

Roger Fieldhouse is arguably the leading British adult education historian of our times. With this book he has written and compiled the most accessible, scholarly account of modern British adult education history. A history which influenced, and was influenced by, developments in Canada and elsewhere.

References

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THE FOUNDATIONS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN CANADA (2nd EDITION)

Gordon Selman, Mark Selman, Michael Cooke, and Paul Dampier (1998). Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing.

In the preface to the first (1991) edition of *The Foundations of Adult Education in Canada*, Gordon Selman and Paul Dampier identify themselves as "self-confessed Canadians" (p. viii); they point to the absence of a strong Canadian voice in the adult education literature as a primary impetus behind their writing the book. To address this situation, the first edition provides a general overview of the study and practice of adult education in anglophone Canada. As an introductory text, the first edition adds a welcome injection of Canadian content to the literature on adult education foundations. It also exhibits the same strengths and weaknesses often attributed to the Canadian character: reliable, moderate, and accessible, but somewhat lacking in edge and intensity.

Why a second edition? What's different about it (aside from adding Mark Selman and Michael Cooke to the authorial ranks)? In the preface to the second edition, the authors offer two main reasons why revisions are necessary. The first is that changes wrought in the 1990s have had a significant impact on the Canadian social fabric and the place of adult

education within it. The second is that there were gaps and neglected areas in the original volume, which required more adequate coverage.

The revisions in response to the second reason are clearly evident in several new sections covering topics missing from the first edition. Vincent Greason contributes a chapter on adult education in Quebec, which emphasizes the unique circumstances of Quebecois culture and history as they have influenced the development of adult education in that province. Shauna Butterwick addresses the role of women's leadership in Canadian adult education history, pointing out that although individual women and women's organizations have played a central role in the growth of the field, their contribution has long been overlooked and relegated to the margins of the foundational literature. Tammy Dewar looks at women in adult education in a contemporary context. She, too, comments on the absence of women's experiences in the "sanctioned" histories of the field; diverse voices underscore her approach and provide a counterpoint to the trend. D'Arcy Martin considers the history and present status of labour education in Canada and, again, suggests that it makes up a significant but often neglected area of adult education practice. These contributions favourably broaden the portrayal of the field beyond the mainstream scope of the first edition. However, covering neglected topics by inserting extra sections into a pre-existing text presents its own drawback. The additions seem like tacked-on afterthoughts rather than natural and well-integrated parts of the whole. Unfortunately, despite the good intentions, this risks reinforcing the sense of marginalization which the inclusion of these topics seeks to overcome.

The revisions in response to the first reason—the need to address the changes of the 1990s—are less extensive. Much of the book retains its original themes and characters. The key trends the authors draw into the second editions are summed up by two phrases: new communications technologies and the budget crunch. Both topics are dealt with primarily at the end of the volume, in new sections inserted into one of the concluding chapters. Both are also dealt with in tones of some concern. In the section on technology, they acknowledge the greater access to diverse resources associated with technological innovation; however, they also associate it with a potential loss of learner control and emotional engagement, and with a widening gap between the "haves" and "have nots." In the section on the budget crunch, they highlight a number of ways in which current economic trends—the decline in public funding and the increasing use of continuing education for revenue generation, among other things—threaten to erode the

social values which have been fundamental to the field. These are pressing themes, which warrant a fuller examination than these brief additions allow.

Despite the stated need to draw the present and future more sharply into the picture, the most visually striking revision to the second edition comes from the past. The original cover design, a collage of adult learners in a variety of modern educational settings, has been replaced by a historic photo of a study group in what looks like an old-time farm kitchen. Similarly, throughout the text there are photographs from the archives, which give visual testimony to the pioneer spirit that inspired the birth and growth of adult education in this country. A strength of both the first and second editions of this volume is the attention given to the historical context. The photos are a positive affirmation of this aspect of the text. However, it is unfortunate that, except for a brief identifying comment accompanying each picture, their addition goes unmentioned and unexplored.

The re-issue of *The Foundations of Adult Education in Canada* implies, rightly, that the first edition has been well received by adult education practitioners and within programs of study across the country. Is the second edition an improvement on the first? It does succeed in expanding the scope of coverage to encompass neglected areas and to provide a more varied profile of the extent and diversity of the field. However, despite the positive aspects of these additions, a (probably unavoidable) patchiness results from inserting discrete new pieces into pre-existing material. This is not a reflection of poor editing, but of the challenge of the task. And on the whole, the resulting effect may be no bad thing. It is still—and perhaps even more so—a characteristically Canadian book. The reliability and accessibility of the first edition are still well in evidence. The new voices claim legitimate space but do not blend into a smooth, harmonic whole. Intentional or not, this unevenness says something interesting about adult education in Canada, then and now.

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