

PHILOSOPHIES OF ADULT EDUCATION MOVEMENTS IN 20TH CENTURY CANADA: IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRENT LITERACY EDUCATORS

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Abstract

This article examines the philosophical roots of today's adult literacy movement in Canada, as reflected in the Women's Institutes, Frontier College, and the Antigonish Movement of the early 20th century. It compares these movements' expressions of three philosophical approaches to adult education: (a) the liberal focus on pre-determined skills instruction, a deficit model perspective, and learners' needing to learn how to learn; (b) the progressive focus on learners' life role experiences, personal/social development, and needs-motivated learning; and (c) the humanistic focus on self-directed learning and independence, meaningful learning, and learners' self-image/self-esteem. Each movement's adult educators were ethically committed to manifesting these philosophical elements in their programming practices. The philosophical beliefs they conveyed have implications for current adult literacy educators.

Résumé

Cet article examine les origines philosophiques du mouvement de l'alphabétisation des adultes au Canada, tel que vécu par l'Institut des Femmes de Frontier College ainsi que par le mouvement Antigonish du 20^{ième} siècle. Il met en comparaison les visions de ces organisations selon trois approches philosophiques de l'évaluation des adultes : (a) la vision libérale de l'enseignement d'habiletés prédéterminées, soit un modèle donnant peu de résultats et dans le cadre duquel les apprenants doivent apprendre à apprendre ; (b) la vision progressiste sur les expériences de vie des apprenants, sur leur développement personnel et social ainsi que sur leur motivation instrumentale ; (c) la vision humaniste sur l'auto-apprentissage et l'autonomie, sur l'apprentissage essentiel ainsi que sur le reflet des apprenants et l'estime qu'ils ont d'eux-mêmes. Les enseignants de chacun de ces mouvements en éducation des adultes furent invités à exprimer ces éléments philosophiques dans la programmation de leurs pratiques d'enseignement. Les croyances philosophiques que ces

organisations ont transmises engendrent des répercussions pour leurs enseignants aux adultes.

The United Nations' declaration of the 1990s as the *Decade of Literacy* has reinvigorated adult literacy education. The challenges that face today's adult literacy educators in Canada are part of a historical continuum. Examining past educational practices from a philosophical perspective reveals prevailing pedagogical beliefs that permeate adult literacy education. Three educational philosophies dominate the current Canadian adult literacy movement: liberalism, progressivism, and humanism. These philosophies also characterized Canadian adult education movements of the early to mid 1900s. In this article the philosophical underpinnings of three movements—the Women's Institutes, Frontier College, and the Antigonish Movement—are compared to provide better understanding of the educational practices that define the literacy movement in Canada at the beginning of the 21st century.

The Theoretical Framework Used for the Comparisons

Five philosophical orientations guide most adult educators' practices: liberalism, progressivism, humanism, behaviourism, and radicalism. The liberal philosophy focuses on cognitive development, pre-determined skills instruction, a deficit model perspective, learners' needing to learn how to learn, and the acquisition of facts and principles (Elias & Merriam, 1995; Scott, 1998). Liberalists assume responsibility for transmitting pre-set units of knowledge to learners who are cognitively deficient, but who have an innate desire to be taught; they believe in learning for learning's sake, without ties to social activism (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Williams, 1996). The progressive philosophy focuses on life experiences, problem solving, and the creation of teacher-student partnerships (Elias & Merriam; Scott). Progressivists believe in self-directed learning, with an emphasis on learners' life role experiences, and needs-motivated learning in order to foster personal and social development (Bigge, 1982; Darkenwald & Merriam; Scott). In progressive education learning the subject matter is not as important as experiencing the problem-solving process (Mezirow, 1991). The humanistic philosophy focuses on individual autonomy, self-exploration, and personal growth (Elias & Merriam; Scott). Humanists believe in meaning making and interactive learning (Houle, 1984; Spencer, 1998). The humanistic teacher is a mediator (Scott, 1998) who tailors program instruction and evaluation to individual learners' maturational needs for self-actualization (Knowles, 1980).

The remaining two philosophical approaches are less widely reflected in today's Canadian adult literacy movement. Behaviourism empowers the teacher instead of the student, and radicalism invokes political activism as its primary goal. Behaviourists believe in standardization and stimulus-response conditioning (Holtzlander, 1997; Skinner, 1976). The behaviourist philosophy focuses on competency-based vocational skills training and the use of rewards and punishments to control students (Elias & Merriam, 1995; Scott, 1998). This focus provides the foundation of the technical-rational education movement (Holtzlander). Radicals believe in using problem-posing to enlighten oppressed learners (Freire, 1993). The radical philosophy focuses on structural social-economic change through consciousness-raising (Elias & Merriam; Scott). This philosophy was the foundation of Paulo Freire's work with literacy learners in Brazil, and although the philosophy underlies popular empowerment education in Canada (Rosenthal, 1990), it is not widely used in mainstream literacy education here.

The early 20th century adult education movements that provide the philosophical bases for comparison in this article represent a broad base of adult education programming practices in different geographic regions of the country. The Women's Institutes began in British Columbia in 1896 for the homemaking education of farm women; Frontier College began in Ontario in 1895 for the basic literacy education of men in mining, logging, road, and railway camps; the Antigonish Movement began in Nova Scotia in 1928 among communities comprising fishermen, miners, and farmers, with emphasis on co-operative business education. These adult education movements made significant contributions to the evolvement of adult literacy education in Canada. In the following sections, the practices that express the underlying philosophies are compared.

Liberalism in Adult Literacy

One can easily argue the merits of delivering pre-determined basic skills instruction to the 6.9 million Canadians whom Statistics Canada (cited in White & Hodinott, 1991) assessed as functionally illiterate in 1990. Adult literacy students frequently have similar reading, writing, and arithmetic learning goals and often are described in terms of deficit model traits such as verbal inarticulation, inappropriate classroom behaviours, and academic disabilities (Berdeaux & Borden, 1984; Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980). They may indeed also need to be taught how to be self-disciplined learners, because of weaknesses in basic study skills, the ability to learn independently, and

transference skills for different contexts (Canadian Association for Adult Education [CAAE], 1982; Mealey, 1991; Rossman, Fisk, & Roehl, 1984). As articulated by Rossman et al., they need to learn how to learn.

Individual learners in a literacy (or other adult basic education) program, however, seldom have the same incoming academic skill levels, and therefore should not be given the same pre-set units of knowledge. R. M. Smith (1972) describes adult learners as each having a "unique combination" (p. 16) of learning skills, background experiences, life interests, and educational needs. These disparities can have significant implications for literacy classrooms, especially when different levels of cognitive maturity (see Davenport & Davenport, 1985) also affect students' readiness to learn.

Furthermore, it is unfair to categorize adults with functional literacy problems as deficient (Fingeret, 1984). Most literacy students' academic skill deficits are due to lack of academic experience, not lesser intelligence or native ability. In their studies of basic writers, for example, Martinez and Martinez (1987) found that these learners' writing problems stem from lack of knowledge of writing conventions, not faulty thought processes. They recommend that educators of these students focus on teaching them how to write, instead of trying to change their cognitive frameworks, "much as using an eggbeater rather than a rolling pin to beat eggs improves the result" (p. 22). Rose (1983) similarly describes adult basic learners as "raw" (p. 127) rather than cognitively deficient. She claims that if these students were truly incapable of learning, they would not be succeeding in basic education programs.

Expressions of Liberalism in the Women's Institutes

In 1896, when Adelaide Hoodless prescribed the need to impart knowledge of housekeeping and family caregiving to British Columbia farm women (see Chapman, 1950), she imbued the Women's Institutes of Canada with a liberal focus on pre-determined instruction. This focus was reinforced by provincial government sponsors who supported Women's Institutes as a means to promote agriculture by giving farm women lessons in parliamentary procedure and homemaking through lectures and demonstrations (Carbert, 1996). The level to which the British Columbia government, for example, attempted to dictate to its Women's Institutes is evidenced in its rule that no Institute could change any part of its constitution without Department approval (Spencer, 1998).

The initial participation of most Women's Institute members relied on a deficit model. The perception was that farm women were isolated and lonely, and eager for the company of other women. The instruction they received

within the Institutes was also based on a deficit model profile of women who originally came from urban centres and were unfamiliar with farm life, and who needed to learn how to conduct meetings and to speak in public (Dennison, 1987). They responded well to the Women's Institutes' liberal focus on the disciplined learning of organizational structure and home economics (Carbert, 1996).

The liberal philosophy's emphasis on the need to be trained how to learn was also very evident in Women's Institutes, which were based on the belief that scientific reason would create a perfect society (Dennison, 1987). Provincial departments of agriculture distributed minute books, which detailed Institute rules and regulations along with instructions for following them. The government even recommended that Institutes hold a parliamentary drill and review the rules and regulations at each meeting. Institute schools, model meetings, and research articles were all used to teach the parliamentary rules of order that were expected to be used in Women's Institute meetings.

Expressions of Liberalism in Frontier College

From its beginning in 1899, Frontier College's provision of basic literacy and English as a second language (Selman, 1998) gave it a decidedly liberal focus. When Alfred Fitzpatrick took reading material to men in Ontario bush camps (Cook, 1987), he started a still-lingering adult education tradition based on the pre-determined need to serve workers in remote locations (see Welton, 1987). Frontier College's initial teaching methods, based on the Queen's University practice of planning lessons around group readings of poetry and prose (Cook), were clearly liberal.

Fitzpatrick virtually defined the deficit model of program delivery by ministering to the needs of neglected and exploited campmen in labour so demeaning that "whitemen fearing loss of self-respect cannot be induced to perform it" (Fitzpatrick, cited in Cook, 1987, p. 37). He described these workers as deteriorating intellectually and morally from diseased, unsanitary living conditions. Certainly, the workers' levels of functional illiteracy classified them as educationally deficient: Fitzpatrick reported that 30% were totally illiterate, and 75% could not tally their work hours or calculate their wages. Undoubtedly, Frontier College undertook to address real educational, recreational, and cultural deficits among the campmen it initially served. Today it continues to serve "persons with special needs" (Selman, 1998, p. 26), such as Aboriginal groups, ex-prisoners, physically and mentally handicapped individuals, and the homeless (see Kuitenbrouwer, 1997; Selman; Thomas, 1983).

Frontier College's aim "to reach the people who are very difficult to reach" (Poulton, cited in Kuitenbrouwer, 1997) has not just geographic but also philosophical implications. Teaching learners how to develop as students (see Selman, Selman, Cooke, & Dampier, 1998) is a liberal concept. The labourer-teachers who supervised camp reading rooms and provided basic education in order to help each adult learner "function as a proud individual and as a productive citizen" (Selman et al, p. 187) cultivated in their students the skills for self-disciplined learning.

Expressions of Liberalism in the Antigonish Movement

Elements of a liberal focus can be found in the "traditional liberal adult education classes" (Spencer, 1998, p. 32) of Nova Scotia's Antigonish Movement, which began in 1928. The messages, speakers, and materials used in mass meetings, study groups, leadership schools, refresher courses, training courses, and kitchen meetings (Coady, 1950a) were pre-designed to give people information about what the Antigonish Movement leaders believed was needed most: education about co-operatives and credit unions (Selman, 1998). Like many other adult education initiatives, the Antigonish Movement was premised on financial and social class deficits (Coady, 1950a). Its maritime fishermen, miners, and farmers were impoverished, uneducated victims of middlemen and company stores (Lotz & Welton, 1987). They were "the great masses left behind" (Coady, 1950b, p. 26) by more fortunate others.

Antigonish Movement leaders endorsed a liberal philosophy that the people they worked with needed to be taught not only what to learn, but how—and often why—to learn it. Coady (cited in Gillen, 1998) lamented "the great default of the people ... [who were] ... victims of ignorance and exploitation ... [with] ... mind-sets to be broken—habits to be changed" (p. 279). The instructional methods used in the Antigonish Movement were deliberate measures to make people aware of their problems, and to suggest practical (i.e., co-operative) ideas for their solution (Landis, 1950).

Progressivism in Adult Literacy

Modern adult educators define the adult personality in terms of experience (Mullen, 1987). Literacy education programs therefore use adult experience as a fundamental resource for learning (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980). The influence of past experience on current adult learning situations is not always positive, however (Cross, 1981). Grossman (1993) describes adult education classrooms "filled with learners lost in fear" (p. 50) because of academic

histories marked by repeated failures and unsatisfactory relationships with teachers. The analysis and reconstruction of experience that characterizes progressive education is therefore a particularly valuable exercise for adult literacy students, whose past unfavourable schooling experiences often provoke current fears and self-doubts, and interfere with their present learning outcomes.

Kahler, Morgan, Holmes, and Bundy (1985) point out that "learning is an emotional problem as well as an intellectual one" (p. 22). Therefore, progressive educators attend to emotions, both positive and negative, in adult learning experiences (Andrews, 1981). The fear that characterizes many adults' learning experiences stems from lack of confidence in their ability to learn, and they often act out their fears in ways that may cushion the blow to their fragile egos (Draper, 1988; Grossman, 1993). Emotionally sensitive progressive educational environments allow these learners freedom of expression when they need to vent their frustrations, and help them learn how to deal with these emotions in positive, socially appropriate ways (Brundage & MacKeracher, 1980).

Developmental phases and social responsibilities demarcate adulthood (Kahler et al., 1985). Progressive literacy education programs give adults vital opportunities to use learning for solving problems related to out-of-school life roles (Davenport & Davenport, 1985). Many literacy students, moreover, seek academic upgrading as a means to move out of their respective communities and to access higher level job and training opportunities elsewhere (Ulmer, 1980). Thus, progressive approaches to literacy education empower students to make decisions to reach previously unattainable goals (K. G. Smith, 1993).

The need felt by an adult to participate in a learning experience determines his or her motivation to learn (Fagan, 1991). For adult literacy students, the progressive *needs* approach to basic skills development is a sociological solution to the problems of providing academic courses that suit specific student populations (K. G. Smith, 1993). Whether one defines learner needs in terms of felt, expressed, ascribed, or real needs, there is no doubt that the needs of undereducated adults differ from those of other student groups. Furthermore, many undereducated adults do not feel a need for improved academic skills because they have learned to cope without the reading, writing, and computation skills that better educated adults take for granted (Banmen, 1986). Cross (1981) advises that such persons may need to be brought to a higher state of academic awareness before they can be expected to make informed decisions to participate in adult education activities.

Expressions of Progressivism in the Women's Institutes

The sharing of skills that typified many Women's Institute activities reflects the progressive philosophy of utilizing learner experiences in adult education. Chapman (1950) describes many early members' expertise-sharing as ranging from baking bread and sewing, to writing papers on child rearing and household management, to making speeches in public. Similarly, the progressive skill sharing that began in individual Institutes soon spread to neighbouring Institutes within and between provinces, and eventually overseas to Great Britain, Australia, and New Zealand.

The Women's Institutes' motto "for home and country" (Selman et al., 1998, p. 169) defines the progressive role that Institutes played in their members' personal and social development. What began for many members as an opportunity to socialize with other women quickly grew from domestic concerns into political/feminist interests and community ventures on local, national, and international levels (Chapman, 1950; Corbett, 1950). All of these pursuits constituted vital functions in Canadian society. For example, the socializing services that Women's Institutes provided extended beyond entertainment for their own female members into recreational evenings for the entire community (Dennison, 1987). Domestic concerns relied on the "expanded view of the family as the important unit of society and of the paramount importance of the mother in raising children" (Sutherland, cited in Welton, 1987, p. 54). Political/feminist interests included guardianship laws and property rights (Spencer, 1998), and resulted in the National Action Committee for the Status of Women (Carbert, 1996), as well as world-wide moral and philanthropic organizations (Dennison). Outcomes of the Women's Institutes' focus on a progressivist, needs-based, problem-solving approach include community services such as community halls, cemeteries, libraries, garbage disposal, sewer systems, fire halls, postal service, telephone systems, road construction, public restrooms, parks and playgrounds, emergency assistance, and aid for the destitute and elderly (Dennison).

Expressions of Progressivism in Frontier College

Frontier College's progressive philosophy is grounded solidly in Fitzpatrick's descriptions of "the crime of the desertion and demoralization of the frontiersman" (cited in Cook, 1987, p. 35). Fitzpatrick's deep-seated belief that all men deserve an education (Spencer, 1998) became a founding principle for addressing inequities that included dividing campmen into "whitemen" and "foreigners" (Cook, p. 37) in a well-established hierarchy that descended to the

Japanese, Chinese, and East Indian workers. The work that Frontier College's labourer-teachers did to help campmen "grow and mature as persons" (Selman et al., 1998, p. 183) was thus inextricably linked to these learners' social progress as well (Thomas, 1983).

Frontier College professed to provide "informal, practical education" (Thomas, 1983, p. 90) in response to the learners' needs and interests, but (at least initially) most of the needs were ascribed rather than identified or expressed by the learners themselves. This, coupled with Frontier College's belief that "a literate person can teach another literate person" (Selman et al., p. 186) and its reliance on donated library resources, indicates that Frontier College instruction was designed to match teaching abilities and available instructional materials, instead of addressing the workers' real learning needs and interests. Moreover, if it was indeed true that the campmen wanted to become Lenins (Welton, 1987) and Bolsheviks (Cook, 1987), then Fitzpatrick used his position of educational power within Frontier College to actively counteract this expressed campmen interest. Whether the needs and interests addressed by Fitzpatrick and his labourer-teachers were ascribed, felt, expressed, or real, however, the fact that Frontier College sought to meet them illustrates its underlying progressive philosophy of education.

Expressions of Progressivism in the Antigonish Movement

The Antigonish Movement adhered tightly to an educational philosophy of personal development and social progress. Its methods were grounded in the belief that individuals can and will educate themselves and develop their own educational leadership, if given the right information and tools (Gillen, 1998). Its primary social progress focus was on economic development through collective efforts to establish various co-operatives: lobster factories, fish plants, canneries, credit unions, and co-operative stores (Coady, 1950a; Lotz & Welton, 1987). The goal was to change people's socio-economic status without changing their primary occupations (Gillen), in order to "give the people life where they are" (Coady, 1950b, p. 28) within the existing social order.

The Antigonish Movement was motivated by a philosophically progressive desire to help financially deprived fishermen, miners, and farmers find viable answers to their economic problems. Socratic questioning was used during large and small-group discussion meetings to probe the people's understanding of their dilemmas and of realistic (i.e., collective) solutions (Scott, 1998). Although the solutions were essentially pre-determined by Antigonish Movement leaders (Gillen, 1998) and the process for resolution was carefully

orchestrated to culminate in these solutions (Spencer, 1998), the Antigonish Movement illustrates a philosophically progressive mission of teaching through problem solving.

Humanism in Adult Literacy

Learner-centred adult literacy educators respect their students' desires and capacities to be self-directing and to be seen as such by others (Mealey, 1991). The extent to which these traits are manifested by individual learners, however, often depends on how demanding the classroom situation is (R. M. Smith, 1982) and on how practical and clearly stated (Fagan, 1991; Gibbons & Phillips, 1984) the learning goals are. Furthermore, although many adults resist learning in situations incongruent with their needs for independence (Mullen, 1987), others require a more structured learning environment (R. M. Smith). This is especially true of adult literacy students, because the social gaps created by educational deficiencies are associated with academic self-esteem deficits (Fingeret, 1984; Ulmer, 1980). These students may need to be taught how to become more self-directed as learners so as to assist their "becoming active participants rather than being passive observers" (Rosenthal, 1990, p. 18).

Adult learning is "an active search for meaning" (Andrews, 1981, p. 22). Thus, adult integration, interpretation, and application of knowledge are dependent on participation in meaningful learning activities (Cross, 1981). The extent to which self-awareness facilitates knowledge construction and meaning making in adults is directly related to self-esteem (Fagan, 1991), particularly in literacy classrooms, wherein students' efforts to master learning tasks for which they feel academically unprepared may cause intrapersonal conflicts (Mullen, 1987). Adult literacy educators therefore seek a humanistic understanding of the role that these factors play in learning, in order to create learning environments that can enhance learners' self-images (Rossman et al., 1984).

Although humanistic educators espouse the concept that adult learners are characterized by responsibility, not all adults enter the learning situation as fully participating, responsible learners. Many adult literacy students, for example, lack sufficient educational experience to make appropriate learning choices (Ulmer, 1980). They need first to be taught how to take responsibility for their own learning, and then to be given sufficient opportunities to practise these active learning skills (Fagan, 1991). Humanistic adult literacy educators are thus responsible for nurturing their students' social maturation processes toward becoming responsible learners.

Expressions of Humanism in the Women's Institutes

Although government support for Women's Institutes was conditional on their active promotion of government policies (Dennison, 1987) and using parliamentary meeting processes (Carbert, 1996), the Women's Institutes controlled many aspects of their own programming. Humanistic trends toward autonomy, self-direction, and personal meaning making were evident in Institute members' interpretations of educational subjects listed in their 1897 constitution. The choices members made for topics of instruction and issues of social advocacy reflected their individual, family, and community needs. Hoodless, for instance, campaigned for clean milk and home economics instruction in response to her own loss of a child due to contaminated milk (Chapman, 1950). Institute women asked for instruction not only in topics such as food preservation, sewing, and home nursing, but also for social advocacy such as parental guardianship, divorce laws, property ownership, old age homes and pensions, mothers' pensions, and workers' compensation (Dennison, 1987; Spencer, 1998). Thus, the humanistic work of the Women's Institutes far exceeded the narrow home-making dimensions anticipated by their government sponsors, and at times even resisted government efforts to quell female suffrage (Welton, 1987).

Women's Institutes fulfilled a humanistic need for self-esteem and self-actualization among their members. Membership was considered a "rite of passage" (Carbert, 1996, p. 1) for new brides in Ontario, and Institutes across the country satisfied women's needs for "education, power, and recognition" (Dennison, 1987, p. 54). Institutes taught women to speak in public (Selman et al., 1998), which empowered them to teach others and to lobby the government for change (Chapman, 1950; Dennison). Women's Institutes thus raised the status of Canadian women in general as "mothers to all other mothers" (Carbert, p. 2) and "wholesale housekeeper[s] of [the] community" (Dennison, p. 54).

Expressions of Humanism in Frontier College

The humanistic philosophy of independent, autonomous, and self-directed learning is evident in Frontier College's motto "to help people gain effective control over their own lives" (Thomas, 1983, p. 91). Fitzpatrick made a deliberately humanistic effort to counteract frontier camp employer-employee relationships typified by the unveiled threat of loaded revolvers on the table while contractors paid their workers (Cook, 1987). Enculturating autonomous self-directed learning, however, must have been difficult in railway camps, wherein only a handful of men attended classes (Spencer, 1998). Furthermore,

although "some workers and labourer-teachers used the opportunity to promote independent learning" (Spencer, p. 38), the learning organization was not controlled by the students.

Frontier College was the humanistic fruit of Fitzpatrick's "personal crusade to secure justice for the campmen" (Cook, 1987, p. 35). His goal was to make learning in the camps meaningful, both for immediate educational gains and for future societal rewards (Selman, 1998). A significant aspect of this meaning making was the reciprocal learning relationship between teacher and student (Spencer, 1998), characterized by a mutual "spirit of inquiry" (Selman et al., 1998, p. 186) fostered by classroom conversations after work (Thomas, 1983).

Frontier College's humanistic labourer-teacher values and respects learners; he or she strives to cultivate enlightenment by nurturing student needs for self-esteem (Selman et al, 1998). Fitzpatrick's focus on "redemption of the individual" (Welton, 1987, p. 9) was a direct antithesis of the spirit of slavery that employers deliberately enculturated in campmen to keep their workers subservient (Cook, 1987). His "idea of the whole man, who had the opportunity to develop all his physical, intellectual, and spiritual qualities" (Cook, p. 48) virtually defines self-actualization from a humanistic perspective.

Expressions of Humanism in the Antigonish Movement

The Antigonish Movement had a humanistic mission to empower people to be independent and self-directing, "to release the energies that are in them, and look forward to the day when they will be able to take over the affairs of their own life" (Coady, 1950a, p. 199). The movement leaders may have had very clear ideas of what these affairs should be—in co-operative economic terms, at least (Lotz & Welton, 1987)—but their goal was very definitely to have the people collectively manage their own economic and social lives. Tompkins (cited in Landis, 1950) insisted, "You must have faith enough to trust the average man for the general direction of his own activities" (p. 196), and Coady (1950a) expected future generations to "do still greater things in building a better social order" (p. 202).

The lessons that the Antigonish Movement taught to maritime fisherman, miners, and farmers were intended to be meaningful to the people's personal and collective lives. Every step in the movement leaders' approach to problem solving was designed to bring participants closer to practical resolutions for their economic problems (Selman, 1998). The Antigonish Movement was thus characterized by a humanistic focus on meaning making. The movement's

success, furthermore, depended not only on co-operative socio-economic developments, but also on participants' personal experiences related to self-esteem and self-actualization. The Antigonish Movement's "complete formula ... [was] spiritual enlivenment and mental enlightenment accompanied by group economic action" (Coady, 1950a, p. 199). This quest for enlightenment is what ultimately defines the Antigonish Movement as a humanistic enterprise in adult education.

Conclusions

Canada's current adult literacy movement has philosophical roots in earlier Canadian adult education movements such as the Women's Institutes, Frontier College, and the Antigonish Movement. Each of these 20th century movements expressed not just one philosophical approach to education, but a composite of liberal, progressive, and humanistic perspectives (as well as others outside the present analysis). Today's adult literacy educators have a responsibility to examine these philosophical legacies critically, in order to make informed decisions about how they will contribute to the field of adult literacy in the 21st century.

What is notable about the philosophical perspectives evinced in the practices of the Women's Institutes, Frontier College, and the Antigonish Movement is not that these individual adult education movements reflected more than one philosophy, but that they reflected the same philosophies in similar ways, despite differences related to geography, administrative structures, teaching methods, and learner profiles. The Women's Institutes were founded in British Columbia by the provincial government. They used lectures, demonstrations, and meetings run by strict parliamentary procedure to serve women who had relocated from urban centres to isolated rural farms. Frontier College was founded in Ontario by Alfred Fitzpatrick. It used informal group discussions, modest libraries, one-to-one tutoring, and classroom lessons based on group readings of poetry and prose to serve men in isolated mining, logging, railway, and road construction camps. The Antigonish Movement was founded in Nova Scotia by Father Jimmy Tompkins of St. Francis Xavier University. It used large and small-group meetings based on Socratic questioning, as well as formal training and retraining courses, to serve economically disadvantaged fishing, mining, and farming men and women.

Despite these differences, the three early 20th century adult education movements examined in this article maintained a liberal focus on pre-determined instruction, a deficit model perspective, and learners' needing to

learn how to learn; a progressive focus on learners' life role experiences, personal/social development, and needs-motivated learning; and a humanistic focus on self-directed learning and independence, meaningful learning, and learners' self-image/self-esteem. All three movements were liberal responses to sets of clearly identified (ascribed) learner needs: knowledge and practice in farm living and public speaking for the women in British Columbia's Women's Institutes; basic literacy skills and better living conditions for the campmen in Ontario's Frontier College; and information about co-operatives and credit unions for the fishermen, miners, and farmers of Nova Scotia's Antigonish Movement. The movements progressively cultivated their learners' personal and social development: the Women's Institutes promoted individual members' expertise and developed community recreation and public services; Frontier College provided individualized lessons for labourers and established recreational reading rooms and informal discussion groups; the Antigonish Movement used co-operatives to educate individual workers and to elevate the socio-economic status of their communities. Humanism was a driving force behind the movements' efforts to foster self-esteem and self-actualization among their learners: Women's Institute members were empowered by their lessons in public speaking to take political and social action on behalf of themselves and others less fortunate in their communities; Frontier College labourers experienced reciprocal learning relationships with their instructors as a precursor to establishing more just relations with their bush camp employers and integrating into the larger social structure of the country; Antigonish Movement workers learned how to establish co-operatives and credit unions in an effort to become economically independent. Thus, although the movements had different learning objectives, their efforts to meet these objectives were born of the same philosophies of education.

Today's adult literacy movement reflects these liberal, progressive, and humanistic roots. It began as a liberal response to a set of clearly identified (ascribed) learner needs: functional literacy (usually defined as grade 9 level reading, writing, and mathematics) for Canadian adults across the provinces. The movement progressively cultivates its learners' personal and social development: it endeavours to improve individual learners' academic and job-readiness skills so they can access higher learning and better employment opportunities. Humanism is a driving force behind the literacy movement's efforts to foster self-esteem and self-actualization among its learners: it fosters self-direction and independence within the context of personally meaningful learning activities.

Philosophies of education are value-laden. The role of the teacher in translating philosophical values into classroom practice is critical. Understanding how philosophies of education underlie personal practice is the key, for example, to providing emancipatory education instead of mere technical-rational training (see Holtzlander, 1997). As the Canadian literacy movement heads further into the 21st century, it will depend less on whatever vestiges of educational philosophies remain from its historic roots in other adult education movements and more on the philosophical perspectives of current practitioners in the field. These practitioners need to look beyond their students' immediate academic needs—and beyond their own individual sociocultural positions—in order to decide what philosophies of education will drive their practice. Examining the historical roots of the philosophies inherent in adult literacy education is an important first step toward realizing this personal meaning-making.

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