

1991, are cited correctly, bearing in mind of course that the information will need to be restructured if the American Psychological Association (APA) format is being used.

While *The Literature of Adult Education* may not achieve Houle's purpose to improve the status of adult education within academe, it is likely that his three more realistic objectives to identify the knowledge base from adult education books, organize the literature, and present a framework to reflect the connections among the elements of the knowledge base have been achieved. Adult educators will benefit from the book being in their library and many practitioners who purchase it are likely, as Houle wished, to acquire a greater sense of connectedness to the literature of adult education which as Houle concludes "in its complexity and its tangled and interactive parts ... is perhaps best regarded as an ecosystem" (Houle, 1992a, p. 321). An ecosystem that, in my opinion and doubtless Houle's opinion too, does not yet adequately reflect the ecosystem of adult education practice.

References

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ADULT EDUCATION IN CANADA: HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

Gordon Selman (1995). Toronto, ON: Thompson Educational Publishing, Inc.

Gordon Selman is one of Canada's most prolific and important social historians of adult education. His book of historical essays is a selection from the work of this practitioner and academic whose career in adult education spans more than forty years. It is another fine effort by a meticulous researcher who has greatly contributed to our knowledge and understanding of the emergence of Canadian adult education. Selman provides an extensive data base for those who wish to study the instrumental, social, and cultural aspects of our field's continuing metamorphosis. He contributes a valuable resource for those interested in comparative historical studies that expose social, cultural, ideological, and political differences among international forms of adult education. Some may argue that his essays are more descriptive than analytical or interpretive. However, Selman's work must be put into perspective. As one of a handful of dedicated social historians in the field in this country his work is groundbreaking. Without the record of his research, many valuable aspects of the social history of adult education in his native province of British Columbia and in the rest of Canada would remain hidden or be lost. His work greatly contributes to studies of the foundations of Canadian adult education. It deserves to be more valued by those mainstream adult educators who too often move forward without looking back and by those publishers who ignore such work as they cater to the market demands of an overly commodified contemporary practice.

The essays in this book are an eclectic offering which Selman chooses to represent his work exploring Canadian adult education and its relationship to the social, cultural, and political mosaic that makes our enterprise a daunting venture in this country. The first two parts of the book provide a more general history, mainly covering the evolution and nature of the field. Essays cover themes, ideas, and concerns that have been on the adult educational agenda since the 1950s when novel notions of adult education as a profession often became pitted against long-standing notions of adult education as a social movement. Ensuing concerns with instrumentalism versus social activism, individualism versus collectivism, and "maintenance/shock" learning versus lifelong learning are among perspectives addressed. There is reflection to varying degrees on the impacts of the Great Depression, World War II, post-war technological change, post-industrialism, and the social upheaval of the 1960s. Through Selman's heavy reliance on primary sources, the critical reader is provided with much documentation to indicate that adult education is a social, cultural, and political enterprise that is not neutral despite attempts over time by some adult educators to feign the premise of neutrality. His attention to detail paints a picture of the diversity and complexity of the field, reminding us that it is indeed an onerous task to answer the question: What is adult education? Selman himself uses a broad, inclusionary definition to keep the parameters of the field wide as he explores the dynamics and status of an enterprise that became increasingly caught up in the movement versus profession debate in the 1950s and 1960s.

The third part of the book is perhaps the most intriguing. Three essays cover the emergence of the Canadian Association for Adult Education from its inception in 1935 to its near demise in the early 1970s. They relate the important role that this English national body—unfortunately there are only brief references in these essays to its French counterpart, the ICEA—played in the emergence of adult education during tumultuous times in Canadian history. More specifically, they show how the CAAE's philosophy and activities over this period were shaped by the strong and dynamic characters of its first three long-term directors—E.A. "Ned" Corbett, J. Roby Kidd, and Alan Thomas. Selman recounts Corbett's prowess in shaping the organization as a promoter of action programs and particular social goals. He describes Kidd's talents for steering the organization through a transition period where the social movement tradition of Canadian adult education had to be respected in the move toward a more professionalized practice in the 1950s. Selman relates how Thomas continued Kidd's work to strengthen the CAAE commitment to professionalization. He deals with interest group politics around Thomas's preoccupation with establishing a national policy for adult education. Thomas's conceptions of adult learning and the learning society are also covered. As well, these essays consider the growing impact of government in the 1950s and 1960s on the emergence of Canadian adult education. Of particular interest in the essay on Thomas is Selman's coverage of the problems with the CAAE provincial divisions that caused havoc for the association toward the end of his term as director.

The remainder of this book of historical essays provides a social history of adult education in Selman's home province of British Columbia. A general history is followed by accounts of the emergence of the enterprise in the province prior to 1914 and

during the Great Depression. Again Selman's research is important and innovative because little work has been carried out in the field to write provincial histories of Canadian adult education. Selman's work provides valuable insights to those who would proceed with such research and face the challenge of finding ways to get these valuable accounts published.

Selman's collection of historical essays is a useful introduction to the field for new students. It is a worthwhile resource that serves as a reminder to the rest of us about what it means to be a Canadian adult educator within the vast learning mosaic comprising our field. It stands as an informative work for all who value the importance of the historical context in building a knowledge and understanding of Canadian adult education. Selman's book takes us through the metamorphosis of adult education from its glory days as a field where amateurs enlivened a social movement to new days when professionals reacted to the demands of an increasingly technicized and commodified practice. While it remains for others to complete this account, Selman's work here and elsewhere is an important contribution toward the accomplishment of an extensive social history of adult education in this country.

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COMMUNICATION THEORY TODAY.

David Crowley and David Mitchell (Eds.) (1994). Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Adult learning is now widely understood to occur in natural societal settings in addition to formal instructional ones. The terms *learning society*, *learning culture*, *lifelong learning*, and *learning organizations*, although murky in specifics, have all become commonplace. These popularized terms behoove us to devote more scholarly resources to nonformal adult learning and its intersection with other areas of scholarship which address conditions impinging on learning outside classrooms and in the natural world. In this regard, the field of communication is of paramount significance. For adult educators open to interdisciplinary inquiry, an excellent resource for a critical exploration of the common terrain between adult education and communication is available in *Communication Theory Today*.

The essential connection between scholarship in both communication and adult education is the significance that each accords to understanding the creation of knowledge. Communication too is exploring the critical role of social relations, political structures, economic imperatives and cultural practices in shaping perceptions, beliefs, and values. Of particular relevance to adult education for social change is the manner and extent that the technologies and economics of communication are fuelling and shaping social change and contemporary society. Any adult educator who ignores the analyses available through current communication scholarship for the project of transformational learning would be like the proverbial ostrich.