certain ecological questions. The institution would run the risk of the program itself being disrupted, and in all likelihood would not be willing to risk alienating, inadvertently or otherwise, a significant section of the public. It is simply safer not to take the risks at all. In this way, the world has become a more dangerous place in which to program about controversial issues. The climate which has been created by the new style of social movements and their tactics has had the effect of circumscribing even those adult educators who might otherwise be willing to organize active programs in the field of education about public affairs. (p. 145)

Is this adult education for the millennium? Where is our courage? Have we had any in the past? This is unclear after reading this book.

We need a vision of a better life if we are to capture the past that does exist in the movement. We may have to take risks in order to find out. Many adult educators have done so in past. Many do so at present.

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Selman, G. and Dampier, P. (1991). *The foundations of adult education in Canada*. Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 310 pp., \$24.95 (softcover).

Canadian adult educators have long needed a road-map through the many and varied blocks that form the foundations of our field of study, our field of practice, and our movement. We need encouragement to sort through adult education in its formal, non-formal, and informal sense. It would be helpful to know if our foundations were indigenous or imported, or both. Indeed, it would be good to know just who Canadian adult educators are.

Selman and Dampier introduce some foundation blocks and should be congratulated on attempting an enormous task. However, they fall short of providing a statement about *the* foundations of adult education in Canada. This book is a collection of essays about some foundations of formal adult education in Anglophone Canada seen from the west coast. As such, it is a contribution to the adult education literature.

While introducing the contents of their book, Selman and Dampier make a significant apology. Because neither is fluent in French, they found it necessary to exclude adult education in French speaking regions of the country, thereby excluding at least one-third of Canada from their story. At the same time, they introduce Mark Selman as a special contributor to the chapter on functions and

philosophical considerations. Would it not have been just as easy to ask one of the many Francophone adult educators to contribute a chapter? The book essentially is a collection of essays and would not have been weakened as a result.

In chapter 1 the authors enter the quicksand of adult education as a field of study by dealing with definitions and boundaries. The literature has long agonized over definition as we have tried to justify our field as a discipline. The effect of starting off with definition and boundary is to add another hesitant note to the apology over language. At any rate, the foundations of Canadian adult education lie in the passion, simplicity, and unassuming work of Canadians from coast to coast rather than in a preoccupation with definition.

Chapter 2 consists largely of a sound introduction to some philosophical considerations in adult education written by Mark Selman, son of the principal author of this book. He introduces some philosophical distinctions and looks at the ways adult educators differ over fundamental assumptions — especially functionalism and conflict theory, and subject-centred and learner-centred approaches. He looks at how positivism, pragmatism, and analytic philosophy affect adult education practice. He concludes by noting the value implications in the concept of andragogy, a controversial concept in the literature. What is frustrating throughout the remaining eight chapters of this book is that these philosophical considerations are ignored. They could have provided the thread to bind the book together.

This thread would have been welcomed in chapter 3 where external influences, mainly British and American, are introduced as themes and Canadian variations on those themes outlined. The themes and variations are an important part of our tradition but there is no explanation of why they came and why they remained or disappeared. For example, why did the British Workers' Educational Association not long survive in Canada? Selman and Dampier declare that by the early 1970s community development activities were over in Canada. The question is why? What is community development? If they were over in the 1970s, what does this mean? What are the philosophical implications behind this?

Selman and Dampier conclude in chapter 3 that adult education as a social movement is dead. But what sort of movement is the adult education movement in the first place? Was it ever a social movement? It might be helpful to recall that Coolie Verner, founder of the first university adult education graduate program in Canada at the University of British Columbia in 1962, once told us that the adult education movement was not a social movement. Rather, it was a movement that made social movements move. From this perspective there is no need to lament the demise of adult education's social consciousness. It may be alive and well elsewhere, perhaps in the popular education movement. The

question is, where does adult learning for social justice appear these days? Perhaps the liberatory tradition in adult education might articulate an answer. The chapter ends with a brief chronicle of adult education events.

The mood changes in chapters 4 and 5. These chapters are well organized introductions to program planning, a cornerstone of adult education as a field of practice. In chapter 4 the authors outline our preoccupation with participation, noting three main topics of inquiry: (a) determining what is meant by participation in adult learning, (b) examining who participates and for what reasons, and (c) identifying the providers of adult learning activity. Most of the main contributors to this inquiry are cited, including works by Verner so long neglected in the Canadian literature. In chapter 5 elements of design in programs are examined, "the most conspicuous aspect of adult education" (p. 103). The main part of this chapter is a list of 12 design elements that appear in most programs. In addition, each element is elaborated upon by way of a sketch taken from a Canadian experience. Some of the ingenuity in program planning is well illustrated in these sketches.

In chapter 6 the authors leave the practical world of program planning and enter the maze of public policy. Selman and Dampier define the term public policy and provide a framework for analyzing the process of policy development. Adult literacy is used as the subject of a case study of how public policy was designed in Canada. The authors conclude with a review of international calls for public policy in adult education. Sometimes it is unclear why certain information is introduced. For example, the contribution of Thomas and Kidd to public policy formulation is applauded with no indication of exactly what the contribution was. Newcomers to Canadian adult education may have no idea of who these two are or what they contributed. Another similar annoyance is the introduction of the Declaration of Dar es Salaam with no information about it. This book contains many facts, figures, events, and players, often for no apparent reason.

Chapter 7 consists of a lengthy list of adult education activities in each Canadian province and territory plus a few points about activities in China, Sweden, and Tanzania. In trying to include so much, Selman and Dampier present a superficial account. For example, in introducing adult education in Alberta they note the origins stemming from 1906 with a bill creating the University of Alberta. The next development was in 1958 with the opening of Lethbridge Junior College. Do two isolated events tell us much about adult education in Alberta? How did the pioneers in the province learn the things they had to learn? Simply introducing isolated statements leads to inaccuracies. Further Education Councils in Alberta are credited with facilitating non-formal learning. In fact, most Council funding supports formal adult education in mainstream educational institutions. In chapter 7 the authors conclude with some notes about adult education abroad to illustrate Canadian international

awareness. There is no concluding paragraph to tie together the disparate content of this chapter. One looks in vain for some connection with Mark Selman's philosophical considerations.

Chapter 8 contains a useful overview of adult education as a discipline and a vocation with no indication of how it fits into the still inarticulate story this book is meant to relate. It is a good essay as it stands. Selman and Dampier slip back to 1814 in Britain to start the chapter, sketch some British and American events of the 19th and 20th centuries, and then outline the beginnings of adult education as a profession. They provide an overview of training opportunities, institutional developments, Canadian literature, and other indicators of professionalism in adult education. They list the roles of adult educators as guides to the learning process, program planners, administrators, researchers, and other specialists. Many roles have been neglected. Where are the radicals, elders, story tellers, volunteers, librarians, social workers, and clergy? Where are the pioneers and the Native Peoples who know as much about adult learning as anyone?

In chapter 9 the authors look at the present and the future. Selman and Dampier conclude that the future is bright for formal, vocational, and academic education. It is dark for those committed to adult education as a component of social critique and social change. They predict that adult education will continue to grow. At the same time, they identify four forces working against a sense of cohesion in Canadian adult education: (a) constitutional arrangements that leave education disjointed, (b) adult education that is dispersed here and there, (c) institutionalization, and (d) philosophical disunity.

This reviewer finds their conclusion rather gloomy. Perhaps if we concentrate on non-formal education and informal learning, the liberatory tradition that remains inarticulate in our literature may bind together those who strive for a better social order. That tradition might bring together a web of Canadians aiming to transform society by helping adults learn. This story is yet to be told. Part of the challenge is to acquire the courage to dream.

The final chapter is a brief introduction to the literature. The last phrase in the last sentence of the book again captures adult education's inferiority complex — "the marginality of the field." Thus the last word is another apology. The book ends where it began. This sense of pessimism weakens this book as a mirror of Canadian adult education past, present, and future. Other mirrors may be more optimistic.

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