

WOMEN'S LEARNING: IMPLICATIONS FOR ADULT EDUCATION RESEARCH AND PRACTICE¹

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Abstract

Women are actively engaged in becoming more educated, but does their demand for and participation in adult education ensure that it is not a gendered area of study? Applying a feminist critique to the production and dissemination of knowledge through research and publishing, this article examines historical and contemporary literature on adult education in Canada. It analyzes the contents of recent adult education journals and suggests possible reasons for, and solutions to, some of the gaps in the literature on women as subjects of adult education research.

Résumé

En dépit de la présence croissante des femmes dans le domaine de l'éducation des adultes, celui-ci continue de les exclure de la recherche et de l'enseignement. L'auteure de cet article propose une critique féministe de la production et de la dissémination du savoir historique et actuel dans le domaine de l'éducation des adultes au Canada. Elle se consacre à une analyse de contenu des revues récemment publiées en éducation des adultes et des raisons pour lesquelles les femmes n'y apparaissent pas comme sujet de recherche. Elle propose aussi quelques éléments de solutions afin de remédier à cette situation.

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A feminist critique furthers the cause of excellence by requiring us to rethink the formulations most of us take for granted. (Minnich, 1989, p. 281)

In breaking those silences, naming ourselves, uncovering the hidden, making ourselves present, we begin to define a reality which resonates to us, which affirms our being, which allows the woman teacher and the woman student alike to take ourselves, and each other, seriously. [emphasis added] (Rich, 1979, p. 245)

Introduction

Women need education. According to Brad Munroe (personal communication, November 1, 1990) of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, women make up 67% of the world's illiterate population. When we look closer to home we find that in 1986, according to a study by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities of Women, 20% of Canadian women could not read or write (cited in Warren, 1987, p. 24).

Women want education. In a case study of a group of females reentering universities (Smith, 1991), I asked each of them why they were returning to formal education. The majority of responses centred around a desire for intellectual growth and knowledge:

[In my job] there was no room for any kind of intellectual growth and I needed that.

I felt like my head was being shut down—I wasn't being stimulated.

I started to notice that I didn't know about what was going on in the world. I did not feel knowledgeable. (p. 51)

Despite barriers and social costs, these women continued their education because, as one female reentry student stated:

I want it too much and I've got too much invested. For my own self-esteem, my sense of accomplishment and for my family as well. I can't possibly quit—it wouldn't be fair to anyone. (p. 78)

Women are actively engaged in becoming more educated. In Devereaux's study of adult education in Canada, we learn that the majority (56%) of students in both formal and informal adult education courses are women (1985, p. 6). Women also participate in education through teaching and research. In Canadian universities, women represent the majority of all students in Education Departments—even at the graduate level. They constitute 68% of undergraduates, 64% of Masters and 54% of all Ph.D. students in Canadian Faculties of Education. At the undergraduate level this is the second highest female participation rate, just slightly behind the health professions. At the Ph.D. level, Education is the only faculty to have females make up more than 50% of students (Breslauer & Gordon, 1989, p. 37).

Does women's demand for and their participation in education (as students and as teachers) ensure that adult education is not a gendered area of study? Is there historical and contemporary research data specifically on Canadian adult women's learning? Since much of the current theory and ideology speaks of knowledge as power and education as empowerment leading to individual and social change (Darville, 1989; Merriam, 1987; Mezirow, 1981), can one assume that there will be much practical information on education as a means of improving the lives of women? Or are there silences in the literature?

This article will address the implications of women's learning on the research and practice of adult education. In outlining my search for material on women's learning, the article begins with an overview of feminist critiques of the production and dissemination of knowledge through research and publishing. This approach is then applied to a brief examination of historical research on adult education in Canada. From there, I critically examine the content of recent adult education journals and conference proceedings. The article concludes with a discussion of the findings and suggests possible reasons for and solutions to some of the analytical and empirical gaps in the literature on women as subjects of adult education research.

A Feminist Critique of Research and Publishing

For the past few decades, feminist writers have raised questions about the gendered research of many academic disciplines. Despite marked differences in their perspectives on the causes and political solutions to sexism in academe, feminist critiques overlap in their findings

about inadequacies in published research on women. Ward and Grant (1985) identify four common feminist themes:

research underrepresented women as subjects, concentrated on research topics more central to men's than to women's lives, used concepts, paradigms, methods, and theories better portraying men's than women's lives, and used men and male experience as norms against which all social experience was interpreted. (p. 139)

To the first theme, underrepresentation of women, could be added omission of women as subjects. When research is conducted on a sample of all male subjects, despite the use of the generic 'he' in the reporting, the findings are often implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) generalized to both sexes (Ward & Grant, 1985, p. 141). A common example of this is the use of the male's occupation to determine the social status of the entire family.

In terms of research topic, feminists claim that women are excluded here as well. Researchers tend to concentrate on areas in which men are the key players, or when women are present, they are considered "only in narrowly defined roles most relevant to men's lives" (Ward & Grant, 1985, p. 141). Studies of the political sphere are seldom conducted on local politics where women have concentrated due to their familial expectations and obligations. And studies of work and occupations usually focus on large corporations rather than on 'homework'.

Sexism in research can also be seen in the use of paradigms, methods and theories which distort women's experiences or better portray men's lives. Feminists have challenged the notion of "objectivity" in traditional quantitative methods, claiming techniques of a qualitative nature are more appropriate when exploring women's everyday worlds. As well, how a research question is defined determines what data are collected and what parts of life are explored. Ward and Grant (1985) offer an example of research on 'fear of success' among professional women which, by collecting data on individuals and ignoring structural barriers to women's experiences,

failed to illuminate situationally embedded expectations on the part of coworkers which influenced

interpretations of women's work behaviors and confined them to a narrow range of roles. (p. 142)

The final theme in feminist critiques of research is in the use of male experiences alone as the norm for what is appropriate, legitimate and important. In academe, since male dominated thought controls the 'conceptual currency', these male established norms judge not only what are relevant topics of study, but also "which interpretations are scholarly" (Ward & Grant, 1985, p. 143). The world defined through masculine blinders has led feminists to call for a scholarship which frees all research, analyses and reporting from dependence upon male norms.

The feminist critique focuses not only on the research process but also on the dissemination of its knowledge. Dale Spender (1981) has written a critique of academic publishing in which she states:

It is important to make explicit the significance of publishing in the research community. In a very fundamental sense, research which is not in print does not exist. (p. 188)

And Dorothy Smith has pointed out that there are "gatekeepers" in the academic community, people who set the standards, produce the social knowledge, monitor what is admitted to the systems of distribution, and decree the innovations in thought, or knowledge, or values (1987, p. 18). And these gatekeepers are most often men.

Since feminist critiques have appeared, there have been increased efforts to monitor and eliminate the gendered nature of many disciplines. Has education, and more specifically adult education, benefited from this new knowledge? Are women's voices being heard; are the gaps being filled in? Has the feminist critique had an impact on adult education to ensure that research is conducted on women as subjects, that topics include those in which women are key players, that methods are applied which portray women's as well as men's lives, and that analyses used are not exclusively based on male norms? This article will address these questions by examining published research on adult education from a feminist perspective, thus contributing to the feminist gatewatching of research and publishing.

Abbreviated History of Canadian Adult Education

As male scholars search for a history of adult education in Canada, they discover something that feminist scholars have known for a long time. Despite shelves of library books on the subject, Michael Welton (1987, p. 12) claims that we are "suffering from a severe case of historical amnesia" on Canadian adult education. This applies even more in the case of women; as Terry Crowley discovered in his search: "women have been largely lost in the historical records of Canadian adult education" (Crowley, 1986, p. 78). He found that only male efforts in establishing educational programmes for adults were regarded as the "real" beginnings.

The blindness to women's participation in education is most evident when reviewing literature on the development of informal adult education in Canada. Whether the terminology used is continuing education, andragogy, education permanente or even lifelong learning, it usually refers to education of "citizens" and generic workers or adults. Seldom is there a reference to the specificity of women's experience; most of the historical accounts of education in the informal sector deal with the educational training of men.

Informal adult education in Canada, like that of formal education, has its roots in Britain, and it originally focussed on two areas: agriculture and citizenship. In *Learning and Society: Readings in Canadian Adult Education*, J.R. Kidd (1963) states:

Paradoxically, adult education is the oldest, and the newest field of education. Organized activities by which adults taught each other long preceded the formal instruction of children; it all began even centuries before such practitioners as Socrates and Confucius. Yet the great changes, the most astonishing growth, has happened in this century. (p. xi)

This growth began in the mid 19th century when immigrants brought with them Mechanics Institutes (MI). These had been important vehicles for worker education in Britain, where the *Workers' Educational Association* had realized the importance of teaching working class citizens about social and political problems. "[I]f labor's aims were to be achieved, both leadership and membership would require more and better education" (Campbell, 1984, p. 6). Canada,

however, was also influenced by the American system where education has been inspired by practical needs, and MIs were soon taken over and adopted by academics and professionals in the agricultural field (Campbell, 1984, p. 910).

Due to the large expanse of this country, traditional classroom learning was a major problem for many residents and universities were forced to develop special methods to deal with the needs and desires of a largely rural population which wanted practical knowledge for their everyday lives, rather than being concerned with their limited political sophistication, as was the case in Britain (Campbell, 1984). People in rural Canada were more conscious of their struggle with Nature than their struggle with Capital (MacInnes, 1925, p. 56).

Strongly influenced by various coop movements throughout the country, informal adult education was not only geared to teach farmers about new methods of crop rotation; it was also aimed at training new immigrants "in order to evolve right thinking, responsible citizens in the young democracy" (MacInnes, 1925, p. 8). This goal was reiterated in 1946 at the National Conference on Adult Education when the "Statement of Purposes" declared that the task of adult education was "the imaginative training for citizenship" (cited in Kidd, 1963, p. 109).

However, a review of the literature on adult education reveals that, while concerned with inequality, it has been largely confined to class inequality. As mentioned, the recorded history of adult education is one of educating "citizens" without dealing with the specificity of women's experience. Gaskell and McLaren (1987) find,

adult educators have tended to ignore women students, or even to be embarrassed by them since, it is assumed, they are bourgeois housewives, not members of the working class. (p. 306)

The limitations placed on women's participation in adult education reflected the concept of women's place in society, and their roles in the private sphere, preset at birth.

Few women could be concerned with educational deprivation. Their expectations did not include education beyond what was required to fulfill their

prescribed duties in a hierarchical society. (Solomon, 1985, p. 3)

So if adult education was geared to workers and farmers, and women did not fit either category, one might conclude, therefore, that women were not candidates for informal learning.

Yet recent feminist research has led to a rediscovery of organizations such as Women's Institutes:

the single most important idea developed in Canadian continuing education and exported to the rest of the world. In the history of rural women no other organization...has played such a formative role. (Crowley, 1986, p. 78).

While the agricultural revolution transformed Canadian farming into an industry geared for urban markets, this was done for the profit of men and at the expense of women. Women's role in agricultural production (especially in dairying) was seriously undermined by 'male initiated and government subsidized' agricultural institutions and factories which took over the local industries that had existed. New discoveries in the science of nutrition led to new forms of knowledge for human betterment, but there was no mechanism for the transmission of this information to women in the countryside (Crowley, 1986, p. 79).

No mechanism, that is, until 1897 when Adelaide Hoodless, a Hamilton housewife, conceived of and founded the first Women's Institute (WI) as a 'household science educational program' after her son died from drinking impure milk. By 1913 nine provinces had WIs (Collins, 1958, p. 209), and almost every town and city in those provinces had their own local branch, working to educate themselves and the public to find ways of improving the quality of community life.

Fifty years after Hoodless first began her work, Robert Collins (1958) attended a typical WI meeting in a small Manitoba town and described it in an article for *MacLean's Magazine*. All but ten of the town's eligible women were present as they began with the singing of folk songs and the recitation of their creed. There was a collection of cards and 24 handknitted sweaters to be sent to Korean orphans. After voting on money for prizes at a local bonspiel and handling

requests for information, there was a discussion on a proposed educational tour to Winnipeg. The women then sat back as,

Doris Pitura, a tall pinkcheeked farm wife (who was once "frightened stiff" of speaking in public) delivered a ten minute talk on oil in Manitoba. (p. 212)

The last item on the agenda was the district president's report on her trip to the 1957 Federated Women's Institute convention in Ottawa where she also visited the House of Commons:

They were so rude! When Mr. St. Laurent spoke, Mr. Diefenbaker turned away. When Mr. Diefenbaker spoke, Mr. St. Laurent began to read a newspaper. They wouldn't last long in W.I. (p. 212).

At 5 p.m. the women closed the meeting and "hurried home to make supper and placate their husbands" (p. 213).

By 1958, 95,000 women had signed up as members, despite resistance from husbands and families (see Collins, 1958), in 5,300 Canadian communities where "the institute is everything: social circle, service club and rural women's university" where members "are dedicated to the betterment of home, country and points beyond" (Collins, 1958, p. 208).

The Women's Institutes are one example of women's participation in informal and largely self directed education. They reveal not only women's concerns with new modes of production, but also their struggle for equality in the new era of industrialization; they reveal women who are seeking not only a recognition and development of their skills and roles as women, but also a recognition of their equality and contributions as persons. This is an area of Canadian women's education that begs to be explored further.

This brief outline has shown that while adult women were actively involved in learning, their contribution is not recognized in historical accounts of the roots of adult education in Canada. They have seldom been the subjects of research; men are portrayed as the key players and male experiences have been the norms against which all experience has been interpreted. As feminist scholars work to uncover women's educational history, do they also ensure that the present

forms of learning of adult women are specified? Or is contemporary adult education still dealing with "generic" students?

Current Research in Adult Education

My background in sociology led me to believe that there was a correspondence between the number of females in a discipline and the recognized legitimacy of feminist research which acknowledges women and their everyday lived experiences as important areas of research. While academically situated outside of an education faculty, I nonetheless began my search for current educational knowledge on adult women as learners fully expecting to find a substantial amount of research being done on women, by women (considering the female participation rates in this field).

As I began to read articles from the academic adult education journals, I found that they appeared more theoretically abstract than practical. Sharan Merriam (1986) states:

Too often adult education research...look[s] at problems in isolation unconnected to sociopolitical and economic realities. (p. 4)

This separation between research and practical reality was also evident in the gaps in research on adult women as learners.

Keeping Ward and Grant's analysis of feminist critiques of research as well as the critiques of male dominated publishing by Spender and Smith in mind, I examined both practice and research oriented journals on adult education. I started with three hypotheses: first, that the journals with a more practice oriented format or approach would have more accounts of women as learners since they constitute the majority of students. Secondly, they would have more female authors, since the majority of practitioners are women. And, thirdly, due to the number of females in graduate education programmes, that research on women would likely be conducted by and written by women.

Data Sources and Methods

Being aware of the two orientations in adult education journals (research vs. practice), I chose one of each from two different

countries. The difference in orientation is evident by the fact that research oriented journals contain abstracts and bibliographies and, in general, have an academic format. The practice oriented ones, on the other hand, have a more journalistic style.

The Canadian publications I analyzed were the 1990 issue of *Learning and Volumes I-III (1987-1989) of Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education (CJSAE)*. The American journals examined were Volume 12 (1988-1989) of *LifeLong Learning (LLL)* and Volume 39 (1988-1989) of *Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ)*.

My first step was to check the titles of all articles, forums, perspectives or special reports, including book reviews. I looked for any reference to women, gender, sex, or anything that could possibly include knowledge about adult women as learners and made a note of the total number of articles and how many dealt even slightly with women.

Secondly, I read the abstracts or browsed through the articles without abstracts. How many of them made reference to women? How many of them dealt entirely with women? Or with any issue possibly related to women?

My third step was to note the sex of all authors, including those written by more than one person. When the sex was not readily apparent (as in names like Pat or Dale) or when only initials were used, I checked biographical notes on authors, or I divided them equally between males and females. In total, how many of the single or first authors mentioned were male? How many were female? Then I did the same with secondary authors. How often, in the case of multiple authors with different sexes, was the first name a male? How often was the first name a female?

As well, I examined the bibliographic references to see who were considered the "authorities", those theorists most often quoted by researchers. Of the articles with a reference to women, I noted the degree to which they actually discussed an issue from a woman's perspective.

Interviews were conducted with two practitioners in the education field: Dr. Jeanine Roy-Poirier, the past president of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education and Dr. Ruth Dempsey,

a professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Ottawa. These conversations led to a similar, but reduced, content analysis of proceedings from the 1990 Conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education and an examination of the titles of Canadian graduate theses on adult education.

Findings

Overall, I studied 19 journal issues published between 1987 and 1990. Ten issues were from research oriented journals (CJSAE and AEQ) and nine were from practice oriented ones (*Learning* and LLL). Out of a total of 141 articles, I found only five with any reference in the title to women. I moved on to step two, examining abstracts. Forty-nine of the articles had them, so for the other 92, I skimmed through the articles. This time I found another 12 that mentioned women (I was generous, they only had to mention the word or use a woman's name in an example). So, out of 141 articles, there were 17 or 12% that discussed, even remotely, women in adult education. (For details, see Table 1, Summary of Findings.)

Some examples of those that mentioned women included an article by Ralph Nader on "Strategies for Training Citizen Advocates" (*Learning*, Vol. V; No. 3) in which women were mentioned with blacks and disadvantaged people as possible groups trainable to become "active citizens". Another article in the same journal, entitled "Environmental Citizenship", discussed environmental education projects with most of the citizen based project examples being female initiated ones. Only two articles (both in CJSAE) mentioned the word "feminism", and both discussed its potential contribution to the development of theory and research in adult education (Miles, 1989; Warren, 1987).

Three of the four journals had a book review section. Out of a total of 39 books reviewed, only one had any reference to women in the title: *Women & Education: A Canadian Perspective* by Jane Gaskell and Arlene McLaren. This is an odd choice of a book to be reviewed for an adult education journal since only one section of the book is on adult women and education.

Step three, who is writing for the journals? Out of 141 main authors, 77 were men and 64 were women. There were an additional 36 secondary authors and of these, 20 were male and

16 were female. In total, 97 men and 80 women had articles published. While there is often an assumption that multiple authors will be listed alphabetically, this was seldom the case in the journals I examined.

Table 1: Summary of Findings

Adult Education Journals

Canadian:

Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education (research orientation), Vols. I-III, 1987-1989

Learning (practice orientation), Vol. V, 1990

American:

Adult Education Quarterly (research orientation), Vol. 39, 1988-1989

LifeLong Learning (practice orientation), Vol. 12, 1988-1989

Research Practice Total Canadian American

Number of Articles	49	92	141	47	94
Total on Women	7	10	17	10	7
In Titles	4	1	5	3	2
In Content	3	9	12	7	5
Authors					
Female Main	18	46	64	19	45
Female Secondary	7	9	16	2	14
Female Main, Male Secondary	3	4	7	0	7
Books Reviewed	28	11	39	17	22
Women in Titles	1	0	1	1	0
Women Main Author	4	1	5	2	3
Women Reviewers	7	2	9	4	5
Research on Women by Women	5	9	14	8	5
Editorial Board	62	43	105	19	86
Female Members	20	20	40	5	35

Canadian Faculty of Education

Graduate Theses/Major Papers	1986	1988	1989
Total Theses/Major Papers	69	107	122
Women in Title	20	27	7

CASAE Conference Proceedings	1990
Total Papers	90
Women in Title/Abstract	9

Including books there were a total of 51 publications with more than one author. Only seven had a woman as the main author and a man as the secondary author. But in general, multiple authors were of the same sex, men write with men and women with women.

Of the 39 books reviewed, 34 were written by men, or had one as the main author. The reviewers were also overwhelmingly male: only 9 out of 39 books were reviewed by women.

And who writes about women? Of the 17 articles and one book mentioning women, 14 were written by females.

In my first hypothesis, I suggested that the journals with a more practice oriented format would have more accounts of women as learners. While there were more articles on women in them, they contained more articles in general. The practice oriented journals had a total of 92 articles, 10 or 11% of which mentioned women. The research oriented journals contained 49 articles and 7 or 14% mentioned women. There is a slight difference, leaning in favour of the research journals, but it is too small a difference to be significant. Overall, there is little being written on the specificity of women's experience within adult education. They continue to be underrepresented or omitted entirely as subjects of research and topics are still chosen which are more central to men's than to women's lives.

Secondly, I hypothesized that practice oriented journals would have more articles written by women. Of the 92 articles in them, 46 or 50% were by women. The research oriented journals had 18 female authors out of a total of 49, or 37%. These numbers show that women are being published but few of them are writing about adult women as learners. Instead, they are continuing the gendered practice of using male experiences as norms against which all experience is interpreted.

And, thirdly I hypothesized that research on women would likely be conducted by women, regardless of subject. Here the evidence is clear: 14 out of 17, or 78% of the material (articles and books) dealing with women was written by women.

Something I had not anticipated was a difference between countries. The American journals contained more articles in total but they were less likely to deal with women. They had 7% of their content on women, compared to 21% of the Canadian ones. Of the two articles that mentioned feminism, both were in the same Canadian journal which was edited by a woman.

If research is being done on women, perhaps it exists in graduate schools, I thought. So I looked at the listings (published in CJSAE) of Graduate Degrees in Canada on Adult Education and examined the titles of theses or major papers. In 1986 there were 69 theses listed and 20 or 29% of these were on women (11 of the 20 on nursing education). In 1988 there were more theses (107) but fewer on women (25% or 27, with nine on nurses). By 1989, the percentage on women had fallen to 6% (7 out of 122) and only two were on health education or nursing.

Maybe the research is being presented at the annual Learned Societies' Conference? I looked at the abstracts in the "Proceedings" of the 9th Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, held in Victoria, British Columbia, in 1990. There were 90 papers presented and seven titles contained something about women. After reading abstracts and conclusions I found two more which dealt, even marginally, with women. In other words, of all the 462 pages of papers which were included in these proceedings, only 10% dealt with the majority of learners in adult education. And 62 out of 115 presenters were women. What is more than half of the participants.

Space does not allow a presentation of the detailed findings of the "authorities" or "experts" referred to, nor the actual degree of discussion on women's ways and forms of learning. But they were not encouraging. Clearly, male theorists are seen as authorities and women's issues are seldom discussed in any depth. As well, the approach used in my research does not adequately cover the third theme of Ward and Grant's feminist critiques, the use of models, paradigms and theories which distort women's experiences. Further research is needed in these areas, for example, to compare the differences in 'issues' covered in practice and research oriented journals. The gaps need to be addressed.

More Questions

As a sociologist I found myself asking why adult education continues to be a gendered field of study; gendered in content, in basic assumptions and in research practice. Why is there so little research being done on women in adult education departments filled with them? Why is there no examination of participation barriers or learning orientations which address the specificity of women's experiences? Why are the silences and gaps continuing to be reproduced? Why are traditional models not being challenged? For example, my research on adult women in universities (Smith, 1991) found that the major situational barrier for these women was not time or money (as has been traditionally theorized), but rather, that the lack of emotional support from family and friends was the biggest obstacle to participation.

In a conversation with Dr. Jeanine Roy-Poirier, the Past President of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, we discussed the absence of women in adult education's recorded history, as well as the current situation. She began to name a few women who were doing research about adult women, but also admitted that there is a lack of available knowledge on women's learning and that there was a desperate need for research which could be both applied and published.

There are women working on it but they are not being published. Only recently have we even had a vehicle for the dissemination of our knowledge. (Jeanine Roy-Poirier [personal communication, October 16, 1990]).

My findings, however, indicate that women are being published. They are just not researching women. It appears that few people work from the position of there being a specificity of women's experience with learning. Dr. Roy-Poirier added that while some of this research is being done at present, it is not getting published; the only way we know about it is by networking.

Dr. Ruth Dempsey, a professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa, agreed with Dr. Roy-Poirier that education, in general, seldom speaks to adult learning methods and specifically, it never discusses the difference in women's ways of

learning. Dempsey also agreed that there is a desperate need for research on women, but added another dimension the need to investigate the structures of power.

In such a patriarchal system as education, changes are so slow. Until recently, there were few female professors in the Department of Education at Ottawa U. So only male models were available to students who were then socialized in male stream studies. And the women who do teach, were also trained in male studies and that is what they pass on to students. They reproduce a patriarchal system. Not only the content but the structures need to be investigated and criticized (Ruth Dempsey [personal communication, October 24, 1990]).

This statement led me to examine the gender composition of our educational structures. One of the first places I looked was at the editorial boards of the journals I had been examining. Who is deciding what gets published? How many people make up the total board? How many of these are women? What positions are they likely to hold?

Once again there was a difference between the practice oriented journals and the research oriented ones. In the two specialising in practice, there was almost an equal representation of women and men. But in the more academic, research journals, while they may have female editors, women constituted just under 30% of the total board. Overall, fewer than four out of every ten board members were women. Males continue to dominate as 'gatekeepers' in the publishing of academic journals.

Dale Spender (1981) concludes that publication is the means by which knowledge enters the public domain, acquires legitimacy, and influences the thinking, teaching, and writing of other scholars. Is this why most women are not 'doing' research on adult women as learners because it is not legitimate? Or is this research out there somewhere in the private domain, and just not getting past the publishing gatekeepers? Not only are the gaps being reproduced, but through the silences, the gendered forms of

education and the research practices/assumptions are also being reproduced, continuing to leave gaps. It is a circular process.

In the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa the administrative personnel consisting of dean, directors, and secretary to council are all men. Of six contact professors in the graduate sector, only two are women. Of 75 professors in total (35 in Educational Studies and 40 in Teacher Education), only 16 are women, ten of whom are in Teacher Education. Ruth Dempsey is right; in terms of structural control of both research journals and teaching facilities, the control lies mostly in the hands of men. Since education as knowledge is power, women as "edupeasants" are especially vulnerable to control by the "educrats" (analogy to technopeasants in Menzies, 1982).

As long as men continue to control what is published, taught and considered significant to learning, will we only have access to what interests men? As Dorothy Smith states: "What men were doing was relevant to men, was written about men, by men, for men" (1987, p. 17). How much longer will this continue? Do women have to develop their own vehicles for publication? Do they want to?

Angela Miles calls for a partnership between adult educators and feminists who are committed to "empowering the disadvantaged and contributing to social change" (1989, p. 2). She argues that this would require a transformation and a redistribution of knowledge. While she acknowledges that this would also necessitate a "radical rethinking of curriculum, course content, and teaching and evaluation methods... and altering the power structures" (p. 10), she fails to address the resistance which is inherent in any partnership: resistance by men who will be required to "share" their present power; resistance by women, socialized in male stream studies, who consider it a "nonissue"; and resistance by more radical feminists who wish to create alternatives to, not partnerships with, the existing order. How can this be changed? How can a partnership be established?

While this article has addressed the gendered nature of adult education at the sites of learning, research and publishing, another area of silence which continues to be reproduced in educational settings is the 'how'—the gendered ways of learning.

Do women and men have different ways of learning? Are their educational needs different? And if so, should we attempt to integrate both ways of knowing into the content of adult education? Will women's knowledge and educational history only become legitimized by entering male stream institutions and the public domain? These are more questions which need to be addressed by both feminists and adult educators in general.

Conclusion

With the emergence of adult education as an institution and its subsequent professionalization came an erosion of women's knowledge, as is evidenced by the absence of material on the Women's Institutes in the recorded history of adult education and its focus on agriculture and generic citizens. This professionalization has also resulted in a diminishing of women's power in a gendered educational institution and a lack of access to knowledge about women's educational experiences.

A feminist critique reveals that historical and contemporary research continues the underrepresentation of women as subjects, the centrality of topics relevant to men's lives, and the analysis of male experiences as the norm against which all experiences are known. Further, male control of what is legitimate and scholarly ensures that the specificity of women's experiences with adult education does not enter the public domain of published knowledge.

How can we ensure that the silences will not continue to be reproduced; that the new knowledge being developed on adult women as learners appears in the public domain (both journals and curricula) and that women's ways of learning and doing research aids the transformative process that Miles (1989) calls for?

One of the articles in the CASAE conference proceedings (Butterwick et al., 1990) offers a suggestion. The authors advise that we ask ourselves some questions about our own research and about that which we read:

- 1) Who is not accounted for in this research?
- 2) Who is not in the picture?

- 3) Whose voice is not being heard?
- 4) Are our methods providing ways to illuminate and include the experiences and understandings of those often excluded from research?
- 5) For whom is the knowledge being constructed?

By applying a feminist critique to adult education, this article is a step in the direction of answering the first three questions. Addressing all of the questions would ensure that the majority of students, that is, women would be included, accounted for and given a voice. Addressing the questions also implies that our research and knowledge would be constructed in a nongendered way, not only for other researchers or academics, but also for the women being educated and the practitioners who experience, on a daily basis, the actual process of educating adults. The gap between research and practice would be reduced; the silence of women's learning would be eliminated.

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