

Articles

WOMEN'S CHALLENGE TO ADULT EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper argues that a creative response to the presence of increasing numbers of women in adult education would strengthen the important and currently embattled social purpose tradition in the field; it would help progressive educators realize more fully many of the pedagogical principles they have developed and worked with to be a potentially powerful resource for educators concerned with preserving the social mission of adult education in a period of ever more insistent pressure for a narrowing professionalization.

Résumé

Cet article vise à démontrer qu'une réponse positive à la présence croissante du nombre de femmes en éducation des adultes renforcerait cette bataille, importante et actuelle, menée pour maintenir la tradition sociale du champ de l'éducation des adultes, et aiderait les éducatrices et les éducateurs progressistes à réaliser pleinement plusieurs principes pédagogiques avec lesquels elles/ils ont travaillé depuis des décennies. Certains aspects de la théorie et de la pratique féministes sont vus comme pouvant représenter de puissantes ressources pour les éducatrices et les éducateurs intéressés à préserver la mission sociale de l'éducation des adultes à une époque où les pressions pour réduire le champ professionnel se font davantage sentir.

Introduction

Women today present a challenge to adult education just by being involved in such large and increasing numbers as social conditions

and the conditions of our lives change.¹ More importantly, women are also posing an intentional challenge to adult education as we consciously articulate our interests, needs and values in feminism and the women's movement. Women's challenge understood in this way represents an opportunity as well as critique to the progressive adult educator. A creative response to this challenge would strengthen the important and currently embattled social purpose tradition of adult education and help progressive educators realize more fully many of the pedagogical principles they have developed and worked with over decades.

For generations, practitioners of popular education have been advocating and attempting to facilitate the learners' control and definition of the learning process and educational resources. However, their success has been partial. Despite many practitioners' desires to the contrary, adult educators generally have played the defining role in the educational encounters in which they have been involved. The challenge to adult educators with a commitment to empowering the disadvantaged and contributing to social change is to welcome the opportunity provided by women's new activism and to participate actively with them in creating new educational forms that reflect the emerging possibilities for a learning partnership.

It is a challenge as well as an opportunity because whatever one's commitments and values, relinquishing a controlling role is always difficult. Whether or not this challenge is met and a political/educational alliance develops between feminists and progressive adult educators remains to be seen. This must be a central question for both parties; but it is not the purpose of this article to explore the concrete and strategic 'hows' of such a process or to offer any assessment of its likelihood. The much more modest intention here is simply to outline the strengths (and therefore the opportunities) that feminist practice potentially brings to education for social change.

It has been obvious to progressive adult educators for some time that an active population or group which is contesting established social relationships in an attempt to take more control of their own lives and to influence the shape of history is far more receptive to a critical education process than are isolated individuals or inactive groups.² Social movements provide a congenial ground for an educational practice which:

encourages the spirit of equality and the realization of full human potential in an anti-elitist communal process;

provides the students with the skills, resources and intellectual tools to understand and to confront the structures and practices which perpetuate inequality;

integrates vocational training, personal enlightenment/empowerment, and social action;

challenges the separation between the world of knowledge production and daily life;

refuses the artificial divisions of subject matter by discipline in an interdisciplinary approach to real world problems;

and breaks down the monopoly on knowledge by recognizing the learners as knowledge creators.

Historically in Canada and elsewhere adult educators have played important roles in movements for social justice and reform. Examples include: the initiators and shapers of the Antigonish Movement; the educational arm of trade unions; co-operative, farmers' and other similar movements; educational resources for community struggles; and the black movement.³

Educators have taken their skills and resources to struggling communities of Third World peasants, workers, farmers, fisherman, blacks, native and poor people. Educators have tried in these struggles to listen to and to learn from the people, to recognize the people's needs and wisdom and to create a learning process which serves those needs as it empowers the people individually and collectively: that is, they have tried to encourage an educational process rooted firmly in social commitment and action. The women's movement is obviously not alone in providing a context for such an educational practice; but the challenge and opportunity it poses for "the field" and for adult educators is in some ways unique. There are a number of reasons why this is so.

The Unique Nature of Women and Its Implications

The group "women" is not clearly located in any single place to which educators can travel, such as a peasant village or native, black, working class or rural community. Many adult educators are themselves members of the group "women". When they teach women as women⁴ they are teaching members of their own group

with a potentially closer relationship to the learners than is generally possible for educators/organizers/facilitators.

In modern urban contexts women are not a homogeneous group who are scattered throughout society with no single social location and no clearly defined space of their own. Until recently, they have been invisible as a social category. In more traditional societies women remain a clearly recognized group but one often ignored or presumed to be insignificant in social terms. Therefore, in both contexts, the mere claiming/recognition of group membership and significance by educators and learners together is itself deeply political and transforms the potential relationship between the two in ways that have yet to be fully explored.

Educational theory and theories of knowledge and learning are central to the women's movement and to feminists in ways that are not true of other social movements. For feminists, personal change and growth are not the guaranteed bi-products of struggle that many Marxists and other radicals have tended to presume. Feminists, instead, consciously structure their practice to maximize personal transformation as both means and end of a struggle which explicitly refuses the separation of process and product. The depth and centrality of this integration of the personal and political, individual and collective, emotional and rational is unique to feminism and distinguishes it even from Freirian and other popular education traditions which pay particular attention to personal change.

The Development of New Epistemologies and Practices

Women's intentional healing of themselves and simultaneous affirmation of their own value and strength is essential to their development of an alternative system of values and vision in a patriarchy which denigrates and trivializes women and leaves them and their work and worth invisible. The renaming of the world so that women become visible and valuable to themselves and each other is necessarily an active and collective process. The conscious reflection on women's experience and practice in the world, which lies at the heart of this process, is leading to nothing less than a re-examination of the very structures of knowledge and the development of new epistemologies.⁵

Movement activists/participants are developing new and exciting forms of educational practice by and for women which facilitate this process of collective rediscovery/renaming of the world and the self.⁶ These include: consciousness-raising groups;⁷ kitchen

table meetings; support groups for women with shared situations and needs;⁸ public panels of women "experts" who are recognized by virtue of their experience rather than any paper or professional qualifications; cross country caravans and buses; action research; theatre performances; conferences; public forums; and as well, new modes of practice in the classroom in the widely varied credit and non-credit courses provided for diverse groups of women.⁹

The new knowledge emerging from movement activity and the self-organization/self-education of women provides important opportunities and poses important challenges for adult educators. The challenge is all the more insistent because, unlike most other constituencies of social purpose adult education, women are bringing their concerns to adult educators in their own space. They are challenging adult educators to counter women's invisibility, to recognize a gendered world and gendered subjects, and to refuse the deficiency model of women;¹⁰ furthermore, they are challenging adult educators to question established definitions affecting not only women, the world and humanity but such central concepts as work and leisure, progress, development, politics, the personal and the natural.

Adult educators are challenged, too, by a feminist practice which, at its best, has been able to realize the principles of progressive and critical education more fully than has been possible before even in social movement contexts.¹¹ Feminists, for instance, open the education and social justice mandate to half of the population which, up until now, largely has been excluded or restricted to a subordinate role. In doing so, they increase access enormously to a genuinely affirmative education. They also broaden and transform the critical agenda and the field of critical enquiry and education, throwing everything into question, including all that has been presumed natural and inevitable.

The notion that the 'personal is political,' and the recognition that naming and reflecting on experience is the key to understanding, brings politics, education and daily life convincingly together. It demystifies theory without denying it as an essential aspect of a collective practice by and for women themselves.¹² And it connects theory and education firmly with practice. The following quotation clearly illustrates the explicit integration of theory and practice, learning and action in the consciousness-raising (C.R.) process:

C.R. is our term for the process by which women begin to discover ourselves against the effects of male supremacy on us. It happens when we describe and share our individual problems so that we can understand the universality of our oppression and analyze its social roots. It is learning to take pride and delight in our femaleness, rejecting the need to follow the feminine mystique or to copy men as our models; it is learning to trust and love each other as sisters, not competitors for male approval. It is deciding and re-deciding each day, individually and together, that we will take control of our lives, create and support each other in alternative ways of living, and struggle together for the liberation of all women.¹³

Jane Thompson points out that education and action are inseparable in feminist classroom learning as well:

The learning experience within the women's movement has never been a purely intellectual or educational affair, but directly related to personal and collective growth, development and change, and to a whole range of campaigns and political activities concerned to challenge and alter women's subordinate position in society. That same link between action, continually developed and interpreted through interaction with theory, and described by Paulo Freire as a kind of personal praxis, also serves as a model for feminist studies. It is inconceivable to imagine courses which value women's personal experience, which develop an alternative version of women's lives to one which legitimises their oppression, and which encourage women to stop denying their own interests in the service of patriarchy, as courses bound by the usual liberal reluctance to be 'where the action is' when students decide to take their learning out of the classroom and into the home, the picket line or the political arena.¹⁴

This articulation of a political ground for education has enabled feminists around the world to share experience and insights across wide divisions of culture, race, wealth and social system; it also has allowed us to develop our understanding and practice together through international links and networks that reflect genuinely equal, reciprocal and supportive relationships among Third and First World groups.¹⁵ This is a unique achievement which represents an enviable alternative to the much more common paternalistic or charitable mode of education/training

relationship that seems inescapable in other contexts even for the most progressive educators.

The Challenge for Adult Education

The most direct and difficult challenge posed for adult educators (both male and female) by the new knowledge and new practice of feminism and the women's movement is the possibility (requirement) it represents for achieving the genuinely reciprocal learning relationship between educators and learner/activists that has long been a goal of progressive educators. Effective social purpose education with women today requires that adult educators learn from the new insights and analyses of the women's movement. This exciting prospect opens the way for a much fuller and more genuinely equal and mutual learning experience for teacher and student than is possible for middle class urban teachers of peasants or intellectual teachers of workers.¹⁶

However, realizing the potential for a true partnership of learning necessarily will involve adult educators in some hard self-questioning. The alternatives that feminists are developing throw into question many established ways of teaching and learning, the content of much of that learning can be questioned as well as the role that even much social purpose education/training has played in serving rather than contesting structures that limit our lives.¹⁷ Michel Jean notes:

It has not been enough to open up the trades and professions to women in order to desex these fields of activity and learning. Little by little we have come to realize that the entire educational and social structure has to be reviewed, in addition to the means by which knowledge is acquired.¹⁸

The following poem which appeared on a women's poster from Papua, New Guinea, is just one example of the kind of challenge being posed to women all over the world and, through them, to the adult educators who are concerned to listen:

Determining New Directions for Women's Education

Women
Don't let the changing times
the changing technology

mean changing hands
Don't lose your ground in the game
they call "development"

Dare to demand education that is real
employment that has rewards
engagement in life
effective voices in the future

Take hold of what you have
of what you know and do already
keep it
caress it
cultivate it
Call improvements to your corner
Put progress in your part

Capture innovations and invent

Crush ways of learning
and strategies of work
which cut your options

Beware the tricks of "training for women"
special projects
deception education
token extension
illusive equality
that starts and ends at home...
as housewives
"having little or no opportunity
to actively engage
enthusiastically participate
in all forms of social and economic life"

Don't be trained, taught, educated...
to occupy yourself with trivia
the "toy" development
of household trappings
and the things they call "women's work"
yet ridicule and dismiss in the analysis of "real" work
of man-hours
and man-made definitions of development

Be cautioned against contrivances
(in the hand craft, needle craft...)

mothercraft, childcraft)
claiming to refine your competence
crown your role while actually
crippling your potential

Go forward
not backward
Be bold
not building
Seize time
Seize training opportunities
Teach yourselves
and set your own horizons

Take note
Take care
Take Courage
Take hold firmly
of tools
and technology
Take part fiercely in the future
Take stock of changing times
and take on a stake in training

Be all that you can
and all that you want
A decade that you want
our decade has begun.¹⁹

The field of Adult Education is not alone in being challenged by women's developing organization and consciousness. Churches, trade unions, social agencies, political parties, governments, the professions and the media are all facing pressure. Unfortunately, there is little sign, yet, that the long history of concern for social justice and the commitment to work towards its realization represented by the social purpose tradition in education has made the field any more responsive to women's challenge than have been these other institutions. A study conducted in 1977 by the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) found that:

Nothing has changed. In spite of years of active concern for women's equality, in spite of the enormous efforts of thousands of women educators (and some male educators) in this country concerned about the status of women in

continuing education, and in spite of the proliferation of really excellent educational programmes for women... speaking globally, nothing has changed.²⁰

A 1988 report, prepared for the same organization eleven years later, found that this state of affairs still persists.²¹ A study undertaken in 1986 for the Social Science Federation of Canada reported that women's influence in each academic discipline varied proportionately with their numbers. The more women there are in a field the larger the role they play. The single exception to this general rule was the field of education where women's influence is much less than would be expected given their relatively large numbers.²² A recent survey of Canadian academic journals found that The Canadian Journal of Education in the 1980's published fewer articles on women than the leading journals in other fields such as history, sociology and psychology, disciplines which have relatively fewer women.²³

Women's access to adult education continues to be limited by a number of factors: low personal incomes; lack of decision-making power over family income; low employer support for their training;²⁴ poor provision of child care and public transportation; lack of recognition for the knowledge and skills women acquire in their unpaid family and volunteer work; and timetabling of classes which takes no account of the domestic demands on women and the particular structure of their working day.

Adult education courses and curriculum continue to make 'ungendered' assumptions which ignore women, devalue their activities, and remain impervious to women's different learning styles.²⁵ Guidance counsellors continue to push women toward the low pay/low status areas in which traditionally they have been employed.²⁶ Women are under-represented in vocationally related training courses and are still heavily concentrated in traditional areas.²⁷ The few programmes which cater to women's particular educational needs tend to be ghettoized and to lack secure institutional support. The administration and teaching of adult education remains largely in the hands of men.²⁸

Conclusions

It is important for progressive adult educators to work toward expanding women's (and all people's) access to all forms of training by reducing the economic and social barriers to formal education, developing effective means of outreach, and finding ways in which to participate and to contribute to community

organizing and popular education programmes -- to go where women (the people) are.

But for the social change tradition of adult education to gain real strength from feminism, adult educators also will have to join feminists in working toward the very transformation of knowledge through the incorporation of the female point of view and experience; undertaking, on the basis of this transformation, a radical rethinking of curriculum, course content, and teaching and evaluation methods to ensure a feminist dimension in all education as well as altering the power structures in education.²⁹

This is a tall order and there are significant forces of resistance within the field which, as we have seen, have so far prevailed. But for those educators concerned to strengthen the social purpose/social mission of adult education and to preserve the pluralism of the field in a period of ever more insistent pressure for a narrowing professionalization,³⁰ the women's movement can be a powerful ally, and the counter pressure of feminists an important resource.³¹ In fact, it may be no exaggeration to say, that without the active and conscious constituency represented by women, the cause of social purpose education may be all but lost.

The analyses, insights and suggestions of feminists offer strong support, too, for those educators concerned to ensure that the increasingly important, and necessarily broad and creative role of adult education in post-industrial society is recognized, consciously planned, facilitated, and adequately financed. Feminist analyses of the increasingly global economy, the inadequacy of current concepts of development, the impact of new technologies on work and on the role of labour and information in production, the shifting relations of production and reproduction (including education) activities, manufacturing and services, and the state and the family or private life, are all contributing to the growing awareness that we are witnessing the emergence of a post-industrial socio-economic order: one with very different organizing principles than industrialism in which education, information and human resources are central.³²

The demands of women for educational access, flexibility, and support highlight essential areas of change if adult education is to grow to play the role it must in this period. They strengthen the case for the abandonment of the rigid timetabling and cost-recovery basis of adult education provision. Together, such designs restrict educational opportunities to those with considerable previous education and substantial financial and psychological

resources. Consequently, the structural changes necessary to build the new relationship between work, leisure and education required in a post-industrial economy are inhibited.

The particular characteristics of women as learners,³³ if they are taken seriously can also make a potentially large contribution to the new kind of education required today. Women's thirst for knowledge and their willingness to make sacrifices for access to education and to undertake important life changes as a result is exemplary. Research has shown that women have a preference for, and an ability to initiate and participate in, the kind of co-operative inter-active, non-hierarchical and personally empowering education process most appropriate to develop the active and flexible response to the world that is increasingly important for people today.³⁴ And women are particularly interested in the human and social application of knowledge; they prefer education which is socially relevant.³⁵ This is, again, the kind of education required to meet the challenges we face today.

Education alone cannot, of course, ensure an adequate and humanity affirming response to the pressures and potentials for social change that we are facing in this period. But the challenges posed by women indicate the necessary direction of movement if the field of adult education is to retain its social purpose tradition and with it, its relevance and its ability to contribute to the development of new ways of being, and a new social order in which the enormously powerful new productive forces are used to enhance our lives and our freedom, rather than to restrict them. This is the historical challenge and potential that women represent for adult education.

Reference Notes

1. Counting formal enrolments only and not group educational activities, in general, women in 1983 made up 56% of adult enrolments in Canada and their participation rate is 21% compared to men's 17%. *One in every five: A survey of adult education in Canada*. 1985. Secretary of State and Statistics Canada, p. 6.

In 1980-1981 women made up 61% of the part-time undergraduate students in Canadian Universities. *From the adult's point of view*. 1982. The Canadian Association for Adult Education.

2. Some educators have concluded that the active collective contest of social struggle provides the only ground for effective popular education practice. Activists take charge of their collective learning, learn for their own self-defined purposes and use their new knowledge in action in ways that individual learners cannot do. Myles Horton of Highlander, for instance, worked closely with the trade union movement in its more radical days and, later, with the civil rights

movement because these two movements provided, at different times, the necessary context for critical education. See *Unearthing seeds of fire: The idea of Highlander*. 1975. Adams, F. and Blair, J.F. (publishers).

Jorge Osorio explores what he considers to be the essential relationship between popular education and popular movements in his article "Popular education in Latin America". In *International journal of university adult education*. 17 (3). November 1988.

3. For information about some of the most important earlier Canadian educational practice see the collection *Knowledge for the people: The struggles for adult learning in English speaking Canada, 1928-1973*. 1987. Welton, M. (ed.). OISE Press.

4. This recognition of women as a significant social group is a hallmark of feminist education which is not, of course, common to all women adult educators, many of whom fail to recognize women as a social group and themselves as part of it, even when they teach all women's groups of health or social workers, welfare mothers, teenagers, prisoners, incest victims or stay at home mothers. Adrienne Rich, one of the most influential theorists of feminist education, describes her own coming to awareness as a woman and the impact of this on her observation of the education process and her practice as a teacher, in the widely cited, and by now classic, article, "Taking women students seriously." In *On lies, secrets and silences*. 1979. Norton.

5. For an account of the development of this epistemological critique and transformation in feminism generally see my *Feminist radicalism in the 1980's*, 1985, New World Perspectives, Culturetexts. Collections of feminist articles which illustrate this radical re-examination/reconstruction of knowledge in a variety of fields include: *Knowledge reconsidered: A feminist overview*. 1987. Franklin, U.M. (ed.). Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women; *Discovering reality: Feminist perspectives on epistemology, metaphysics, methodology, and the philosophy of science*. 1983. Harding, S. (ed.). D. Reidel; *Feminism in Canada: From pressure to politics*. 1982. Miles, A. and Finn, G. (eds.) Black Rose Books. See Elizabeth Minnich, "Toward a feminist transformation of the academy," for an early account of the epistemological shift involved in feminist education. In *Proceedings of the fifth annual GLCA women's studies conference*. 1979. A special issue of the *Journal of moral education* entitled *Feminist perspectives on moral education and development*, 16 (3), October 1987, presents more recent writing on the epistemological transformations involved in feminist education, including, "Do we really want to produce good people?" by Neil Noddings and "Transforming moral education" by Jane Roland Martin. For an article relating this feminist epistemological work to questions of practice in adult education see: Warren, C., "Feminist discourse and the research enterprise: Implications for adult education", *Canadian journal for the study of adult education* 1 (2). 1987.

6. Case studies of feminist educational practice in Canada, the United States, England and the Third World respectively may be found in the following books: Canada: *Women and education: A Canadian perspective*. 1987. Gaskell, J.S. and McLauren, A.T. (eds.) Detselig; *Women's studies in Canada: A discussion*. November 1987. Somer Brodribb. A special publication of Resources for Feminist Research; The United States: *Learning our way: Essays in feminist teaching*. 1983. Bunch, C. and Pollock, S. (eds.) The Crossing Press; *Gendered subjects: The dynamics of feminist teaching*. 1985. Culley, M. and Portugese, C. (eds.) Routledge and Kegan Paul; England: *Learning liberation: Women's response to men's education*. 1983. Jane L. Thompson, Croom Helm; New

futures: Changing women's education. 1985. Hughes, M. and Kennedy, M. (eds.) Routledge and Kegan Paul; *Third World: Towards empowerment: report of FAO-FFHC/AD South Asia training for women development workers Oct. - Dec. 1983, Food and agricultural organization of the U.N.*, April 1985. Kamla Bhasin, office of the FAO representative in India; *In search of answers: Indian women's voices from Manushi.* 1984. Kishwar, M. and Vanita, R. (eds.) Zed Books; *Growing together: Women, feminism and popular education.* 1988. Isis International and Network for Women and Popular Education of the Latin American council on Adult Education. Isis International.

7. Consciousness-raising groups emerged in the early days of this phase of the women's liberation movement apparently spontaneously in the thousands all across North America and represent one of the most original and important feminist educational and political contributions. For an early monograph describing and reflecting on the practice of C.R. and its significance see Pamela Allen, *Free space; a perspective on the small group in women's liberation.* 1970. Times Change Press. The following anthologies of early feminist manifestos and articles also include a number of pieces on C.R.: *Voices of the new feminism.* 1970. Thomson, M. (ed.). Beacon Press; *The new woman.* 1970. Bunch-Weeks, C. and Cook, J. (eds.). Bobbs Merrill Co.; *Radical feminism.* 1973. Koedt, A. et al. (eds.). Quadrangle.

8. These include, among many others, groups for young mothers, single mothers, widows, battered women, and incest survivors. They provide a context where the women can support and inspire each other, share and reflect on their experience, and develop new understandings of themselves and the world and new abilities to act in and on it individually and collectively.

9. The enormous range of feminist credit and non-credit classroom teaching can be seen from the diverse case studies presented in the following articles: Loewenstein, A., "Teaching writing in prison." Haywoode, T., "College for neighbourhood women: Innovation and growth." Sands, D. et al., "A feminist chatauqua for a rural state." Gibbs Russell, M., "Black-eyed blues connections: Teaching black women." In *Learning our way*; Hoffman, N.J., "Breaking silences: Life in the feminist classroom." Miller, N.K., "Mastery, identity and the politics of work: a feminist teacher in the graduate classroom." In *Gendered subjects*; Nemiroff, G., "Women's studies in the workplace." In *Canadian women's studies*, 1 (2). Winter 1978; Shteir, A.B., "On teaching 'women and literature' to grade 13 students." In *Canadian women's studies*, 1 (1). Fall 1978; Powell, C., "The bridging program for women: A CLOW model that works." Cooke, A., "A life skills program for strippers." In *Women's Education*, 5 (1). Fall 1986.

10. The term 'deficiency model of women' refers to the practice which has been prevalent in most disciplines by which if women are noticed in research and if they are found to be different from men they are presumed deficient. For an early description and rebuttal of this practice in psychology see Wine, J., "Gynocentric values and feminist psychology." In *Feminism in Canada.*

11. For a discussion of the remarkable success with which feminists have "made operational the ideas, insights and practices educational philosophers and theorists have engendered and promulgated," see Greenberg, S. "The women's movement: Putting educational theory into practice." In *The journal of curriculum theorizing*, 5 (2): 192-197. 1982. One example of feminist reflection and transformation of established popular and critical education principles is "Feminist pedagogy in education for social change." In *Feminist teacher*, 2 (2).

Jenkins, M.B. and Hooyman, N. A more recent theoretical contribution to feminist critical pedagogy can be found in Weiler, K. *Women teaching for social change: Gender, class and power*. 1988. Bergin and Garvey.

12. For feminist discussions of the role of theory and the teaching of theory and theoretical competence see: Bunch, C., "Not by degrees." In *Learning our way*; Cocks, J., "Suspicious pleasures: on teaching feminist theory." In *Gendered subjects*; Evans, M., "In praise of theory: The case for women's studies." In *Theories of women's studies*. 1983. Bowles, G. and Duelli Klein, R. (eds.) Routledge and Kegan Paul.

13. Bunch, C. "A broom of one's own." In *The new woman: A motive anthology on women's liberation*. 1970. Bunch-Weeks, C., Cooke, J. and Morgan, R. (eds.) Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, p. 169.

14. *Learning liberation*, p. 120.

15. The activities of the United Nations Decade for Women from 1975 to 1985, in particular the three international conferences which marked its opening and midway and closing years, played a large role in initiating vibrant international networks of exchange, affirmation and learning among women activists and educators that continue to develop. The publication *Voices rising: A bulletin about women and popular education*, published twice yearly in English, Spanish and French by The Women's Program of the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE), gives ample evidence that this process of exchange and cooperation continues to grow in the years following the close of the decade. The April/May 1988 issue is, for instance, a special report on an international seminar entitled "The Feminist Challenge to Adult Education" held in November 1987 in Montreal and sponsored by the ICAE and the Institute canadien d'education des adultes:

About 100 women took part in the five days of meetings, workshops, and study-visits: 11 women from Africa, 14 from Latin America and the Caribbean, 10 from Asia, 1 from Australia, 13 from Europe, 6 from the U.S., and 21 each from Quebec and Canada...Participants came from popular education groups, women's organizations, adult education institutions, trade unions, and national liberation movements. We're working as grassroots educators, as feminist activists, as coordinators of programs and networks, as researchers and writers, and in different fields of adult education--in literacy, popular theatre, worker education, feminist consciousness raising, and political organizing. p. 3

16. In a respectful popular educational process a lot of mutual learning does go on between those with more and less formal education and higher and lower social status; but the kind of deep, conscious, qualitative challenge that feminism explicitly makes to established analyses and world view and to the presumptions of educators is unique.

17. Thompson, J. calls for "a radical redefinition of subject matter, different lines of enquiry and new ways of learning." In *Learning liberation*, p. 111; and, Cebatorev, N., "Women's action in the third world: Is popular education enough?" In *Worldscape*, 2 (1). Spring 1988.

18. From a keynote speech to the Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, published as "Creating and communication knowledge from a feminist perspective: The risks and challenges for women." In

Knowledge reconsidered. Michel Jean was head of the "Commission d'étude sur la formation des adultes in Quebec" whose influential report appeared in 1982.

19. Reprinted in the introduction of the module *How do we liberate ourselves, understanding our oppression, working for emancipation.* 1987. The Philippines: The Centre for Women's Resources; and, also in *Voices rising: A bulletin about women and popular education.* April/May 1988.

20. Willis, J., co-ordinator CLOW. *Learning opportunities for women.* 1977. Report on a survey conducted under contract to the Women's Programme, Secretary of State.

21. *Women's education and training in Canada*, prepared by Susan Wismer for the Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women. 1988.

22. *Sex bias in research: Current awareness and strategies to eliminate bias within Canadian social science.* 1986. Report of The Task Force on the Elimination of Sexist Bias in Research. Linda Christiansen-Ruffman, Chair to the Social Science Federation of Canada. Ottawa.

23. Maciejko, B., mimeo. "Feminism and Canadian academic journals: A sample survey." 1987. Vancouver: Department of Social and Educational Studies.

24. A higher proportion of men than women in adult education receive support from their employers, *Women's participation in adult training in Canada and British Columbia: A profile.* March 1988. Report to the Ministry for Advanced Education and Training. Province of British Columbia. Prepared by the Canadian Association of Adult Education.

25. For recent influential research on women's ways of learning and knowing see: *Women's ways of knowing: The development of self, voice, and views.* 1986. Belenky, M.F., et al. Basic Books.

26. *Who turns the Wheel?* Part 5. 1981. Science Council of Canada.

27. Women in 1980-81 made up only 31% of those enrolled in Canada Manpower Training Programs. They made up 93% of those receiving training in clerical occupations, for instance, while they received only 1.3% of the instruction in construction trades. *From the adult's point of view.* 1982. Canadian Association for Adult Education, p. 13.

28. See an unpublished study by Thomas Guinsberg and Jacequelyn Wolf, conducted for the Canadian Association of University Continuing Education and reported at the 1988 Annual General Meeting of the Association; also *Adult education studies in Canada - 1984.* Report of a study conducted by Patrick Keane on behalf of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education, specifically "Faculty listing" and "Liaison persons."

29. If the knowledge base and power relations of education are not transformed as women's access is enhanced, the involvement of increasing numbers of women and feminists in the field, as students and teachers, may do more to limit and co-opt the women's movement than to strengthen adult education as a movement. The impact of adult education and feminism is mutual; and institutional adult education is a danger as well as a resource to any social movement.

Hayden Roberts recognized this danger in his article "The Socio-Politics of adult education in Canada" when he noted what he calls "counter cultural" education, (education that seeks alternative socio-political philosophies, or ideologies or...paradigms...and is willing to question the most fundamental values, purposes, and objectives of any system) that: "Practically none of this kind of education is being offered by the adult education arms of the formal educational institutions. But a fair amount of it is going on in church groups, cross-cultural learner centres, energy and ecology groups, holistic health groups, futurist groups." He goes on to say that "as an adult educationist interested in social change, I am interested in this movement. But even as an adult educationist, I hope we don't get our hands on it, and co-opt and formalize it." *Canadian issues, special issue: Reaching out: Canadian studies, women's studies and adult education.* 1984. 6:117-118.

30. Gordon Selman has traced the social movement roots and increasing professionalization of Adult Education as a field in Canada in a number of articles: "The adult educator: change agent or program technician." In *Canadian journal of university continuing education*, 11 (2). 1985; and with J. Kulich, "Between social movement and profession -- a historical perspective on Canadian adult education." In *Studies in adult education*, 11 (2). 1980.

31. Associations of women and feminist educators are key potential allies for those concerned to protect and enhance the aspect of adult education which presumes to have something to say about social justice and social change. The commitment of even mainstream women's educational groups to social purpose and social mission education is absolutely clear and unapologetic. The following examples of policy and purpose statements leave no doubt of this:

(1) Excerpt from the Mission Statement of the Canadian Congress of Learning Opportunities for Women:

The Canadian Congress for Learning Opportunities for Women (CCLOW) recognizes that most women in Canada live in a society where systemic discrimination, especially against women, prevails. Women are poorer than men, and have access to significantly fewer educational, training and job options than do men. As well as being economically disadvantaged, women lack adequate support services necessary for them to have access to the full range of learning opportunities available to men. CCLOW addresses the causes of these inequities and makes recommendations for their redress.

We strive for the empowerment of women on the personal, social and political levels of our lives.

(2) Excerpt, The Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women:

PURPOSE

CRIAW's purpose is to encourage and coordinate and disseminate research into women's experience and to ensure an equal place for women and women's experience in the body of knowledge and research about Canada, its people, culture, economy and politics. The Institute also encourages the participation of women in all facets of the research process.

OBJECTIVES

* To promote the advancement of women through feminist and women-centred research

* To encourage and facilitate communication and information exchange among academic women, community workers and activists, women's groups, and concerned individuals

* To disseminate results through publications...

* To sponsor and assist research of interest to and by women in Canada.

(3) Excerpts from the Constitution of the National Women's Studies Association (USA):

Women's Studies owes its existence to the movement for the liberation of women; the feminist movement exists because women are oppressed. Women's Studies, as diverse as its components are, has at its best shared a vision of a world free from sexism and racism...The development of Women's Studies in the past decade, the remarkable proliferation of programs that necessitated this Association, is a history of creative struggle to evolve knowledge, theory, pedagogy, and organizational models appropriate to that vision.

Women's Studies is the educational strategy of a breakthrough in consciousness and knowledge. The uniqueness of Women's Studies has been and remains its refusal to accept the sterile divisions between academy and community, between the growth of the mind and the health of the body, between intellect and passion, between the individual and society.

Women's Studies is equipping women not only to enter society as whole and productive human beings, but to transform the world to one that will be free of all oppression.

32. I examine the impact of post-industrial changes on women and the important role that feminist analysis and the women's movement can be expected to play in the shaping of a creative progressive response to the pressures and potential of this period in an unpublished paper: "The changing relation of production and reproduction in post-industrial society: A class and gender analysis."

33. *Women's ways of knowing.*

34. *Ibid.*; Baker Miller, J. *Toward a new psychology of women.* 1976. Beacon Press.

35. Franklin, U. *Will women change technology or will technology change women?* March 1985. Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.