

INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN GRADUATE PROGRAMS IN ADULT EDUCATION IN CANADA

James A. Draper

Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Abstract

In 1986, a questionnaire was mailed to nineteen university departments in Canada that offer courses or programs in adult education at the undergraduate or graduate levels. The purpose of the descriptive survey was to ascertain the extent to which international and comparative studies are a part of the programs of study in adult education in Canada. The survey was undertaken as an informal project¹ of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Seventeen universities responded.²

Résumé

En 1986, un questionnaire fut expédié à 19 départements d'universités canadiennes, qui offrent des cours ou des programmes en éducation des adultes. Le but de ce sondage descriptif était de déterminer dans quelle mesure les études internationales et comparées font partie des programmes d'études en éducation des adultes au Canada. Le sondage fut entrepris à titre de projet informel de l'Association canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes. Dix-sept universités ont répondu au questionnaire.

Introduction

In 1986, a questionnaire was mailed to nineteen university departments in Canada that offer courses or programs in adult education at the undergraduate or graduate levels. The purpose of the descriptive survey was to ascertain the extent to which international and comparative studies are a part of the programs of study in adult education in Canada. The survey was undertaken as an informal project of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. Seventeen universities responded.

The terms "comparative" and "international" were used interchangeably in this study. Although comparative studies includes all aspects of comparison and is not limited to specific programs, agencies or political boundaries, international comparison is the term more commonly used. The 28 item questionnaire was organized under eight general headings: student and faculty complements; programs; faculty; students; funding; exchange programs; research publications; and additional related items.

Student/Faculty Complements

Ten universities reported a total of 36 full-time faculty, 24 part-time and 13 cross-appointments. Eleven universities reported a total of 2093 students enrolled within certificate, diploma, undergraduate and graduate (M.Ed., M.A., Ed.D. and Ph.D.) programs. The universities were asked to report on the total number of part-time and full-time student enrolments. Eleven universities reported a total of 1326 students; and seven universities reported 181 full-time students.

These figures are approximate and more detailed and accurate figures are required. However, for the purpose of this study, the figures indicate that there is a sizable number of faculty and students who hold some potential to become involved in international and/or comparative studies in adult education. This number includes about four hundred students who are enrolled in programs that require a thesis; hence there is considerable potential for research in this field.

Programs

The universities were asked the extent to which they offered international and comparative studies in their adult education programs. Ten institutions reported nothing for this item; three indicated that such a topic was only minimally introduced through other courses, notably an introductory course to adult education. Dalhousie University reported having a course on comparative studies in adult education, as did U.B.C. and OISE. The University of Guelph reported graduate courses in: international extension studies; education and international development; international communication; and extension education in change and development.

A number of universities reported courses which included aspects

of comparative and international studies in adult education. Saskatchewan reported five such courses, but no full titles were given. Guelph reported additional courses relating to planning and rural development, development administration, and planning for community development. U.B.C. listed five courses that touched on international studies in adult education: institutions of adult education; the community practice of adult education; introduction to adult education; foundations of adult education; and adult education and society. OISE named introduction to adult education, community education and development, political economy of adult education, and a course on adult education in cross-cultural contexts.

The universities of Saskatchewan, Dalhousie, Guelph, U.B.C. and OISE described briefly the historical development of their respective department's interest in international and comparative studies. In some cases, such as Guelph, the interest goes back to 1959. OISE and Saskatchewan introduced courses on the topic in the late 1960's and Dalhousie and U.B.C. in the last decade. Without exception, the interest in international and comparative studies grew out of the personal interests of specific faculty members as compared with departmental policy that intentionally planned for such a focus and then sought faculty members with specific interests in this area. In many cases, faculty came with interests and experiences focusing on specific countries and/or regions. Interestingly, U.B.C. and OISE also report that their department's interest in this field was reinforced by having visiting professors from other countries teach in their programs. U.B.C. also acknowledged the benefit from the staff in the U.B.C. Centre for Continuing Education who had international interests and OISE acknowledged the influence of the International Council for Adult Education. The international travel and overseas assignments of some faculty have also reinforced international interests in some departments of adult education.

The questionnaire asked what the comparative and international courses specifically attempted to achieve. Responses included: to orient students to international issues, especially Third World issues; to understand the ideology and politics of education; to present theoretical models for interpreting education and development; to enrich students' knowledge of the field of adult education and learning; to give Canadian students a fresh perspective by exposing them to others; to facilitate and enable foreign students to do some work which relates to their home situation; and to improve cross-cultural communication and understanding between various ethnic and cultural groups, within

and outside of Canada.

No universities required students with interest in international and/or comparative studies to study languages.

Finally, with respect to reporting on their programs, the universities were asked if the department surveyed was currently involved (or had been involved) with any international or overseas projects. McGill University reported that some of its faculty were associated with educational psychology and curriculum projects in Ecuador as well as planning for distance education in Peru. Guelph reported that its members were involved with projects in the Caribbean, Africa, Asia and South America. U.B.C. offers an adult education diploma program in Brazil and had just completed offering a diploma program in Hong Kong, with a likelihood of this continuing, and a similar program to be offered in Singapore. OISE has an extensive project in Chile as well as an international commonwealth study focusing on the training of adult educators at post-secondary institutions in India, the Caribbean and Africa. The University of Saskatchewan is consulting with the Welsh region Open University, and has an exchange program with Bristol University. Dalhousie reported that two of its professors were involved as advisors with the Dalhousie centre for development studies when a training program for middle level civil servants from Zimbabwe was initiated in the summer of 1984.

Faculty

Ten universities specifically named 33 faculty members who had interests and involvements in comparative-international studies.³

The international agencies, other than universities, that supported the overseas work of faculty included: Canadian International Development Agency, the International Council for Adult Education, International Council on Distance Education, the Adult Education Research Conference, the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education (U.K.), The British Council, the Commonwealth Secretariat, Commonwealth Council of Educational Administration, Unesco, the International Development Research Centre, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, the Indian Council of Social Science Research, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada), Canadian Organization for Development through Education, the Coady International Institute, World Literacy of Canada, and the Shastri Indo-Canadian Institute.

Students

Seven universities reported that approximately 72 students were interested primarily in comparative-international studies, of which about 34 were foreign students from such countries as: Australia, Chile, China, Ethiopia, Ghana, Grenada, Guyana, Honduras, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Kenya, Korea, Malawi, Mexico, New Zealand, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Tanzania, Thailand, Trinidad, the United Kingdom, the United States, Venezuela, Zambia. Such foreign students have had field experiences in rural extension, community development, literacy, training, distance education, popular education and non-formal education. Five universities reported having had a total enrolment of approximately 135 foreign students during the past five years, with the highest numbers enrolled at OISE, U.B.C. and Guelph. Many Canadian students with interests in comparative-international studies have had overseas experiences with the Canadian University Services Overseas, Crossroads International, and the World University Services of Canada.

With some exceptions, very few universities have any long-term or formal plan for involving students wishing to have overseas experiences. Opportunities are available, however, through informal arrangements or through resources outside of the universities. In some cases, a student is able to receive graduate course credit towards a degree program through a practicum or an individual reading/research course, but this is rare.

Funding

Students, both Canadian and foreign, are sometimes able to pursue their studies in the comparative-international field through a variety of funding sources such as: scholarships or fellowships from CIDA, IDRC, Unesco, the Commonwealth Foundation; graduate assistantships offered by some departments of adult education; research contracts; study leave pay from one's employer; and the Swedish Foundation. Small amounts of money are available to provide funds for foreign students to travel through parts of Canada.

The universities were asked to report the registration fees that are required from Canadian students as compared with foreign students. Saskatchewan and Manitoba reported that there are no differential fees required of foreign students. However, the universities of U.B.C., Guelph and OISE, reported that foreign or

visa students pay between 50% to 250% more in fees than do Canadian students.

Exchange Programs

Few organized exchange programs are available as part of a department's adult education comparative-international studies program. The University of Saskatchewan reports that exchanges with West Germany have been organized and a tour of adult education agencies in the United Kingdom took place in 1983. The University of Guelph has an annual undergraduate International Development 'minor' course to the Caribbean with CIDA scholarships for about three students per year. U.B.C. has had students visit the Brazil diploma program and faculty have been involved in some exchange programs sponsored by the U.B.C. Centre for Continuing Education, the Canadian Association for Adult Education and the British Council.

During the past five years, about seven faculty from universities outside Canada either have taught or visited the University of Guelph, from such countries as Guyana, the Netherlands, the United States and some Third World universities. U.B.C. reported about ten such faculty from England, Brazil, Germany, the U.S.A. and Europe. OISE reported visiting professors from England, Ireland, Australia, Poland, the U.S.A. and Brazil. Saskatchewan has had about 15 visiting professors, from West Germany, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.A.

Research/Publications

For a listing of faculty publications relating to comparative-international studies, the reader is referred to the publication by John Dobson.⁴

Student theses that have related to comparative-international studies, completed in Canada, are listed in two publications by Dobson and Draper.⁵

Table 1 shows that a total of 59 masters and 34 doctoral theses have been produced that relate to international and cross cultural studies. This is out of an approximate total of 588 masters and 199 doctoral theses that have been completed in adult education in Canada. Thus, one can conclude that approximately 10% of all masters and 17% of all doctoral theses relate to international or cross-cultural studies.

Table 1

Postgraduate Theses Relating to International and
Cross-Cultural Studies in Adult Education: 1958-1986

Degree	University							Total
	OISE	UBC	McGill	Guelph	SFX	Sask.	Dal.	
Masters	8	3	6	29	6	5	2	59
Doctoral	31	3	-	-	-	-	-	34
Total	39	6	6	29	6	5	2	93

Table 2 shows the frequency of countries, geographical regions or theme areas on which masters and doctoral theses focused. By far, the largest number of theses have focused on African studies, followed by those done on the Caribbean and the Middle East. A relative large number of theses have dealt with the concerns and cross-cultural adaptation of foreign students studying in Canada, the re-adjustments of Canadians returning to Canada after having worked overseas, such as with CUSO or Canada World Youth (CWY), and of immigrant groups to Canada. A few theses have examined the thoughts of Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educator.

Table 2

The Geographical or Theme Focus of Theses in Adult
Education Relating to International and Cross-Cultural Studies

Focus	University							Total
	OISE	UBC	McGill	Guelph	SFX	Sask.	Dal.	
Africa	7	3	1	13	2	-	1	27
Caribbean	6	-	-	3	-	-	-	9
Middle East	5	-	2	-	1	-	-	7
Latin America	1	-	-	6	-	-	-	7
Thailand	4	-	-	-	-	1	-	5
India	2	-	-	-	1	-	-	3
Other Geog.	4	2	1	1	-	1	1	10
Ethnic Adjust.	7	1	2	6	2	2	-	20
Freire	3	-	-	-	-	1	-	4
Total	39	6	6	29	6	5	2	93

From the data available, it becomes clear that some universities focus more on one or a few geographical regions than others. For instance, the University of Guelph focuses heavily on Africa and

Latin America; OISE on Africa, the Caribbean and the Middle East. Both these universities also have produced a number of theses dealing with foreign student and Canadian adjustment and the adjustment patterns of immigrants to Canada. These latter topics directly relate to cross-cultural communications and other issues.

Additional Questions

In the last section of the questionnaire, the universities were asked to comment on the issues which they felt needed to be addressed in comparative-international studies in adult education; the barriers that prevent departments of adult education from becoming more involved in comparative-international studies in adult education; departmental future plans; career opportunities in the international field of adult education; and the extent to which departments were supporting non-formal education in Third World development.

The responding universities identified a number of issues that needed to be examined relating to international studies in adult education. They reported a greater in-depth examination was needed of the Canadian experiences in the international field, with a view to learning from these experiences; the need to improve Canadian understanding of development; the importance of comparative research in one's area of expertise; the need for a greater political/economic focus in adult education program; the too descriptive analysis that is done in comparative-international studies; the fact that comparative education is not a priority; the unavailability of accurate data; the problems relating to the usage of the same terms with different meanings or the usage of different terms with similar meanings which make it difficult in collecting and comparing information; the need to develop the criteria and concepts which are valid for satisfactory comparative analysis; the rapid growth in communication; the need to improve the instruments and means of international communication in the field, privately, bilaterally, and multilaterally; the need to identify aspects of the field where international cooperation is desirable; and the need for greater understanding of the significant contributions to thought and practice which have come from Third World institutions.

Six universities had comments to make about some of the barriers that prevented departments of adult education, students, and faculty from being more involved in comparative-international studies in adult education: lack of funding and financing were

mentioned by five of the institutions; not seeing international studies as a priority; language barriers; institutional barriers such as minimizing the value of co-authored research or policies that prevent students from including international experiences for credit in their respective programs of study; a lack of time; a lack of student and faculty interest; not having release time from one's institution to become involved; a lack of awareness of the value and need for more comparative-international studies to be undertaken; and unnecessary squabbling relating to ideology resulting in some professionals being unable to give advice.

Of the seven who responded to a question on future planning, five universities indicated that they had no such plans relating to comparative-international studies, although a few mentioned that international matters were a priority at the moment and some effort was being made to consolidate and reexamine the resources and role of their department in the international field. The University of Guelph expressed its continuing commitment to collaboration with Third World universities. U.B.C. reported that it plans to offer diploma programs in such places as Hong Kong and Singapore; that several faculty members have contacts in China and that these are to be further developed; and there is a hope to strengthen ties with the Pacific Rim countries.

One university department felt that there were few career opportunities for persons wanting to specialize and work within the field of comparative-international adult education, while another institution felt that the possibilities of doing so were "substantial".⁶ Two other universities thought that there likely would be career opportunities with government agencies, multi-national aid agencies, such as Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and International Development Research Council (IDRC), or with some non-governmental international agencies that are involved in development. Comments were made that foreign students returning back home are likely to have a greater interest in comparative-international studies. Finally, some feeling was expressed that there may be some opportunity for academic teaching in the area of international studies.

The last question asked the departments of adult education was to indicate the extent to which they were supporting non-formal adult education in Third World development.⁷ Six institutions indicated that they were giving at least some support; a few of the same institutions said that they were substantially involved although this might be limited to the specific interests of one or a

few faculty. Graduates from some departments were directly involved in non-formal education in developing countries; some doctoral students were doing theses on the topic; and faculty were involved through research, teaching and consulting. Books, course outlines, and other publications also often were provided to persons in Third World countries. As volunteer members of international voluntary organizations, some faculty and students felt they were making some contribution to non-formal adult education in other countries.

Observations Based on the National Survey

From this brief descriptive survey one can conclude that whereas there is a great deal of individual faculty and student interest in comparative-international studies, as a field of study it is peripheral to most departments of adult education. Few departments consider this as an official focus. The actual numbers of students and faculty mentioned in this study are less important than the fact that within six or so departments there is a core of dedicated and experienced persons who are committed to the study and practice of international studies. The existence of such studies stems from the personal overseas experiences as well as the presence of casual visitors from other countries, or even, in some cases, from having foreign scholars teach within Canadian institutions. Such exchanges, although brief, can be helpful in extending the international networks of individuals and departments, sometimes leading to return visits and the sharing of materials.

Although there are few courses which actually focus on comparative-international studies, many more courses have a potential for this field of study. In fact, there are few courses which could not include a comparative-international component in them: courses on community development; adult basic education/literacy; adult psychology and development; and program planning or introductory courses to adult education. Those few courses that do focus on the topic attempt to achieve a number of purposes which go beyond the content of the course, such as, upon an understanding of the macro, international issues and the enhancing of cross-cultural communication. An attitude toward cross-cultural differences and the development of cross-cultural communications skills have as much relevance to the Canadian context as they do to understanding people in other countries. There are few adult educators in Canada, for instance, who are not working with ethnic and cultural groups other than their own. All of them have an ethnicity and a culture and all

interact in their daily lives with people from different backgrounds. Daily cross-cultural interactions are not often acknowledged.

A rich resource within comparative and international studies is the presence of foreign scholars. Legitimizing the presence of such scholars is a debate that continues. As far as the presence of foreign scholars is concerned, it is appropriate that adult educators should be involved in the debate. The fact that much legislation discourages their presence has wide repercussions. In a number of submissions and testimonies presented to the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations, the present policy towards foreign students was described as "confused", "complex", "inequitable" and "educational protectionism". The federal government was urged to take a leadership role in replacing the confusing mix of federal, provincial and institutional policies for foreign students by a coherent national approach.⁸ In its conclusion, the Committee stated:

We believe that foreign students constitute an important asset for Canada that has not been sufficiently recognized in terms of improving trade opportunities, increasing cultural contacts and more generally on foreign policy.⁹

These should be areas of concern to educators especially to those committed to comparative and international studies.

In some ways, the extent of comparative-international studies in universities is linked to the general public's awareness of international issues. Many efforts are being made, through developing education and other programs, to increase this awareness. The Canadian International Development Agency is aware of this link between public awareness and the political support which it receives for its work. The fact that some provinces in Canada discriminate against foreign students through differential fees is a reflection of a narrow political and public perception of the presence of such students within Canadian institutions of higher learning. An important role for those committed to comparative-international studies is to work with others to influence decision-makers of the benefits of having students from other lands in their midst. One approach to doing this is to undertake studies which document the role, location and positions of influence that foreign student graduates have after they return to their homelands.

A number of other issues are in evidence arising from this

national survey. The need for more documentation of resources and the sharing of experience in this field is a basis for the study and practice of international-comparative interests. There also is a need for a human resource data-bank which records the experiences and interests of adult educators in this field. A greater understanding of terminology is also important since it is with words that people describe what they do or what they want to achieve. The need for more conceptual models and a further understanding of the relevance and importance of comparative-international studies is required including the linking of these benefits to cultural diversity in Canada. Many of the areas of concern arising from this national survey can be put into the form of recommendations and questions for further research. Research is also needed to document a more detailed picture of the comparative and international involvements and interests existing within departments of adult education.

A number of barriers discourage or prevent departments from becoming further involved in international studies. One could debate the circular relationship between resources required and expended. The lack of funding, planning, and supporting policies can all serve as barriers. A number of barriers are beyond the direct control or influence of individual departments of adult education: for instance, provincial legislation that imposes differential fees on foreign students which discourages such students from study in Canada; or the policies of universities that restrict the use of credit courses for those wishing to pursue an interest in international studies within international settings.

What career opportunities are available for those who are interested in international studies, apart from the likelihood of an academic career in this field? Living and working overseas is only one way to pursue an interest in the international field. The question is also related to alternative ways in which one can support Third World development, the role of non-formal education, cross-cultural communication, and program initiatives in other countries. In this survey, a number of agencies were named that support international projects through Canadian universities. All are potential employers, and some are within Canada. The scope of organizations can be greatly expanded, thereby expanding the potential scope of employment agencies such as World Literacy of Canada and CUSO, the churches, the YWCA and YMCA, and others, all of whom have an interest in international projects and issues. Various ethnic-specific organizations, trade unions, business and industry, as well as community-based agencies, such as literacy and second language

programs, depend for their success and effectiveness on cross-cultural communication and understanding. All of these resources hold a comparative and international potential for adult educators.

Reference Notes

1. The principal researcher for the study was James A. Draper, assisted by Winston Lawrence.

The principal researcher and the sponsoring agency, CASAE, are aware of the limitations of the survey method. As the literature on research methods points out, the value of the information which is reported through surveys is dependent upon the accuracy of interpretation and facts reported by the respondents.

Periodically, since the mid 1970's, surveys of adult education programs and university courses have been undertaken which present the 'state of the art' or the field of adult education in Canada at the time of the surveys.

In determining which universities should receive the questionnaire used in this study, two sources were used:

Keane, P. 1984. *Adult Education Studies in Canada - 1984*. Halifax: Dalhousie University (the survey was a project of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education).

The most recent list of members of the Canadian Professors of Adult Education in Canada, 1986.

The survey focused on the international and comparative activities within the field of adult education in Canada as defined by the above sources, and not upon the more general field of international and comparative studies.

2. The 19 universities/institutions receiving the questionnaire were: Manitoba; Saskatchewan; Dalhousie; Calgary; Guelph; British Columbia; Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; St. Francis Xavier; Victoria; New Brunswick; The Faculty of Education, University of Toronto; Western Ontario; Queen's University; Ottawa; McGill; Concordia; Regina; Montreal; Alberta. The latter two universities did not respond to the study. Regrettably, the University of Calgary was excluded from the study since the response indicated that while there were international and comparative activities in the Faculty of Education, none seemed related to the adult education program.

3. Faculty that were named as having interests and involvement in comparative/international adult education in Canada were: Manitoba - F. Drewe; Saskatchewan - R. Carlson, M. Collins, R. Wickett; Dalhousie - Ruth Gamberg, B. Roald, Stuart Semple, Michael Welton; Guelph - D. Blackburn, E. Findlan, J. Shute; UBC - R. Boshier, P. Buttedahl, J. Kulich, D. Pratt, G. Selman, T. Sork; OISE - J. Draper, J. Farrell, K. Rockhill, A. Thomas, D. Wilson; SFX - John Dobson; FEUT - K. McLeod, S. Reesak; UWO - N. Hey, D. Radcliff, D. Ray; McGill - G. Anderson, R. Boulianne, T. Eisemon, R. Ghosh, C. Lusthaus.

4. Dobson, J.R.A. 1984. *The Study of People, Programs, Places and Processes: Canadian Adult Education Literature, 1977 - 1984*. Antigonish, Nova Scotia: Department of Adult Education, St. Francis Xavier University, pp. 60.

5. Dobson, J.R.A. 1986. *Adult Education Theses in Canada, 1980-1986*. Antigonish: Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, Department of Adult Education, St. Francis Xavier University.

Draper, J.A. 1981. *Adult Education Theses: Canada. (to 1980)* Toronto: Department of Adult Education, OISE.

6. This topic was more extensively discussed at the Annual National Conferences on "Career Opportunities in International Adult Education", 1984, 1985, 1986, Department of Adult Education, University of the District of Columbia, Washington, D.C.
7. Draper, J.A. 1985. *Commonwealth Institutions of Higher Education and Their Involvement in Non-Formal Education*. Toronto: ICAE.
8. Special Joint Committee of the Senate and of the House of Commons. 1986. *Independence and Internationalism*. (Report on Canada's International Relations). Ottawa: Queen's Printer, pp. 94, 151.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 151.