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EDITORIAL

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COLLEGE ADULT EDUCATION AND INCLUSION

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This special issue of the *Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, titled *College Adult Education and Inclusion*, explores adult education, continuing education, and inclusive pedagogy at the college level.

Given education scholars' current lack of interest in this subject, this special issue represents an important innovation. In five articles divided into two sections, this volume brings together authors publishing recent research results from complementary conceptual and methodological perspectives. In doing so, this issue contributes to cumulative knowledge pertaining to college adult education in Quebec.

The first part, *Sociocritical Perspectives*, begins with an article by Jonathan Martel, "College Continuing Education: Invisible and unrecognized", which is followed by Pierre Doray and Ariela Ionic's "Adult education in cégeps and public policy in Quebec". The first presents a knowledge synthesis of college continuing education and applies a critical, andragogical lens to the topic. The second article carefully applies a sociographic framework to this same field.

The second part, *Field Research*, contains three articles that discuss studies in the college and adult education sectors. In "Balancing family life and college studies: Needs of student mothers and institutional strategies", Jean-Pierre Mercier demonstrates the importance of examining how women faced with limited options balance education with their family and work lives. This is followed by "Perspectives on learners transitioning from adult general education to cégep" by Marie Thériault and Isabelle Marchand. This ethnographic study shows the impact of life course and educational pathways on rates of adult education, high school diploma completion, and college studies. Bridging between these two educational levels to facilitate transition remains an issue. Nathalie Trépanier and Maria Grullon, in "Inclusive college education: A question of training", examine issues of teachers' professional development in inclusive, personalized teaching practices. Such practices support success for students at risk of academic failure, including those arriving from adult education programs.

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Bringing together these studies on the college sector immerses the reader not only in documentary, sociographic, psychoeducational, pedagogical and andragogical perspectives, but also in the emerging field of acceptance, inclusion, and education for adults in college, all from a lifelong learning perspective.

Part I – Sociocritical perspectives

1. “*College Continuing Education: Invisible and unrecognized*”, Jonathan Martel

Jonathan Martel introduces the issue’s theme by presenting the context in which adult continuing education offerings evolved in cégeps. In the spirit of greater access to this introduction, we have chosen to translate the first part of this article into English.

This article demonstrates how the continuing education sector has been conceived and structured to respond to specific workforce training needs. Presenting this poorly known context allows readers to understand the administrative and educational structure of adult college education in Quebec, as well as state policies and (neoliberal) economic ideologies that have shaped the sector over time.

The paper provides an understanding of how the adult education sector has been designed and organized to provide short-term education programs to meet the need of businesses and public organizations for a workforce trained in the logic of productivity. Jonathan Martel’s article also presents the college adult education sector as a structure that helps many adults obtain their first postsecondary qualifications and gain stable employment, thereby reducing job precarity.

2. “*Adult education in cégeps and public policy in Quebec*”, Pierre Doray and Ariela Ionici

To complement the first article, the second, by Pierre Doray and Ariela Ionici, adopts a sociographic approach to analyze the development of the college adult education sector from 1960 to 2022. Through the lens of the sociology of public action, it highlights the links between enrolment in various college programs and Quebec’s adult education policies over the last sixty years. The study covers three time periods: 1960-1983, 1984-2001, and 2002-2022. Corpus analysis reveals the ratio of adult education to regular programs in cégeps. Of particular note during the transition between the first and second period is the replacement of practices associated with providentialist educational policies with the professionalization of education practices designed for the workforce. The transition to the third period, which ends with the COVID-19 pandemic, is associated with the erosion of adult education policies’ structural effects on cégeps’ educational practices.

Part II – Field Research

3. “*Balancing family life and college studies: Needs of student mothers and institutional strategies*”, Jean-Pierre Mercier

Jean-Pierre Mercier’s study invites the reader to consider the balance between school and family and work life at the intersection of adult education and inclusive educational approaches. This study examines both the particular needs of student parents, specifically mothers in college, as well as institutional strategies implemented to meet these needs. Collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, these data reconstruct student mothers’ experiences of navigating school-work-life balance during this time. Data also show how

a lack of institutional policies on school-work-life balance in the *cégep* studied weakens support for student parents, given these practices often depend on the goodwill of individual actors. In comparison, other contexts with institutional policies in place appear to offer support that structures collective action and helps student mothers balance school with various life spheres and academic perseverance.

4. *“Perspectives on learners transitioning from adult general education to *cégep*”*, Marie Thériault and Isabelle Marchand

This ethnographic study by Marie Thériault and Isabelle Marchand addresses student transition from general adult education to *cégep*. Following Long and Bélanger’s theoretical model, this transition is approached from three convergent perspectives: psychological, pedagogical, and sociological. Questions around rights to social integration and lifelong education are central to this study.

Through a co-constructive and comparative analysis approach to this transition, this article highlights the perspectives of adult education experts; those of adult learners were explored in earlier publications. Transitioning to college is a complex task, and adults who undertake it must demonstrate particular educational resilience within this sociopedagogical context. The adult education sector contributes to adults’ success by allowing them to develop strengths and skills they can use to complete their postsecondary studies.

In keeping with colleagues featured in this special issue, the authors propose a sociopolitical approach to the question by addressing laws and education policies concerning adult education. This introductory framework aims to define adult continuing education as a field of research and practice in Quebec.

5. *“Inclusive college education: A question of training”*, Nathalie Trépanier and Maria Grullon

In their article, Nathalie Trépanier and Maria Grullon invite reflection on inclusive teaching practices implemented by teachers in *cégeps*, as well as on relevant initial and ongoing education. Such practices are not inconsequential for students considered “at risk of school failure”. This category of adult student, including people with disabilities and those in precarious circumstances, calls direct attention to academic inequalities and adverse social relations that hinder academic success for many adults, hence the importance of paying particular attention to this group through an inclusion lens.

The study by Trépanier and Grullon examines questionnaire data collected between December 2016 and February 2017 from 483 *cégep* teachers in fourteen of Quebec’s administrative regions. Over two-thirds were women. The study produced a statistical description of a range of inclusive teaching practices. It also clearly demonstrates that professional development for *cégep* teachers is essential for optimal implementation of these practices. Readers will indeed attest to the fact that, without continuous support for teachers’ professional development, initial training is insufficient to allow teachers to meaningfully integrate inclusive teaching into their practice. As a result, students who are already at risk of school failure are doubly disadvantaged each time inclusive practices that address their specific needs are not implemented.

We sincerely hope that reading one or more articles in this special issue will allow readers to become more familiar with the college system specific to Quebec, either because it is the first time they have encountered it or because these articles present new knowledge in the field of education for adults of any age.

Furthermore, two texts that fall outside the special issue’s theme appear in this volume, both on the subject of a new translation of Paulo Freire, *La pédagogie des opprimé.e.s*, published by Les éditions de la rue Dorion in 2021. The first is a book review by Eluza Maria Gomes, Marlon Sanches, and Jean-Pierre Mercier. It takes a fresh look at Freire’s landmark work by situating it in the context of today’s adult education landscape.

The second article recounts experiences of reading circles of Freire’s book. In 2022, reading circles were created through the collaboration of Un Québec fou de ses solidarités, the Centre de documentation sur l’éducation des adultes et la condition féminine, and Les éditions de la rue Dorion. Nearly eighty people participated in these circles. In this article, Laurence Bergeron Michaud, Isabelle Coutant, and Jean-Pierre Mercier share experiences of moderating the circles as well as critical perspectives on the state of adult education.

Pleasant reading!