

WRITING OURSELVES INTO BEING: A REVIEW OF THE CANADIAN JOURNAL FOR THE STUDY OF ADULT EDUCATION/LA REVUE CANADIENNE POUR L'ÉTUDE DE L'ÉDUCATION DES ADULTES

Ralf St. Clair

University of Glasgow, Scotland

Abstract

Examines and analyzes the 22-volume publication history of The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education/la Revue canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes (CJSAE/RCÉÉA). Three different approaches are applied: quantitative history of publication trends, e-mail interviews with five former editors, and analysis of Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE) documents relating to the journal. The author concludes that the journal has been shaped by different layers of expectations and influence, including three tensions of the United States vs. Canada, francophone vs. anglophone Canada, and east vs. west. Overall, the journal has contributed significantly to the formation of the academic field of adult education in Canada.

Résumé

Cet article examine et analyse l'historique en 22 volumes de la CJSAE/RCÉÉA. Trois approches différentes sont employées à cet effet: l'analyse quantitative des tendances historiques de publication, l'analyse qualitative d'entrevues effectués par email avec 5 anciens éditeurs, et l'étude de documents auxiliaires qui traitent de la revue, publiés par la CASAE/ACEEA. L'auteur conclut que la revue a été façonnée par des influences et attentes à des niveaux différents, comprenant, entre autres, trois tensions clés: la tension canado- américaine, la tension est-ouest et la tension anglophone- francophone. Dans l'ensemble, la revue a largement contribué à l'établissement du domaine de recherche sur l'éducation des adultes au Canada

Introduction

Writing a review of a journal's history is one of those endeavours that should be easy, a simple act of archival analysis, of developing and assigning categories to static entities and frozen moments. It should be an accounting, an orderly progression of signifiers and

*The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education/
La Revue canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes
23,2 May/mai 2011 27-44*

ISSN 0835-4944 © Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education/
L'Association canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes

digits indicating that this topic was important *here* and mattered less *here*. What could it be beyond an extended index, a listing of the products of thought?

There are parts of the task that are of this nature, but to suggest that this captures any of the deeper resonances would be misleading. A journal is a living creation, an actor in its own existence, shaped but ultimately not controlled by those who initiate it and struggle to turn it from an idea to a reality several times a year. To understand it fully is to understand the forces behind and beneath it. In the case of *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education/la Revue canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes (CJSAE/RCÉÉA)*, the background almost eclipses the figure.

CJSAE/RCÉÉA is an attempt to raise a tent in a gale, to crown the 40-year history of the creation of a discipline with success and establishment. A journal for adult education in Canada marks the full realization of the bourgeois aspirations of Fitzpatrick and the economic critique of Coady simultaneously—this is the trick that has fascinated those close to the process. There have been attempts to manage the journal as a collective and as a soviet, and each has foundered upon the impossibility of adult education as a field of university study. While the fortunes of interdisciplinary work and research into the education of adults have soared around the world, the existence of adult education as a defined field has become increasingly translucent, liminal, and ill-defined. The figures on stage have resolutely denied the disappearance of the Northwest Passage.

This is a Canadian story. Even though it started after the period of their highest influence, this is a story of the legacy of Coolie Verner and Roby Kidd and their colleagues, and it is also a story of not being American. It is Canadians recapitulating the ventures of Sitting Bull over the border into Saskatchewan. Fleeing the consequences of the victory over Custer, Sitting Bull is met with peaceful acceptance north of the 49th, a version of the fundamental myth that shapes so much of our Canadian world. Could it be the same for adult education? Could it also be met with a Canadian acceptance and sustenance?

There are three strands to the story told here. Each of these has been analyzed in a distinctive way, and I provide the appropriate details in each section. One strand is the accounting of what was published in the journal, who wrote it, and what they wrote about. The second is the tale of the editors and those associated with them. The third is about the grand project of creating the discipline of adult education in Canadian universities. These three strands come together in the story of *CJSAE/RCÉÉA*, but not in a simple way.

Accounting

I will begin with an obvious strategy to understand a journal, asking who has published in *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* and what they have published. The first 22 volumes of the journal contain 162 articles, and my research assistant and I have reviewed all of them. In this article they have been divided into four eras simply by grouping into five-volume sets. It would have also made sense to divide according to editorship, but that would have raised a lot of difficulties regarding manuscripts that were judged appropriate by one set of editors, but peer-reviewed by another set, and so on. The five-volume approach used here is somewhat arbitrary, but does provide a pragmatic way to look at changes over time. The most recent two volumes have been rolled into the previous five, primarily for convenience.

Table 1*Authorship Statistics for Articles*

| Volumes | Articles (n) | French (%) | Total authors (n) | Female (%) | Non-Canadian articles (%) |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1–5 | 31 | 29 | 37 | 41 | 6 |
| 6–10 | 40 | 30 | 58 | 62 | 15 |
| 11–15 | 36 | 16 | 45 | 40 | 25 |
| 16–22 | 55 | 7 | 90 | 66 | 20 |

As shown in Table 1, the first 10 volumes do a commendable job of including French-language articles, with 29% and 30% for volumes 1–5 and 6–10, respectively. This compares to an accepted figure of 22% for the francophone population as a share of the Canadian total (Statistics Canada, 2009). The French-language representation appears to have been helped by having active and well-placed francophone co-editors. However, this trend suffered a setback in volumes 11–15, and a reversal over the last seven volumes. This reduction in representation occurred after the journal lost its last francophone editor.

Female authors have been very successful in getting published in the journal, with an overall representation of around 50% across the life of the publication. Deeper analysis shows that 87% of men are sole authors compared to 71% of women, and that men are more likely to collaborate with women than with other men (of men who write with others, 62% write with women). Overall, the gender of authors is not strongly biased in any particular direction, but neither is it entirely unproblematic—women are more likely to be co-authors than first authors.

Of note is the very high percentage of authors who are Canadian. Internationalization, while seen as a worthy goal, can often be hard for North American journals to achieve. For volumes 11–22, *CJSAE/RCÉEÉA* managed to attract 20–25% non-Canadian authors. This is a reasonable proportion, but even at the high point of international contribution, 75% of authors were Canadian. There is a relatively small adult education community in Canada, and it can be inferred that *CJSAE/RCÉEÉA* was a significant publishing outlet for members of that community. Perhaps more accurately, it was a significant outlet for specific members of that community, as around 93% of all authors were based in universities.

Table 2

Methods Employed in Articles (%)

| Volumes | Non-empirical | Qualitative | Quantitative | Mixed |
|---------|---------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| 1–5 | 65 | 11 | 23 | 0 |
| 6–10 | 50 | 23 | 25 | 3 |
| 11–15 | 61 | 28 | 8 | 3 |
| 16–22 | 31 | 47 | 13 | 7 |

Note: Columns may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Examination of the type of data informing the articles shows substantial changes over time (see Table 2). Before discussing the details it is worth pointing out that this form of categorization is not as precise as might be expected. Such blunt distinctions can be less than helpful; for example, when a researcher counts open-ended responses to a questionnaire, is this quantitative or qualitative? However, provided the criteria are applied consistently, they can offer useful insights into change over time. The category *non-empirical* covers quite a range, from historical work based on primary sources through critical philosophy and secondary analysis of empirical data. The key factor in this category is that the articles did not represent analysis of primary data.

Two trends stand out over the life of the journal. The first is the huge decrease in non-empirical work from 65% of articles in volumes 1–5 to 31% in volumes 16–22. The majority of non-empirical work was either based in critical theory (including gender critique, queer theory, and related areas) or was historical. For a contemporary reader reviewing the whole of the journal as a piece, it is striking how conceptual the journal was in the early years, and then how that conceptual focus was replaced by empirical work.

The second trend is the growth in qualitative research from 11% of articles in volumes 1–5 to 47% in volumes 16–22. The growth in empirical work is almost entirely driven by qualitative contributions (with some mixed-method pieces), while quantitative contributions fell back substantially. It would be extremely interesting to examine this in the light of trends across educational research as a whole, but that is beyond the scope of the current article.

Categorizing articles by substantive focus is always difficult (Taylor, 2001). There is an inevitable degree of compromise—articles simply do not fall neatly into one box of a typology because the point is often to explore relationships between different ideas, usually in a specific context with a specific type of people. Nonetheless, such categorizations, if treated as indicative rather than definitive, can illustrate the flow of ideas through a journal in a vivid way.

In this case, my approach to categorization was to consider the fundamental type of question being asked in the article, which required careful examination of the details of the research. For example, an article on women's learning in a community college

could potentially be considered as belonging to categories such as gender, institution, or learning. Discerning which placement was most appropriate involved checking to see what theoretical framework was used to frame the study and what sort of findings and implications were identified from the work.

The articles were allocated to six categories, though many more categories could have been used. The aim was to balance a useful disaggregation of focus with the danger of claiming a specificity that could not really be justified. The six categories were (1) historical (articles specifically examining historical events in adult education, which might or might not lead to implications for the current time); (2) learning (articles offering insights into the processes of adult learning and teaching approaches that support them); (3) institutional (where the context of the study was the predominant factor); (4) gender (articles centring the gender identities of the participants and their associated issues); (5) critical (with a central focus on oppression, often on the grounds of class, economics, or sexuality); and (6) research (looking at adult education research in Canada). The gender and critical categories potentially overlap, as gender research is arguably a form of critical research, but it seemed that gender-focused research was qualitatively and quantitatively distinct, and an important category in its own right.

Looking across the lifetime of the journal, there are significant differences between volumes 1–5 and volumes 16–22 in distribution of the published articles in each category (see Table 3). For example, historical articles drop from 13% to 9%, institutional research grows from 6% to 15%, and critical research drops from 23% to 15%. There are also consistencies—gender stays between 18% and 20% (except for volumes 11–15, where it drops to 6%), research articles are generally low (except for volumes 6–10), and learning accounts for between one-third and one-half of articles published.

One plausible interpretation of these figures is that publication patterns were generally quite consistent and that areas of special interest emerged briefly against that background. So, for example, there were special issues on feminisms (volume 8, issue 1), critical research (volume 5, special issue), and research (volume 9, issue 1) that would affect the category proportion in those periods. It is interesting that the first five volumes contained the highest proportion of historical work, and this point will be returned to in the third section of the current discussion.

Table 3

Primary Focus of Articles (%)

| Volumes | Historical | Learning | Institutional | Gender | Critical | Research |
|---------|------------|----------|---------------|--------|----------|----------|
| 1–5 | 13 | 35 | 6 | 19 | 23 | 3 |
| 6–10 | 5 | 35 | 20 | 18 | 8 | 15 |
| 11–15 | 8 | 50 | 22 | 6 | 14 | 0 |
| 16–22 | 9 | 40 | 15 | 20 | 15 | 2 |

Note: Rows may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The journal featured two other interesting and unusual forms of content. The first is a range of contributions called "Perspectives." According to the submission guidelines: "Critical reviews of the literature of adult education and essays which focus on analytical examinations and critiques of issues in adult and continuing education are published in the Perspectives section." "Perspectives" articles are present throughout the lifetime of the journal, and up to volume 22 there have been 51 published. Despite the description above, some are reports of empirical research, and some are as long as the more usual articles. In some cases, they take the form of letters to the editor or responses to previous articles, but there have also been a few examples of more creative contributions such as poetry.

The authors of "Perspectives" vary widely. Some are recognizable names in the field of adult education in Canada, or indeed more widely, but many are contributed by people who were students at the time. Far fewer of the "Perspectives" are presented in French (10%) than the articles, but the authorship is more international, with 37% non-Canadian overall. There were also slightly more non-university authors of "Perspectives."

The aim of "Perspectives" is to provide an open forum for discussion of issues of interest to the field of adult education in Canada, and indeed many of the "Perspectives" retain their freshness and value some years later. It is, however, quite unusual for an academic journal to devote so much space to activities that can perhaps be characterized as community building rather than strictly research. While *Adult Education Quarterly (AEQ)*, for example, has attempted to create dialogue around academic issues, there has been little sign of the breadth found in *CJSAE/RCÉÉA*'s "Perspectives."

The second unusual inclusion is the listing of graduate degrees awarded in Canada. This takes up a considerable amount of space and it is not clear how effective it is. By the time a dissertation or thesis was listed in the journal, the publication would likely have appeared in other databases, particularly in recent years as electronic publishing has become more responsive. It seems likely that these efforts can be considered once more as contributions to community or field building rather than narrowly academic activities.

Taken as a whole, *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* can be seen as a very credible peer-reviewed journal catering to a specific range of interests in Canada and beyond while demonstrating equitable representation of francophone and female authors. It has never really managed to attain the wide geographical and institutional range of contributions that could have been hoped for, yet very many of the most well-known adult education academics in North America have contributed at one time or another. The "Perspectives" and the awarded degrees sections have a double effect—they make the journal less strictly academic in tone and provide a sense of topics of importance and interest across Canada at various times. The journal sets out to reflect and serve the field, and achieves this aim in important ways.

The Editors' Tale

This section looks at the experiences of five of the editors who worked with the journal over its history. In preparation for this review, former editors of *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* were invited to comment on their experience through an open-ended e-mail questionnaire. One francophone and four anglophone editors responded (one through a substantial phone interview) and provided a range of insights into the production of the journal. Respondents

were promised confidentiality, and the comments included here have been presented in a form that respects that undertaking. The information from the editors is presented in a format reflecting the order and coverage of the questionnaire.

It is worth considering the role of journal editors in terms of their influence upon the actual material published. In this section I draw on my own experience of academic editing, and I suggest that the degree of direct influence on material published is a great deal more limited than is sometimes assumed. An editor may have an opportunity to solicit manuscripts and encourage people working in a particular area to submit, and there is likely to be more latitude for editorial influence in “Perspectives” than in research articles. Overall, however, editors rely on a strong editorial board to identify the best possible material out of the submissions received.

Where editors make a huge difference is in the actual administrative processes of taking manuscripts from receipt through review to publication. It is a complex and demanding set of tasks, and the better they are performed the more likely that high-quality manuscripts will be received. If an author writes a strong piece and has the choice between submitting it to a journal that will not reply for two years (this is not unknown) and another that will respond in three months, the latter will have an advantage. In my experience, the quality of management bears directly upon the quality of the academic product.

The sequence of editors of *CJSAE/RCÉEÀ* is not entirely straightforward to deduce. The listing in Table 4 is based upon the comments and masthead in the print version of the journal, but there is a fair amount of overlap, and a number of issues have no editorial listing available. It is notable that there have been three attempts at collective management of the journal (Tom Sork at the University of British Columbia [UBC] intended to work with colleagues collaboratively, though the journal itself does not always make this clear). There are two other noteworthy features. The first is that from 1991 onward there was a designated editor in chief, who was the anglophone editor. The second feature is the lack of a francophone editor from 2005 onward. These developments could be seen as moves away from the principle of equality of francophone and anglophone representation, but at the time may simply have been driven by the pragmatic difficulties of shared leadership.

Table 4

Francophone and Anglophone Editors of CJSAE/RCÉEÀ (Editors in Chief Underlined)

| Anglophone | | Francophone |
|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Hayden Roberts | 1987–88 | |
| | 1988–90 | Madeleine Blais |
| Catherine Warren | 1988–91 | |
| | 1990–91 (?) | Nicole Tremblay |

| | | |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| <u>Adrian Blunt</u> (and the Saskatchewan Editorial Collective) | 1991–97 | |
| | 1992 | Claudia Danis |
| | 1992–93 | Benoit Charbonneau |
| | 1993–95 | Nicole Tremblay |
| | 1995–99 | Paul Bouchard |
| <u>Allan Quigley</u> (and the Antigonish Editorial Co-operative) | 1998–2001 | |
| | 1999–2005 | Mohamed Hrimech |
| Thomas Sork | 2002–05 | |
| Tom Nesbit | 2007 onward | |

One constant challenge for the journal has been achieving a high level of submissions from which to select the best for publication. According to the *Editor-in-Chief's Report* of 2000 (Boshier Collection), prepared by Allan Quigley, 1995 was the first year in which there were more than 20 submissions of potential articles, and the best year, 1999, had 36 submissions. This meant that the acceptance rates for the journal were initially high—an average of 41% over the first five volumes. In 1999–2000, the acceptance rate was 50% despite the high number of submissions. Journals sometimes view their rejection rate as a mark of quality and reputation, since it indicates that many more people want to publish in the journal than it can accept. For many journals, *CJSAE/RCÉÉA's* rejection rate of 59%, or even the pre-2000 peak of 70%, would be considered relatively low. This is particularly true since *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* generally publishes only twice a year, so logically could expect a lower acceptance rate than a comparably rated journal publishing four issues annually. However, another interpretation, and the one to which *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* editors appear to have adhered, is that lower rejection rates indicate that submissions are appropriate and the journal is serving the community well.

The first question posed to editors was why people wanted to take on editorship of the journal—a tough job with little direct reward. Reasons ranged from the pragmatic, such as career development and “it was our turn,” to highly idealistic statements about opportunities to connect with the field and the “fascinating and interesting challenge.” One former editor explicitly referred to the opportunity to bridge across francophone and anglophone adult education research because they were aware that remarkable work was being done in Quebec and not being recognized by the rest of Canada. Most of the editors referred to an expectation of support from colleagues or institutions. One former editor describes submitting a proposal for the editorship while on sabbatical, on the basis of “long-distance assurances that there would be support from the Dean and my . . . colleagues.”

When taking on editorship of a journal, proponents have to identify what they see as the priorities for development over the term of their editorship. When I asked editors

what their priorities had been, I heard about three different approaches. There were editors who came into the editorship with a pragmatic objective such as “to do the best I could,” those who planned to implement a specific administrative innovation (such as electronic reviewing), and those with more specific academic goals.

The more specific goals of one editor included democratizing the editorial roles, opening the journal to a wider range of submissions, and promoting graduate student publication. The last goal was inspired by *AEQ*, which carries many articles that start as theses and dissertations. For this editor, including graduate student work was seen as a way to increase the quality and relevance of the journal, not only because it can be a very effective way of increasing the number and range of manuscripts submitted, but also because it offers an important opportunity to students. In educational research, as in many fields, graduate students may contribute the freshest and most challenging work.

Another new editor hoped to internationalize the journal and build the strongest possible editorial board, and was successful in attracting contributions from several continents. One editor was committed to increasing francophone representation, though he/she considered that he/she had not achieved this goal. Editors identified a strong set of aspirations around increasing the scope and coverage of the journal.

There was another set of aspirations around the production process. A former editor stated that he/she came into the job determined to raise the credibility of the journal by ensuring it came out on time. “The lowest point in our journal’s history, in my opinion, has been when contributors and subscribers could not count on it coming out on time. I received e-mails from potential contributors asking if the *CJSAE/RCÉEÀ* still existed.” Another editor noted that once the journal had “accepted a paper by a European author and two years later it was not published yet, though it had been cited in other articles. The author could no longer submit it somewhere else. He kept asking me—that was not fun.” There were a number of periods in the life of the journal when publication was delayed, and publication times continued to be a primary concern for editors. More than this, it can be seen as having directly harmed the reputation of the journal at a number of key junctures in its publication history, according to several of the editorial respondents.

One editor stated that he/she had come into the job with the intention of redesigning the look of the publication, which was achieved along with a change of publisher. There was also the intention to produce error-free copy, and one group of editors managed to have only two typos during their tenure. These aspirations are concerned with increasing the quality of the journal as a product, ensuring that it was timely and well presented. Achieving these goals would help ensure that *CJSAE/RCÉEÀ* was taken as a serious academic publication in the competitive field of education journals.

There were a number of comments about the management of the journal and the need to have a closer relationship between CASAE and *CJSAE/RCÉEÀ*. One editor stated that a “direct meeting of the board once or twice a year would have helped to discuss problems face to face and try to find solutions,” and another called for annual meetings at the CASAE conference as “something we could all expect and count on.” One editor specifically commented that they believed that the delays in publication had arisen partly because there was not a close relationship between *CJSAE/RCÉEÀ* and CASAE, and that

the "old boys" [CASAE executive] would not get 'tough' with their own," preferring to leave the relationship relatively loose.

Reading through the aspirations of the editors, one senses a tension that can be characterized as creativity versus managerialism: several former editors came into the job eager to change the journal, to represent a wider constituency to a wider audience, or to experiment with the form of research, whereas others were committed to taking care of business and getting it out on time. These aspirations generally tended not to manifest in either pure form; comments from the editors suggest that time and again idealism and pragmatism found a balance in the production of the journal. This shows up most clearly when the editors were asked to comment on their legacy. The consistent implicit component across all of the answers was just keeping the journal going, perhaps with modest development of the publication process. There were exceptions to this pattern, such as one editor who commented that his team had brought the journal to the highest point in its publishing history "with a solid team working late nights, selfless hard work, and an exceptional CASAE executive willing to help in any way it could."

Over the life of the journal it has been produced and printed in a number of places. Originally the office was at the University of Toronto for several years, though later it tended to follow the editor. Printing seems to have started at the University of Calgary, moved to Montreal, and then moved again with the editor. Some of these arrangements were more effective than others, but transitions between different sets of arrangements were not always easy. One editor talked about bringing the printing to his/her institution just in time for the print unit to be completely reorganized. Another mentioned "transferring the entire system to a new publisher and the intricacies of paper bond, colour, fonts, [and] electronic copy" that had to be figured out.

It is interesting to look at what the editors say they got out of the experience; the answers do not bear much relation to the reasons that people wanted the job. The editors almost uniformly said that, in the end, the best parts of the job were working with authors and colleagues, and seeing the issues in print after all their efforts. There was a strong sense of accomplishment shared by all the former editors, a feeling that they had done something ultimately worthwhile.

There is a thread running through the editors' tales that goes some way toward explaining their experience, and that is failure of institutional support. Two types of support were mentioned: the help of colleagues with the sheer labour of producing a journal, and institutional support with the pragmatics of paying postage and getting the issues printed. Almost every editor recalled difficulties with one of these two aspects of journal production, and no editor described getting *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* out as an easy process. The idea of an editorial collective seems rarely to have led to effective practice. The severe publication delays the journal has experienced several times in its history were almost always because one person ended up carrying the workload.

Adding to the difficulties was the inconsistency of support from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), which funded production of the journal under a program designed to strengthen specific disciplines in Canada (the Aid to Scholarly Journals program). In some years editors would have a decent level of funding

to help with the production process; in other years they would have none. This seemed to be largely dependent on the changing regulations of SSHRC and the way the journal was represented in the application. At one point, the SSHRC committee expressed concerns about the low rejection rate of the journal and the lack of empirical content, though they were content to continue funding (undated memo, Boshier collection). Later in the journal's history, it took one editor almost his/her entire editorial tenure to regain the funding lost at the time of editorial handover. The combination of uncertain institutional and external support for *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* has been a constant factor throughout the life of the journal.

One of the clearest areas of agreement among the former editors concerned the contribution the journal made to the field. All agreed that *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* was important to adult education in Canada, and several cited membership surveys suggesting that the CASAE membership viewed the journal as the most important activity of the organization. One editor stated,

When I would travel across Canada and the U.S., and to New Zealand and Australia and the U.K., and see how our country's academic world was known and identified by the *CJSAE/RCÉÉA*, I realised the journal is effectively the primary point of our identity within and beyond our national borders. It puts us on the academic map.

Another acknowledged the past, but suggested the future may be less clear:

The field is changing, with more specialized programs often replacing more general programs and I worry about the future of general journals like *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* . . . However, as long as there is a vital organization behind it, there will be a need for a good research journal in Canada with the broad scope of *CJSAE/RCÉÉA*.

One editor told me a story that seems to me to encapsulate the history of *CJSAE/RCÉÉA*. The issue had been printed and was ready to be taken to the post office for dispatch. Due to a heavy snowfall the roads were not passable, so the easiest thing to do seemed to be to load the entire production onto a cart, and the editors did so before setting out for the centre of town. As they were crossing over a bridge the cart very nearly tipped the whole load into the creek, and the unfortunate editors were lucky to save the entire issue without too many life-threatening injuries. The history of the journal suggests that it has always been on the verge of tipping over, heading for the creek, and that only the skills of key individuals have prevented disaster.

Looming Large: The Context of the Journal

It is difficult to speak with conviction about any artifacts—in this case texts in a journal—without recognizing that they are the products and reflections of a far wider process. Foucault's (1970) work points toward this when he tells us that discourses must be treated as “practices which systematically form the objects of which they speak” (p. 49). A similar meaning is carried by Deleuze and Guattari (1987) when they point to the rhizomic nature of human knowledge and human action. In both cases, these writers are warning us of the dangers of foundationalism and fundamentalism, of overlooking the profoundly human

nature of construction. They ask us to wean ourselves off assumptions that cause and effect are separate and definable elements with a clear relationship, as represented by a book or a journal article. Instead they press for the importance of circulation of ideas, for cognitive structures with multiple entry and exit points and multiple crooked pathways between them. The book is replaced by the web, the text by the hypertext. Understanding the comments of the last two sections requires studying the fabric from which this collection of texts arises. Actions were taken and decisions were made, but these were so deeply embedded in the network of academic adult education in Canada that it will require some contemplation to understand it.

In this section I draw on the data from the last two sections, and supplement them very substantially with information derived from a range of early documents surrounding the founding of CASAE and the *CJSAE/RCÉEÉA*. These documents are from Roger Boshier's personal collection. Boshier, an emeritus professor of adult education at UBC, was a central figure in the events of the early 1980s, and he archived many of the early memos, letters, reports, and proposals. This section, therefore, has the form of a reflective narrative that is based upon documentary evidence—an instance of the archaeological approach to knowledge recommended by Foucault (1970). It would be disingenuous to deny that such reflection will reflect the positionality of the writer, and I should clarify that I am a graduate of UBC and a very strong supporter of Canadian adult education. A person with a different background may read these rhizomes quite differently.

Though a comprehensive history of adult education as an academic discipline in North America has not yet been written, it is possible to identify a few of the main outlines. There is a rigorous history of adult education at UBC that offers important insights (Damer, 2002). This history shows key figures acting strategically over a number of years to create and maintain the discipline of adult education. In this respect, UBC can perhaps be considered a useful microcosm of what happened across the field in Canada.

In the present issue of *CJSAE/RCÉEÉA*, Boshier refers to the foundation of CASAE in Vancouver in 1980. His analysis suggests that filling an existing gap in the field was only part of the intention behind the association's founding. Another, not insignificant, part was to prevent a vacuum in Canadian-specific adult education research that would be filled by the existing dominant forces—mainly from the United States. The same analysis can be extended to the foundation of the journal.

From the very beginning, the journal reflected CASAE's self-consciousness about research. This shows up in the papers compiled for the first, establishing meeting of CASAE at UBC on May 6, 1980. Teresa MacNeil presented "Canadian contributions to empirical research in adult education," a survey of available Canadian adult education research (Unpublished, Boshier collection). As with the current author, MacNeil found categorization of research to be challenging, but argued that "we have little choice but to organise a large-scale effort to inform ourselves about adult education research in Canada, and organise it promptly" (p. 8). As CASAE moved toward a pattern of annual meetings, Roby Kidd of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) wrote a memo on June 23, 1981 (unaddressed, but most likely to Giselle Painchaud, the first president of CASAE) stressing the need for good histories of adult education and an inventory of research (Boshier collection).

In a letter to Giselle Painchaud dated August 31, 1981, James Draper (OISE) expressed the hope that CASAE should “be more and do more than the [Adult Education Research Conference] AERC” (p. 1, Boshier collection). By that time, the AERC had been running for about 20 years, and although it was a successful conference, it was not a membership organization in a conventional sense. Draper wanted CASAE to do more than organize a conference, including attracting field practitioners and taking a role in shaping the practice of adult education. He suggested that annual reports could include “suggestions for further research from field-practitioners” (p. 2). He further referred to work he had done with Bill Griffiths and Teresa MacNeil designed to contribute to what we might now call a comprehensive audit of adult education research in Canada.

The 1982 CASAE meeting passed a motion that “a committee be created to examine the feasibility of a Canadian journal devoted to research in adult education” according to a memo dated June 22, 1982, from Painchaud to the committee members (Boshier collection). The committee was to be chaired by Boshier and included MacNeil and Alan Thomas of OISE. The early stages of the journal, at least according to available records, seem to demonstrate strenuous efforts by OISE to influence the shape of the publication. For example, on August 17, 1982, Diana Ironside of OISE forwarded a memo to the committee (written some time earlier according to the cover sheet). In the memo, participants in the “Department Reaches Out” project of OISE’s Adult Education Department asked that the association “assess the feasibility of establishing a regular and national journal of adult education” (p. 1, Boshier collection). It is unclear who the author was, but the memo read that “we have not formulated specific objectives for any national journal” (p. 1). This is followed by two pages of suggestions for specific objectives.

On September 9, 1982, Boshier wrote to the committee members, stating, “I am assuming that a journal is needed. The probability of completing the task will be greatly enhanced if we all agree with this assumption and immediately turn attention to its form, financing and future” (Boshier collection). This may be recognizable to academic readers as a standard and generally effective chairing strategy where the task facing the committee is taken as a valid one so that discussion can move forward. The implication may be that there was less than complete agreement among the committee members regarding the desirability of having a journal at all. This is reflected in the *Report of the Journal Feasibility Committee* prepared by Boshier and presented to CASAE on June 22, 1983 (Boshier collection). The report laid out three options: no journal, a peer-reviewed conventional journal, or an electronic journal. The “no journal” option was justified by the argument that “Canadian adult educators are not facing problems associated with the dissemination of their work” (p. 4). Boshier lays out a detailed typology of academic publishing that he subsequently largely ignores. He analyzes Canadian contributions to the top U.S. journal, *Adult Education*, and to the AERC conferences. Between 1975 and 1982, 20% of the journal articles and 21.4% of the conference papers were by Canadians. Nine of the 11 most prolific authors were from western Canada, and their research, according to Boshier, tended to be even more American in nature—meaning highly empirical and pragmatic—than American research rather than reflecting more critical European traditions. In other words, Boshier’s argument was that Canadian publications tended both to be compatible with U.S. publishing and highly successful. What this argument overlooks, Boshier states,

is the possibility that this pattern concealed the need for representation of specifically Canadian viewpoints.

The electronic journal option had been strongly supported by Ernest Shapiro of the University of Manitoba and Alan Thomas of OISE in particular. They had pushed quite hard toward an electronic journal throughout the year, and there had been a special meeting at OISE in June 1983 to examine the feasibility of an electronic journal. Boshier, faced with strong advocacy, elected to share chairmanship of the committee with Thomas, and it is interesting that the undated memo inviting "Members of the Journal Committee, CASAE" to attend the June 1983 OISE meeting was signed "Alan M. Thomas, Chairman" rather than "co-chair" (Boshier collection). The final report of the committee to CASAE (1983, Boshier collection) was mainly concerned with the "no journal" and "print journal" options, with the expectation of a separate presentation on the electronic option by Thomas.

Before leaving the Boshier and Thomas committee's final report, it is worth acknowledging a particularly prescient comment on the option of a stand-alone print journal: "enthusiasts should not underestimate the amount of work and business acumen required to go it alone" (p. 6, Boshier collection).

CASAE did finally choose the option of a stand-alone print journal with the support of a three-year SSHRC publication grant, aiming for first publication in spring 1987. Don Brundage of OISE was the managing editor who took on the task of negotiating with OISE Press regarding production of the journal. On May 30, 1987, the minutes of the sixth annual general assembly of CASAE (Boshier collection) contain an item explaining that the first full issue had not been able to be produced during the first year of funding and that therefore it was "running one year behind time" *before the first issue was out*. Editor Hayden Roberts explained that the second issue was "well underway" and that the third "has a good start." This was borne out by the report to the CASAE board of directors in 1988 (Boshier collection), by which time the third issue was already published. Assuming an intended publication rate of two issues a year, the journal was now one issue behind.

The minutes of the SSHRC publication grant committee from 1988 (Boshier collection) comment that the latest issue contained "high quality and interesting work with a useful 'Perspectives' section, less introspective than in the first issue" (p. 1). Closer proofing (for typos) was recommended, and the committee stated that "it was found to fall somewhat short on empirical research" (p. 1). It was noted that "the rejection rate of 15% seemed very low" (p. 1), but continued funding at the rate of \$6,864 per annum was recommended. The CASAE response to the financial health of the journal and the slow start was to propose three issues for the 1988–89 volume, though only two were finally published.

Looking across the inception of the journal and the first few years of publication almost 30 years later, the early discourse seems to have been shaped by three tensions in the Canadian adult education field. The first was the tension between Canadian and American adult education research. As indicated earlier, objectively Canadian research was more than holding its own in the major North American publication venues. Rachal and Sargent (1995) conducted a study of institutional productivity in adult education journals from 1983 to 1992. From 1983 to 1987, which was before the first publication of

CJSAE/RCÉÉA, six of the 40 most productive institutions were Canadian. Given that the U.S. population was about 10 times that of Canada, this is a notably strong showing from Canada. Nonetheless, Canadian researchers do seem to have felt the need for a journal that represented the broader culture and history of adult education in Canada—this perhaps goes some way to explaining the dominance of Canadian articles (94%) in the first five volumes of *CJSAE/RCÉÉA*, as well as the high representation of non-empirical work. In place of the empirical work that was already successful in U.S. journals, *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* was publishing articles on the history and philosophy of the field in Canada.

The second tension was anglophone versus francophone Canada. The journal explicitly tried to address this by ensuring that there was a francophone editor. This strategy worked well in the first 10 volumes, though there has been some falling off since. There is, of course, a question about whether the journal's approach was the best. One article in most of the earlier issues is in French and abstracted in both languages (the latter is also true for English articles). The question is whether this could be seen as symbolic more than truly effective, since in order to read the French article, one would need to be able to read French, and it is possible that people with that level of written French comprehension might be reading French journals already. The same is true for francophone readers and the English articles. Making research from each language community accessible to the other would ideally require full text translation, which would be extremely expensive and time-consuming. Nonetheless, the journal does deserve considerable credit for being open to francophone contributions during the 1980s and 1990s, decades during which there were considerable concerns with the representation of Canadian francophones.

The third tension can be considered as the bipolarity of western and eastern Canada. The two most important anglophone institutions in Canadian adult education research at the time were UBC in the west and OISE in Toronto. These two institutions adopted different approaches to adult education research. UBC was the second most prolific institution in North American adult education publishing from 1983 to 1992 (behind the University of Georgia), with authors coming largely from the adult education program and publishing in adult education journals (Rachal & Sargent, 1995). Of the 128 student-authored articles in *AEQ* from 1969 to 1988, 12.5% were from UBC alone (Blunt & Lee, 1994). Considering that, on average, 7.6% of submissions to *AEQ* from 1988 to 1999 were from students (Taylor, 2001)—and there is no reason to believe this had necessarily changed from earlier years—it seems that both UBC staff and students had a very high hit rate with publications.

The situation at OISE was quite different. Most of the rankings and investigations mentioned above include OISE or the University of Toronto, but usually quite far down the list. For example, where UBC was second in 1983–92, OISE was 16th (Rachal & Sargent, 1995). This should not be taken as implying that OISE staff and students were not publishing, but it does suggest that they were not publishing in the canonical adult education journals. One implication of this is that OISE may have been less invested in print-based adult education journals because, at OISE, they were not taken as indicative of a healthy program, unlike the UBC tradition. UBC, as mentioned earlier, had less to lose because it already had a high profile in the existing journals, but might have been

correspondingly cautious about a new form of journal different to the ones they already knew and, to some degree, dominated.

Many other universities at the time (according to one former editor of *CJSAE/RCÉÉA*) saw UBC as different from the majority of Canadian adult education programs because it was so focused on empirical research and the publication agenda. The other programs were more concerned with practitioner training and issues of local practice than with creating a national field. For them, a CASAE journal may well have offered an opportunity to publish more local material and more alternative material than were possible in the existing publishing outlets. It is certainly the case that UBC has not dominated *CJSAE/RCÉÉA*, despite continuing as the third most productive department in North America from 1993 to 2002 (Rachal & David, 2005).

Given these three tensions, the appointment of Hayden Roberts as the first editor was inspired. Roberts gained his PhD in California, so did not necessarily see the Canadian–U.S. tension as quite so important. He had just published a book on adult education research in Canada (Roberts, 1982) that focused on francophone research and pointed out that anglophones who did not follow French-language research were missing out. Roberts was working at the University of Alberta, a proud research institution but one without the empirical adult education research focus of UBC. Roberts's appointment offered a way to step beyond the tensions inherent in the creation of the new journal, and was an effective solution. The editorship of the journal did not come to one of the major Canadian universities until 2002, and then only for three years.

Another issue underlying the 25-year lifespan of the journal has been significant changes in the project of adult education as a discipline. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, adult education was seen as an emerging discipline, concerned with establishing itself and gaining credibility. The acknowledged pioneers of the field, such as Alan Thomas, and Roby Kidd were still active, and continued to press for acknowledgement of the disciplinary nature of the endeavour. There was also some openness to alternative knowledge generation and work such as community development, which looked at the time as if it might well still end up in the broad tent of adult education. By the late 1980s, it was less clear where the discipline of adult education was heading, and in the following decade there was a substantial trend of dismantling the canon and moving away from a coherent historical narrative based on great white men as the founders (Blunt & Lee, 1994).

The years between the mid-1990s and the current time have been deeply destructive to the project of academic adult education globally. The number of departments called "adult education" has fallen as they have been merged or recombined with higher education, human resource development, or some other field held to be related. As Milton, Watkins, Studdard, and Burch (2003) suggest, the key to providing adult education in universities has been program integration (to keep student numbers up) and strong leadership (which helps to maintain faculty staffing levels). The overall trend has been for a radical de-centring of adult education into specializations and interests that are shared with other disciplines in joint programs.

These changes can be seen as deeply threatening if the aim of *CJSAE/RCÉÉA* was to build a discipline, or somewhat gratifying if the aim was to represent the diversity

and variety of education for adults. Certainly the three original tensions seem less pressing, replaced with the challenges of a highly audit-driven research system and a professionalization of educational research. One manifestation of the evolving context may be the increasing empiricism of the journal.

Final Thoughts

My aim with this article was to try to understand *CJSAE/RCÉEÉA* as an artifact and some of the forces shaping that artifact. The journal comes across as a brave exploration of difficult terrain. There have never been easy times for the journal, just different varieties of challenge. The inclusivity of the journal was won in the face of the three exclusivities—we are not just Americans, we are not just anglophones, we are not just UBC. It seems that the energy of the journal came from the power of these three statements. The editors have believed that they were doing something important and different, helping to shape the field at a fundamental level. The journal has always been more than a publishing venue for research; it has always been an extended statement about who we, as Canadian adult educators, are and what we value.

As a cultural representation, *CJSAE/RCÉEÉA* has been an effective symbol. Even the issues of production times and of funding are consistent in some way with the Canadian academic experience. Yet the outcomes have been surprising. CASAE members stated that they thought the journal was perhaps the most important thing the association did, and that must reflect the symbolic capital tied up in it. The *CJSAE/RCÉEÉA* was started in a time and a context where academic credibility for a coherent field of adult education seemed achievable, and huge amounts of effort and time went into striving for that achievement. Nowadays that credibility seems both less possible and less desirable, perhaps not really what we wanted all along. The journal has transformed itself from a symbol of a discipline to a symbol of shared beliefs and values across a far more scattered array. It has changed from a representation of possibility to a demonstration of a shared orientation. We wrote ourselves into being, and through doing so we learned that we were not who we thought we were.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank those involved in the production of the *CJSAE/RCÉEÉA* who agreed to be interviewed. Invaluable assistance was provided by Peter Smith (Scotland) and Amelia Davis of the University of Tennessee (Knoxville). My thanks to Roger Boshier for sharing the banana boxes.

References

- Blunt, A., & Lee, J. (1994). The contribution of graduate student research to Adult Education Quarterly, 1969–1988. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(3), 125–144.
- Damer, E. (2002). Building a department of adult education at the University of British Columbia, 1957–1977. *History of Intellectual Culture*, 2(1), 1–17.

- Deleuze, G., & Guattari, F. (1987). *A thousand plateaus: Capitalism and schizophrenia*. St. Paul, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Foucault, M. (1970). *The order of things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. London: Pantheon.
- Milton, J., Watkins, K. E., Studdard, S. S., & Burch, M. (2003). The ever widening gyre: Factors affecting change in adult education programs in the United States. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 54(1), 23–41.
- Rachal, J. R., & David, W. W. V. (2005). Institutional and individual productivity in selected adult education journals, 1993–2002. *The Canadian Journal for the Study of Adult Education*, 19(1), 1–20.
- Rachal, J. R., & Sargent, S. F. (1995). Publication productivity of North American institutions in selected adult education journals, 1983–1992. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 45(2), 63–78.
- Roberts, H. (1982). *Culture and adult education: A study of Alberta and Quebec*. Edmonton: University of Alberta.
- Statistics Canada. (2009). *Population of French mother tongue and population of French as the language spoken most often at home, and difference between the two, Canada, 1971 to 2006* (2006 Census Analysis Series). Available at: www.statcan.gc.ca
- Taylor, E. W. (2001). Adult Education Quarterly from 1989 to 1999: A content analysis of all submissions. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 51(4), 322–340.