

IT DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT: TRENDS IN RESEARCH IN ADULT EDUCATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION AT THE ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION (OISE)

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Abstract

Research in the Department of Adult Education at OISE is examined through the vitae of the faculty and the titles of student theses. Some differences were found among the topics that faculty published on, those they worked on in sponsored research projects, and in the focus of their activities in community-based projects. Similarly, faculty and student research interests were found to be somewhat different. The Department has a strong orientation to social rather than economic issues and interpretive, qualitative research methods are preferred by both faculty and students.

Résumé

Les activités de recherche au département d'éducation des adultes de l'Institut d'études pédagogiques de l'Ontario sont examinées à partir des curriculum vitae du corps professoral et des titres de thèses des étudiants. Il existe quelques différences entre les thèmes qu'abordent les professeurs dans leurs publications, ceux auxquels ils travaillent dans les projets subventionnés et le focus de leurs activités dans leurs projets avec les communautés du milieu. De même on trouve des différences dans les intérêts de recherche des professeurs et des étudiants. Le département est fortement orienté vers des problématiques sociales plutôt qu'économiques. Enfin, les méthodes de recherches interprétatives et qualitatives ont la préférence à la fois des professeurs et des étudiants.

Purpose and Scope

This article outlines and categorizes research conducted since 1988 by faculty and students in the Department of Adult Education, OISE. OISE is the graduate department of education theory of the University of Toronto. In addition to Adult Education, its internal departments include: Applied Psychology; Curriculum; Educational Administration; Higher Education; History and Philosophy of Education; and Sociology in Education. Research involving the education of adults and adult learning is frequently carried out in all these departments. Ontario has approximately fifteen universities, about half of which have faculties of education. While the faculties of education tend to focus on elementary and secondary education, a great deal of research relevant to adult education is carried out in social science and professional faculties.

One of the problems attendant on developing an article under the title of adult education research concerns the virtual impossibility of defining the *boundaries of adult education*, especially in light of the range of interests of the eventual international audience intended. Therefore, since I was asked to report on Ontario,

I chose the easiest way out and decided to report on the activities of the faculty and students of the Department of Adult Education at OISE, as the only graduate level department in the province explicitly labelled as adult education, and to let those activities define the parameters of adult education for themselves. I would have liked to have drawn on the work of other parts of OISE and of other universities, but the short time frame for researching the material for this article and the problems of definition of adult education precluded me from attempting to discuss the work of other academic units. Also, there are a number of nongovernmental organizations in Ontario that conduct their own research in the adult education field, but I understand that their work will be reported on separately for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Thus, for practical but less than satisfactory reasons, the OISE Department of Adult Education is being used here as a proxy for academic adult education research in Ontario.

Another problem in focussing this work concerns the *definition of what research is*. In the following discussion, conventional indicators of research such as faculty publications, work with academic organizations and journals, funded research projects, and the like, along with student thesis work are reviewed. However, it would be unrealistic to think that such indicators provide a complete picture of relevant work that has been conducted. There is no fine line to be drawn between theoretically oriented work associated with academic groups or funded by universities and granting councils, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, client defined contract research, personal involvement with action in the field, faculty specialist consultation with various public organizations, and the development of new knowledge through the creation of fresh approaches to teaching in the Department's own courses. Therefore, faculty work in professional organizations, with community groups, and so on is documented here to indicate the research being conducted beyond that which shows up in more formal ways. Certainly as well, the Department is not entirely defined by the interests of the faculty. The resources and directions brought in by the students has a great deal to do not only with formal academic outcomes but also with faculty learning from student experiences and, overall, the impact of the Department on the community when students leave the Department. Thus, background information on the kinds of people who become students in the Department is included.

A third problem in developing this article is that it is supposed to be about *trends* in adult education research. Trends are usually considered to be changes over time. For example, in background information on UNESCO's plans for the international seminar on adult education research trends, it was hypothesized that "in industrialized countries, where accelerating technological change and increased competition have swelled the demand for a more qualified workforce, the initial goals of Adult Education are being more and more equated with purely economic objectives" (M. Blais, personal communication, 1993). However, since no earlier benchmarks are available to use as a basis for comparison, work in the Department between 1988 and 1993 is considered here. As such it is to be considered as the current/recent configuration of interests. It shows how present activities are clustered but does not attempt to compare that pattern with previous activities in the Department or with those of other units.

In sum, then, a description of research trends in adult education depends heavily on how one looks at the constituent parts—adult education, research, and trends. In this article, the interests and activities of a small group of faculty and students will be used to represent adult education. A sample of their academic and less formal activities will be used to represent research. And the configuration of focus among these activities over the past six years will stand as the current pattern of interest in this field. Since a particular interest was expressed, for this exercise, in the clients of the research, comments are made in various sections about who might be affected by the research.

Given these parameters, the article is organized as follows. First, faculty work is discussed in terms of: publications; leadership positions in academic organizations; editorial work in academic publishing; sources of funding for research work and the kinds of work sponsored; consultation work in government sectors; personal social action through participation in community initiatives; and methods employed in faculty research. After a discussion of the Department's recent experience concerning the kinds of students it admits, student research work is discussed in terms of thesis research: topics and methods.

Faculty Research Activities

At the time of writing (1993), the Department has sixteen faculty (nine men and seven women) with over 50% appointments (four of whom were appointed in 1990), two cross-appointed faculty (both men) with less than 50% appointments, and three professors emeriti (two women and one man) who retired from full-time faculty positions in 1991. The academic program of the Department is loosely divided into four foci: Comparative, International, and Development Education; Critical Global and Community Issues; Developing Human Resources; and Teaching and Learning. These foci are reflected in course offerings and admissions, but students have a good deal of freedom in the courses they choose and most faculty members consider themselves to be associated with more than one focus.

Representative samples of work of all of these faculty members since 1988 will be reported on below. In order to discover patterns in the whole corpus, it has first been divided according to the form it has taken: publications; leadership in academic organizations; editorial positions in academic publishing; by sources of funding; consultation; social action in the community; and research methods. These divisions have been made not only for practical purposes but also to see if the content differs according to the type of work. In other words, for example, do faculty members focus on one kind of issue in their sponsored research and another in their social action? Then, the material in each of these groups has been analyzed according to topic. Of course, this grouping is by necessity rather rough because the data and force of argument in any one item may cover a range of interests and some items are not easily classified. One item (e.g., one published article) cannot be quantified relative to another item except as an indication that attention was being paid to the topic it covers. In addition, the corpus covers only a representative sample of faculty work. Therefore, the analysis by topic cannot be understood numerically but only as an

indication of activity. However, despite these drawbacks, since the corpus is quite large, the overall patterns are useful.

Faculty Publishing

Publications are the traditional indicator of faculty research work. For this article, items have been selected from the vitae of faculty in such a way as to cover as wide a range as possible of the topics addressed. Most of the citations here are books, chapters in books, and journal articles. However, in some cases, conference papers have also been included so that certain topics are not left unmentioned. The items were sorted into thirteen categories. Most items will be discussed below only once even though many could have fit into several of the groups. The categories will be discussed starting with two very general ones, then moving through four that concern broad areas of society, two that concern organizations and the workplace, four that address teaching and learning in adult education programs, and one on personal development.

1. General statements about adult education. Faculty work in the Department on comprehensive statements about adult education have been concentrated recently in articles for the second edition of the *International Encyclopedia of Education*, for which Farrell has edited the education planning and policy (for children and adults) section. For that publication, Farrell wrote on educational expansion and social equality (1994a), planning education (1994b), effective and efficient use of teachers in developing nations (1994c), textbook development and delivery (Farrell & Heyneman, 1994), and demography in educational planning (Farrell & Chau, 1994); Hall about participatory research (1994); Thomas about planning public policy (1994a) and reforming strategies for adult education (1994b); and Wilson about macro-level facilities planning (1994a) and technical-vocational education (1994b). Publication initiatives like encyclopedias invite the development of state of the art papers which, it appears, the faculty would not otherwise write. There are a few more items (e.g., Burnaby, 1992a; Draper, 1988a; Thomas, 1989a, 1989b; and Tough, in press) in the categories below that also have a state of the art character.

Included in this category is Draper's history of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (1990) as it is a reflection of an important aspect of the development of the field of adult education in this country. Also both Miles (1989b) and Rockhill (1992b) challenge adult education to take account of women's (and for Rockhill's part, feminist postmodern theoretical) interests and perspectives.

In light of the volume of more specific items in the other categories, it appears that faculty are inclined to undertake writing general statements about the field when asked, but are not often moved to do so on their own. However, Miles' and Rockhill's papers represent a desire to shift the field as a whole in a particular theoretical direction. The client group for work in this category would range from other academics, practitioners, and policy makers. To a large extent it is documentary, but it also takes positions concerning theory and practice, or both.

2. Research methodology. Work on research methodology, like state of the art statements about the field, is a core aspect of any area of study. Hall, Jackson, and

Park (1992) and Hall (1994) document the movement towards participatory research and press for the application of its principles, especially in social action work. Farrell (1988) talks about ways in which researchers can be blinded by their epistemology to some of the consequences of their research. Lenskyj (1991) discusses the ways in which sexualities are treated in research. And Rockhill (1987, 1991) looks at the impact of subjectively oriented research on entrenched academic perspectives on research, and expands on the autobiographical methods she has been developing.

While research methodology is a relatively small category, it is important to the development of the field. Critiques of others' research are needed, but more rare is the creation of new techniques and even new epistemologies. From within the Department, the most obvious clients for this research are the students. As published works, these statements are clearly intended for other academics and practitioners. Hall's work, in particular, is aimed at an impact in community development work. His previous work has had a considerable effect in third world countries.

3. Policy. This and the next three categories concern society at large, its governance and its changes. Of the items in the policy category, Thomas has written the most general pieces, one on adult learning and the roles of governments (1989a) and one on government and adult education in Canada (1989b). On specific topics, Razack (1991c) calls for women not to be treated as all the same in constitutional reform, and looks at omissions and silences around race in the law (1993). Federal and provincial policies on official language training for immigrants are outlined by Burnaby (1992b), and Wilson (1990) discusses policy making in technical-vocational training.

In light of all the items in this corpus, it appears that faculty members occasionally write about policy as it relates to topics within adult education that they are particularly interested in, but do not write extensively about policy per se. The intention in some of these pieces is clearly to influence policy makers on behalf of certain groups such as women of colour, immigrants, and adult learners more generally.

4. Social transformation and equity. Items explicitly focussing on social change, democracy, and equity are included in this category. Among the most general are Hall (1992) on adult education and democracy, Thomas (1989c) on adult education for social action, and Farrell (in press a) on education and social equality. Focussing on the future for lessons about necessary present-time social change, Tough (1989b) talks about avoiding World War III. In the context of India, Draper (1988b) discusses the role of the social sciences in adult education to bring about social transformation. Razack (1992) looks to history for her discussion of using law for social change. Participatory research as a means of creating knowledge and social change in North America is the theme in Hall et al. (1992). Quarter (1992) considers cooperatives, nonprofits, and other community enterprises as sites of democracy in work. Finally, for want of a better category in which to place it, the report of Thomas, Farrell, McLean, Tomic, and Wilson (1991) on an international study for the World Health Organization is concerned with creating educational environments supportive of health.

While social change and equity are the ground theme behind virtually all the items in this corpus, especially those in the following section, the items mentioned here were among the most explicit. All are both documentary and hortatory to some extent. Some address issues for society as a whole (e.g., Tough) while others look for change among more specific groups (e.g., Quarter). While an academic audience is the primary target of many of these publications, Hall et al. (1992) and Thomas et al. (1991) are more particularly aimed at practitioners.

5. The past, the future, and social movements. Faculty writing in the Department is frequently concerned with social movements and social change. In some cases, historical events or cases are used as illustration, and even speculation on the future. The feminist movement is the most written about. Miles writes generally about feminism and its move from pressure to politics (1989a) and feminism, the women's movement, adult education and social change (in press). She takes a specific example from rural women and feminism in *Antigonish* (1991). Lenskyj illuminates women's role in society through the history of women in sport and physical education (1989, 1992b). Drawing on the past history of family institutes (1991b) and the continuing history of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund (1991a), Razack talks about women's roles and the action they have taken. Other case studies with a feminist analysis appear in other categories (e.g., Rockhill, 1990). These four of the seven women faculty members write from an explicitly feminist perspective.

Other social action initiatives included are the cooperatives movement as discussed by Quarter (1992). The work of Tough is included here as part of the futurist movement which works to bring about present social change in order to prevent future war (1989b) and other global disasters (1991-92).

This category has echoes in many of the others. Writing on the feminist and women's movement dominates items in the corpus on collective social action. Again, most of it is written for academic publishing, but the greater intention is for influence on social change.

6. Popular culture. Two items were found to relate to popular culture. Miles (1990) discusses Harlequin romances from a feminist perspective, and Sullivan (1990) uses a critical cultural analysis to look at television as mass media.

7. Organizational development. In this and the next category, organizations, especially as workplaces are considered. Alexander presents general perspectives on organizational transformations (1989a) and adult learning in organizations (1989b). Laiken (1993) talks more specifically about how trainers within organizations become consultants. The specific case of a worker cooperative organization and its problems is discussed by Quarter and Morgan (1990). Academic and practitioner audiences are intended.

8. Training and the workplace. Both pre-employment education and training in the workplace are considered in this category because the two are often discussed together, at least in policy making. Wilson (1992) provides an overview of technological education in Canada; he also discusses the effectiveness of national

training boards through a comparative study of such bodies in a number of countries. Thomas (1992) points out that the transition from school to work is often an iterative process these days with workers frequently becoming students again at least once. Ellis, whose work includes a detailed and longitudinal study of women engineering students, considers gender equity in the engineering faculty of one Canadian university (1988a). Concerning the educational qualifications that might be expected of police in Ontario in the future, Hart, Scane, Burnaby, and Thomas (1992) look at the outcomes of higher education in light of the requirements for police learning.

Moving now more directly to the workplace, as a background study on the same issue of educational qualifications for police, Laiken (1992) reviews current research and field applications of evaluation of adult learning in the workplace. Ellis (1988b) points out that women have more choices now in the work that they can do. In the context of basic skills training (adult basic education) in the place of work, the values exhibited in such situations are discussed by Draper (1991). Work and mental health are the topic of a special issue of a journal edited by Quarter (1993). Two case studies are included here as well: Ellis (1988c) looks at community health nurses and their clients, and Burnaby, Harper, and Peirce (1992) relate the employer's intentions and the workers' reactions in an English as a second language program in three garment factories.

Overall, these items address general education and training rather more than the technological. Some of this work was motivated and financed by employers or governments concerned about employee performance on the job. The items are variously focussed on the interests of employers, workers, potential workers, consumers of the product or service, or both.

9. Participation in adult education. This and the next three categories address adult education programs and their learners. Under participation in adult education, patterns of participation as well as barriers and motivators are considered. Livingstone, Hart, and Davie (1992) conduct a survey of public attitudes towards education in Ontario every two years. Davie's role in this work is to focus some of the survey on participation of adults in education and views about the participation of other citizens. Over the years, the surveys provide longitudinal data for pattern analysis. See also Thomas (1992), as noted in the previous category, who shows how employees are tending to return to school for periods of time.

With regard to access to adult education, Thomas and Klaiman (1992) report on the utilization of prior learning assessment by Canadian institutions as an alternative to the formal educational achievement criterion for entrance into postsecondary education. Once students are admitted, they require services to support their learning; Ironside (1988) discusses data on adult students' perceptions of the advising services available to them. May, Ironside, and Burge (1991) consider the role of feminist pedagogy in distance education as an issue around successful participation.

On account of major demographic, social, and economic changes in recent years, configurations of participation by adults in education have been considerably altered. It appears that faculty in the Department have been somewhat less involved in

documenting the numbers than in considering attitudes, accessibility, and services. Target audiences for the publications are academics, administrators, adult educators, and the general public. Intended beneficiaries are various groups of adult learners who want access to formal education.

10. Teaching and learning. Under teaching and learning, general theory about teaching and learning in adult education is considered as well as issues related to particular contexts, populations, or topics. Tough (in press) provides an overview of adult learning for the *Encyclopedia of the Future*, and, more specifically, discusses encouraging self-planned learning (1990). Applications of learning theory to the instruction of adults is the topic of a paper (1988) by Brundage. Griffin writes about learning to name our learning processes (1988a) and holistic learning in adult education (1988b).

From a feminist perspective, Rockhill talks of speaking exceptionality in the feminist classroom (1992a) and Lenskyj (in press) of the politics of feminist pedagogy. Lenskyj also raises issues around women's experience of sexual harassment in sport and physical education (1992a). Brillinger and Brundage (1989) outline the topic of family-life education. Materials for the teaching of English as a second language for immigrants who are illiterate in their mother tongue is the subject of an article by Burnaby (1990), and Tough (1989a) writes about teaching about potential futures.

Teaching and learning in adult education continues to be an important focus among the faculty in the Department both from the point of view of general theory of adult education and in light of specific perspectives. The immediate impact of most of this work is on students in the Department, and the intention of the publications is to disseminate findings created within Departmental classes to other facets of adult education as well as to advance adult education theory.

11. New technologies and special programs for adult education. This category mainly involves considerations about new communicative technologies and their relation to adult education. Most generally, Wilson, deMoura Castes, and Oliviera (1991) describe innovations in educational and training technologies. Distance education is an emerging theme in Department faculty writing. Davie (1989) provides advice on facilitation techniques for the online tutor in computer mediated adult education courses. Lenskyj and Burge (1990) look at issues and principles for women studying at a distance. Another example is May et al. (1991). In the face-to-face classroom, process and conference writing by computer have a place in adult basic education (Draper and Scane, 1989).

Concerning programming and technologies for adult education, Wilson (in press) compares open universities in Thailand and Indonesia.

The distance education writing arises largely from experience in those types of teaching in the Department although other Canadian programs are considered. The adult basic education technology study was inspired and funded by provincial interests, while the open university work in Southeast Asia was generated by questions raised in that part of the world.

12. Adult basic education and English as a second language. Department faculty writing on literacy includes an international perspective on adult literacy (education) such as Drapers' piece (1989) on the vital role of literacy in international communication and national development. Burnaby (1992a) outlines adult literacy issues in Canada. Philosophies for literacy education are addressed by Draper (1988a). Draper and Scane (1989) also write about technology in teaching adult basic education.

In the information age in which literate communication has become increasingly important and in the North American population which has a lot of linguistic minority groups among the English-speaking majority, it is not surprising that issues of learning English as a second language and adult literacy become amalgamated. Burnaby and MacKenzie (1988) focus on patterns of literacy in Cree, English and French in the northern Aboriginal community of Rupert House. Rockhill (1990) considers the importance of English literacy learning among Hispanics in California, and Klassen and Burnaby (1993) provide both national statistics and a case study on immigrants who do not speak English and who are not literate in their mother tongue.

With respect to the teaching of English as a second language alone, Burnaby (1992b) outlines and critiques Canadian policies. Rockhill and Tomic (in press) situate ESL learning between speech and silence.

Clearly, the issues of language and literacy have a place in the interests of the Department. International considerations, literacy learning for mother tongue speakers of English in Canada, literacy for Aboriginal and immigrant speakers of other languages, and second language training in official languages are all areas of focus to be included concerning literacy and language learning or both. Audiences for these writings include academics, policy makers, and practitioners with the expectation that learners will benefit.

13. Personal development. Finally, literature on adult personal development must be acknowledged. Beck (1989, 1993) questions assumptions by prominent moral development theorists that stages in moral development generally documented among older people are necessarily *higher* levels of moral being. This book is intended for academics, practitioners, and individual adults interested in personal growth.

Faculty Leadership in Academic Organizations

Because there are a number of factors which influence faculty publishing that might bias one's understanding of the actual scope of the research they conduct, several other measures of faculty research activity are included here. The first is academic organizations on which faculty have recently held executive positions. There were twelve activities of this sort reported by faculty.

As might be expected, several faculty members have been active on the executive of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education. One faculty member has been very active in comparative and international education organizations and another in the area of futures, global change, and ultimate meaning. It appears that

only some faculty members express their research interests through work with academic organizations and therefore the range is considerably skewed towards their specific interests. Obviously, the academic community is the main beneficiary of such work, but, to the extent that these organizations influence practice and advocate change, others may be reached as well. In the discussion below concerning social action through participation in nonacademic or partially academic organizations, a much wider range of faculty interests is demonstrated.

Editorial Work in Academic Publishing

Closely linked with executive work in academic organizations is editorial service on academic journals. Twenty-five journals or publishers for which Department faculty have worked as editors or on review boards were reported by faculty. In this group, general adult education is strongly represented, as is feminist publishing. Several faculty members have been involved in each of the *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, which is managed in the Department, and *Resources for Feminist Research*, which is housed in the Centre for Women's Studies in Education at OISE. A number of the journals deal with education generally, that is for children or adults, but the faculty publications discussed above indicate that faculty publish mainly about adult issues.

Sources and Topics of Externally Funded Research

In this category, research funded externally to OISE is considered according to source and topic in order to document one major link between clients and research in the Department. Research funded through internal OISE sources is not included in the discussion because a client group is not implied. Federal academic granting agencies have been included because they largely fund research according to thematic priorities they have set. Forty-seven research projects were considered in all.

The topics of these research projects are discussed here in descending order of the number of items on each topic.

- (1) If one considers English as a second language for immigrant adults and Aboriginal language and literacy in the same category as adult basic education (ABE), then that topic is strongly supported by the federal and provincial governments with a little work as well in the nongovernmental (NGO) and private sectors. Government contracts in ABE tended to be oriented to issues and models, but one provincial contract and the NGO and private contracts related more to specific practice.
- (2) Funded organizational development work came from all categories of funders; these activities were almost all focussed on organizational development within the sponsoring agencies. Perhaps public education about cooperation and cooperatives, funded by an NGO, could be considered as organizational development as well.
- (3) General studies on training and education aimed at employment were funded by international and federal government institutions; a few profession-specific studies were contracted by a provincial government ministry and an NGO.

(4) Feminist issues research was sponsored by a federal granting council, the federal government, and the provincial government.

(5) Finally, a federal granting agency and the federal government sponsored wide-ranging international networking projects.

A few topics did not fit easily into the topics just discussed. They include: educational reform in Jamaica; popular education and environmental action; supporting healthy environments; a survey of public attitudes to education; and program planning for older adults.

In terms of the source of the initiative for the projects, most were framed by the funding agency and came to the Department as a Request for Proposal or in a less formal way. The main exceptions are those funded by the Canadian International Development Agency and the International Development Research Council; they were initiated by Department faculty and comprise the bulk of the funded international work in the Department. Other projects conceptualized by faculty include the prior learning assessment, feminist activism, and law and women on the margins projects funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and the literacy demands of Canadian institutions on employees, clients, or both, funded by the National Literacy Secretariat. A number of the other projects arose through negotiation between the principal investigators and the sponsoring agency. As noted above, externally funded projects are the direct source of less than half the material in the publications of the faculty.

Consulting of Department Faculty by Governments

As well as listing research projects funded by various sources, faculty in the Department report consulting with various institutions as part of their field development activities. The eleven organizations by which faculty were consulted comprise almost entirely government organizations. Five of the organizations were federal, four provincial, and two municipal.

"Consulting" it seems is what one does with government; that is, governments make use of academic expertise for some activities by inviting faculty members to sit on committees or write position papers. In the next category, social action and community participation on the part of the faculty is considered. That grouping suggests "membership" rather than consultation. Consulting implies that one has been asked to take part whereas membership suggests that one has sought out the involvement. Thus, in consulting, the organization that invited faculty to take part is clearly in the position of client. Outcomes of consulting tend to be policy statements and reports. The impact on the target group is unlikely to be directly or immediately visible. The group of organizations that consulted with Department faculty suggests a wide range of topics addressed, and no particular focus of items is apparent. Also, the name of the organization does not necessarily imply the topic of the consultation.

Faculty in Social Action and Community Participation

As noted in the previous category, social action and community participation seem to imply proactive involvement on the part of faculty as opposed to their being invited

to participate, as in the consultation considered above. It suggests working *with* the community rather than doing research *on* a group. Therefore, the relationship between the faculty member and the organization is less one of expert to client and more one of cooperative participation among parties. Faculty members report having been active in twenty-eight nongovernmental, community organizations. Such work could be considered field development in adult education at the grass roots level. The outcomes tend to be direct action such as curriculum development, fund raising, organizational development, public advocacy, action research, evaluation, and so on. In some ways these activities probably represent the interface between faculty professional work and their personal commitment to action. As such it may be distinguished from faculty work on the executives of academic organizations previously discussed if one conceives of academic organizations as aiming at knowledge and community organizations as aiming at action. In the organizations, faculty have taken executive positions in some, but have been associated in a variety of ways in others.

These organizations range from international to national to local. Some lean more to advocacy (e.g., Science for Peace, Canada) while others are more deliverers of services (e.g., the Workers Educational Association), but none could be considered to be exclusively one or the other. Their foci include access to adult education for certain groups (e.g., Canadian Council on Learning Opportunities for Women, Leadership in Learning Opportunities for Older People), adult basic education (e.g., Frontier College, TESL Canada), social action (e.g., Antigonish Women's Association Rural Outreach Committee, St. Christopher House), and health (e.g., Designing Aids for Disabled Adults, Humber College Health Sciences). This last topic of health is interesting since it has rarely appeared in the above categories. However, as will be seen in the discussion below on students in the Department, that area of interest is a major one among them.

Methods Employed in Faculty Research

Comment is appropriate here on the approaches Departmental faculty use in conducting their research. Qualitative data are used almost exclusively in the activities described above. The academic literature, public documents and statistics, and historical materials provide the basis for state-of-the-art, historical, and policy analyses for publication or literature surveys for clients. Questionnaire and telephone surveys, (participant) observation, and interviews are frequently used to study teaching practice, workplace situations, administrative directions, and the lived experience and views of various groups. For obvious reasons, studies involving extensive surveying are usually funded, but not always. With the exception of Livingstone et al. (1992), the work virtually never involves statistical sampling or numerical analysis beyond simple descriptive statistics. Control over the data is becoming increasingly collaborative with participants rather than strictly investigator directed, especially in faculty activities with community organizations. Methods of analysis are mainly interpretive, drawing from the disciplines of adult psychology, mathematics, sociology, history, philosophy, linguistics, and others depending on the topic.

Student Research

The Department and its students are constantly in a process of mutual shaping. Clearly it is the purpose of the Department to influence students in fairly specific ways. In addition, students shape the Department by the knowledge and experience they bring to Departmental activities, the ways in which they interact with faculty and each other, and in reflecting the Department to their friends and colleagues outside of OISE. Each year the Department registers about 130 new students chosen from a set of about 285 applications. The largest proportion enter the Masters of Education program, the next largest group in the Doctor of Education program, and a small number come into the Masters of Arts program. About three-quarters of each intake are women; masters students average about 35 years old, and doctoral students in their early forties. Of course the selection of new students is far from random. Some applicants (less than 20%) are not qualified according to the academic entrance criteria set for all applicants to OISE. The rest are screened by committees of faculty and current students, and those highest ranked are selected until the quota is filled. Thus the faculty and current students, as well as the academic criteria-setters, have a great deal more control over the mutuality of influence than the applicants. Nevertheless, each new student group brings in influences from the community and from individual learning.

In 1989 a student in the Department, Helen Slade, conducted a study on the characteristics of the applicants to the Department from 1986-87 to 1988-89. As an indication of the influence of the community on the Department, Slade's findings are quoted on the occupations of newly registered students immediately before coming into the Department. Among the M.Ed. students who registered in the Department, the following are the types of occupations they came from in descending order: health agency, postsecondary education, community or voluntary agency, government, school board, self-employed. For the M.A. students, the list was: post-secondary education, health agency, community agency, school board, self-employed, business, government, short-term or unemployed. Among the Ed.D. students, the occupations were: post-secondary education, government, health agency, school board, business or industry, self-employed, volunteer or community agency. Slade points out that these categorizations are rough and often disguise the adult education activities of the employee.

Of course, it is not possible to draw a direct comparison between the faculty research evidence as discussed above and these areas of student employment. There are evident common interests. However, one area of contrast stands out strongly. About 20% of the total number of applicants to the Department are nurses and this number is increased to a small extent by other health care professionals. Only in the faculty activities on social action and community participation, or both, is interest in health care indicated. This is a powerful demonstration of the fact that students bring with them backgrounds and directions that are different from those of the faculty.

Thesis Topics

In light of these differences, it can be expected that student research patterns are not the same as those of the faculty. Student masters and doctoral theses¹ are used here to gauge student research. It should be noted that students in the Department have a great deal of control over the topics of their dissertations. All the successful student theses since 1988 were sorted into groups using the same process by which faculty publications were classified. The groupings are discussed below in descending order of the numbers of theses in each category.

1. Personal development and learning. There were 21 theses in this category. They mainly describe the experiences of individuals or groups of individuals under certain conditions, and these experiences are discussed in terms of personal development and learning (realized or potential). Examples include: *Older Widowed Women: Their Reflections on Learning to Make Decisions* (G. Greaves, 1992, doctoral); *Seasons in a Priest's Life: A Study of the Adult Development of Roman Catholic Priests* (M. O'Connor, 1990, doctoral); *Making Words Count: The Experience and Meaning of the Diary in Women's Lives* (C. Van Daele, 1990, doctoral); and *Values and the Environmentalist* (A. Reece, 1991, masters).

About one third of these theses had health as part of the central theme, for example: *The Personal Meaning of Chronic Illness within the Context of Everyday Life: A Case Study of the Experiences of People with Insulin-Dependent Diabetes* (B. Oram, 1992, doctoral); *The Phoenix Rising: Self Development in Caregivers for Relatives with Alzheimer's Disease* (G. Bar-David, 1992, doctoral); *The Health of the Aged* (L. McDougall, 1992, doctoral); and *Learning and Health Behaviour Change: An Holistic Model* (C. Moyer, 1991, masters).

2. Teaching. The next largest grouping, with 18 items, was theses concerning teaching in more or less formal settings. Examples are: *The Purposes of University Continuing Education: The Perspectives and Learnings of Continuing Education Deans and Directors* (L. Hein, 1992, doctoral); *The Elementary School Principal as Facilitator of Adult Learning* (J. Reid, 1991, doctoral); *The Phenomenology of Change within Selected School Boards in Ontario as a Result of the Presence of Adult Students in the Day Program* (W. Coombs, 1989, doctoral); and *A Study of International Educational Aid: The Training Programs of the South African Education Trust Fund* (K. Mundy, 1992, masters).

3. Community-social change and organizational development. Fifteen theses related to change or the promotion of change in a community, often within a particular organization. Examples are: *Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers from Minority Communities* (S. Applebaum, 1992, doctoral); *The Problem of Political Education: Teaching Political Economy to Social Workers* (R. Williams, 1988,

¹ To conserve space, the theses cited are not listed in the bibliography since the full reference is recoverable from the citation in the text. All are unpublished dissertations from the University of Toronto.

doctoral); *Developing Leaders in Turbulent Times* (S. Wright, 1989, doctoral); and *The Politics of Male Friendships and "Sexual Identity"* (R. Wallace, 1992, masters).

4. Workplace related studies. This group of ten theses focus on training and other learning specifically for the workplace. Examples are: *Job Search Experiences of Graduates Following the Basic Job Readiness Training Program* (W. Fallis, 1988, doctoral); *The Performance Improvement Process: Teachers' Experiences with Intentional Change* (B. Lee, 1988, doctoral); *The Multi-Disciplinary Team as an Example of Shifting Paradigms* (L. Pike, 1991, doctoral); and *Transforming the Elements: The Reorganization of Work and Learning at Stelco's Hilton Works* (M. Sanger, 1988, masters).

In addition to these groupings, there were four directly related to adult basic education and ESL, one on the media, and a number of others that were difficult to classify.

Methods Used in Research by Students

Methods used by students for their research are virtually all oriented towards qualitative data. For practical reasons they do not conduct the kinds of large surveys that faculty do under contract, and for academic reasons they do more work on data they have collected themselves rather than on public documents and statistics (although of course they do literature reviews). Case studies are very common, as are analyses of in-depth interviews of people with specific experiences. Disciplined subjective interpretations tend to be valued highly.

Discussion and Summary

Faculty

From the data on publications alone, it appears that the faculty of the Department write general statements about the state of the art in adult education mainly in response to requests for such work for international encyclopedias and handbooks as well as introductory pieces for edited collections on more specific topics. Faculty write about overall policy in their fields of inquiry, but are more focussed on movements, cases, and issues in the general population that exemplify (or not) evolution towards social equity, democracy, and transformation. The dynamics of organizations in change attract some attention. The teaching and learning of adults in whatever context is the subject of considerable study—theory, media, programs, and language and literacy. Finally, personal psychological development is included.

In terms of the supposition, cited above, that western countries are focussing on economic objectives, it seems clear from this corpus that this is not what is inspiring the faculty members of the Department. Items related to the workforce or even to training for the workforce are overshadowed by others in terms of volume. International studies relating to workforce training are at least as prominent as those concerning local work matters. Organizational development pieces stress worker participation more than the demand that workers be trained to employers' specifications. Those items that relate to the workforce generally

address the equity interests of the workers rather than the requirements of employers or government for worker productivity.

In considering the range of client groups for the above writing, one can put various faces on it. One perspective is that the group of people being discussed in an item is its target to the extent that the supposed interests of that group are being advanced and advocated for. This begs the question of whether the writer is in a position to represent the real concerns and wishes of the group. The groups of people discussed in faculty publications include women, workers, students, immigrants, racial minorities, Aboriginal people, and those with low levels of formal education. There are no firm grounds at this point on which to base comments on the extent to which Departmental faculty correctly or adequately reflect the positions of these groups. Certainly, some kind of social change by or on behalf, or both, of the groups is supported in most of the above material.

A second perspective is that the client is the targeted audience for the publication. As professors, the Departmental faculty are required to publish for academic audiences. Virtually all the items listed here are either articles in academic or professional journals, material published by academic or general publishing houses, or papers given at academic conferences; in addition, there are a few pieces distributed by governments, international non-governmental organizations, or the Department itself (see also *Editorial Work in Academic Publishing*). However, in a field of practice such as adult education, theory and application are not often separable in written discussion, so audiences other than academics are frequently intended. For example, regarding teaching and learning specifically, consideration of policy, access, support, and educational treatment, especially through distance education, is aimed at policy makers, administrators, and practitioners. Also, some items (e.g., Livingstone et al., 1992; Beck, 1993; Tough, 1991-92; and Hall et al., 1992) are directed towards the general public.

A third perspective is that the client is the person or body who funded the research behind the publication. Roughly speaking, more than half of the above publications were the result of unfunded research or work assisted by small in-house grants.

With respect to research and other activities rather than publishing alone, faculty in the Department have been shown to do research on adult education in general terms, policy and social action, organizational development and the workplace, teaching and learning in adult education (especially participation, technology, and adult basic education), and personal development. The tenor of the whole corpus is an emphasis on personal and social equity and fulfillment. Interests on the part of some faculty members have resulted in strong perspectives of feminism, comparative and international education, and futures. Populations featured include women, adult students, workers, immigrants, racial minorities, Aboriginal peoples, adults with low levels of formal education, clients of health care, and the general population.

Some research in the Department is externally funded. Sometimes the research is proposed by the funding agency. International organizations and governments ask and pay mostly for studies on training. Federal, provincial, and local governments, Canadian NGOs, and the private sector have requested that research be done in adult basic education, organizational development and training for the workplace, and women's issues. Governments also make use of Departmental expertise by asking faculty members to consult on various activities. However, other organizations respond to faculty requests for project funding. The International Development Research Council and the Canadian International Development Agency have supported various faculty initiatives in international educational research networking. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grants have supported faculty proposals for work on prior learning assessment and women's issues.

Sponsored projects account for only a part of the research done in the Department. The publications of the faculty and faculty participation in community social action show that a great deal of research on adult education in general, research methodology, policy and social action, distance education, futures education, personal development, and health education is carried out without external funding. Therefore, if clients of research in the Department were considered to be those agencies which propose research topics, fund such work, and solicit faculty consultation, then the Department must be understood to be relatively little affected by clients. If, on the other hand, clients were considered to be various groups in society that are or might be affected by adult education or learning of several kinds, then the Department would appear to be quite responsive through formal research and other kinds of professional and personal activity. For this article, no attempt has been made to assess the scope of faculty research relative to any measure of social need or demand, the character of approaches taken to social issues, or the impact of the work on target groups.

Students

Student thesis work largely focussed on topics in: personal development and learning; teaching; community-social change and organizational development; the workplace; a few others. While these themes are all represented in faculty publishing, the students appear to put more emphasis on personal development and on formal teaching than do the faculty. Health care was an important element for a number of the students but much less so for the faculty. On the other hand, the strong faculty interest in adult basic education is not pronounced among the students, and there is no student thesis work as yet on some areas of faculty interest such as futures. Feminist work was not made a separate category among the theses since it was difficult to tease out from other themes, but it is well represented. Given the exigencies of thesis work and the fact that few students have the resources that faculty do when doing sponsored research, it is not surprising that the research methods used by students have less range than those of the faculty. However, when these inherent differences between student and faculty research are taken into account, both groups are similar in their tendencies

to use qualitative, interpretive research approaches. In sum, while it is clear that the students are influenced by the directions taken by the faculty, they follow their own interests to a considerable extent in their thesis work.

Final Word

In terms of this article, the boundaries of adult education have been artificially defined as the scope of the work of the faculty and students in one department. While the range demonstrated is broad, the general emphasis on social rather than economic issues has meant that some matters such as formal training, especially for economic productivity, receive less attention in the Department than they might elsewhere. On the other hand, attention is paid in the Department to some topics that might be defined in some other institutions and spheres as belonging in some other field. The Department favours an inclusive definition. Also, students and faculty do not necessarily have entirely overlapping ranges of interest.

In this article the work in an academic department has been chosen to stand, in some way, for adult education research in a region. Thus, the definition of what research is has been skewed by the academic context, especially since student research was considered. While the faculty and, to some extent, the students show a range of research methods, both groups tend to use qualitative methods. In academic departments, the kinds of products of research valued are circumscribed by the ethos of the university. However, if we look at research as some of the activities that faculty are sponsored to undertake by external bodies (for example, organizational development) and that faculty and students undertake through community action, the definition of research could be stretched.

Finally, given the limited time and resources available for preparing this article, little has emerged that shed light on trends. Simple observation shows changes in the Department, for example, toward more use of qualitative research approaches and towards more social than psychological interests. However, without accessible baseline data from earlier periods in the life of the Department, elaborated and well-founded statements cannot be made about trends in faculty or student research.

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