

Samuel Mitchell.

**INNOVATION AND REFORM:
CONFLICTS WITHIN EDUCATIONAL CHANGE.**

North York, ON: Captus Press, 1990.

219 pp. \$21.00.

Innovation and Reform should be of interest to scholars in educational administration and leadership, curriculum, and teacher development, as well as teachers and administrators concerned with school innovation and reform. In this book, Samuel Mitchell provides eight reasonably well-written chapters that not only review a great deal of literature pertaining to school innovations, but express insightful analyses and conjectures about what it takes to orchestrate **programs and people** in a productive way. The dynamic tensions among "the experts" of innovation and reform, school administrators, teachers, parents, and students themselves are explored in terms of the legal, institutional, and human relationships that make school improvement projects as complex as they are.

Mitchell brings sociological, instructional, historical, and ethical perspectives to bear on his review and analysis of many case studies and dramatized anecdotes in educational reform. Not only are the various "players" in these illustrations taken into careful consideration, but the processes of innovation are examined in light of the conditions that seem to influence its success. The book promises many informative lessons to school reform planners and researchers alike.

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THE FOUNDATIONS OF ADULT EDUCATION IN CANADA.

Toronto: Thompson Educational Publishing, 1991.

320 pp. \$24.95.

What a pleasure to see published a Canadian foundations text in adult education! In writing this book, the authors tell us (p. x) that they asked themselves the question, "what is Canadian about Canadian adult education?" They answer this important question "with emphasis on the most recent decades, and on the relationship between adult education and the society of which it is a part" (p. viii). While the book addresses the nature of adult education in Canada, the authors make it clear that they do not adequately present the Quebec context, suggesting that the two solitudes are as evident in adult education as in other aspects of Canadian society.

Like other adult education foundations texts, e.g., Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), the book begins by setting out for the novice reader definitions and philosophical frames in which to make sense of what follows.

The first chapter deals well with the thorny issue of definitions. In this chapter, the authors compare and contrast the many overlapping terms used to describe learning that occurs in adulthood: continuing education, extension, community education, lifelong education, open learning, recurrent education, community development.

The second chapter presents some philosophical perspectives for understanding the functions that adult education can play in the lives of individuals and the society in which they live. Clearly set out and defined is a framework for understanding the kinds of claims and assumptions one may make in any field, e.g., differences between empirical claims, value claims, epistemological claims. As well, a central concern in adult education, whether change is seen as essentially a personal process, a process which furthers social needs as a whole, or as a mechanism for bringing about social change, is also discussed. An awareness of this distinction is crucial as it impacts on programming, methods, objectives, and so forth.

The content now being set, the next chapter looks directly at the Canadian scene and explores the relationship between Canada's experience as a nation and the development of adult education services and programs. Geography (specifically, great distances, and resulting regionalism) as well as tensions between federal and provincial governments in terms of responsibility for education are essential elements of the Canadian experience. The suggestion is also made that on the whole adult education programs tend to be servants of the needs of other elements in the society. Thus, since Canada's population is largely an immigrant population, citizenship education has been important. Another instance of the same principle, a weak industrial base, has made economic development important.

Examples are given to make clear the ways in which Canadian adult education programming reflects our unique setting; for instance, brief descriptions of Radio Forum, CBC, and NFB are provided. These are instructive examples because they remind the reader that adult education has many guises. However, for the novice reader in adult education, the examples may not provide sufficient detail to be able to understand the context within which these programs occurred and their impact on society.

Chapter 4 steps away again from the Canadian setting and looks at models for understanding participation. The information provided is useful in the generic sense. However, given that the previous chapter had created a frame for thinking how Canadian adult education has developed out of a unique

national experience, I also expected to find out what was particular about Canadian patterns of participation in adult education and in what ways Canadians are similar and different from other nations; this was not the case.

Chapter 5 explores to some extent program design and development. Here Canadian examples are presented, not necessarily in detail, to show the adult education enterprise at work. As regards program development, Cranton (1989) is not mentioned; nor are Canadians well-known in adult education in terms of their contribution to our understanding of the teaching/learning process, e.g., Giffiths, Barer-Stein). In saying this, I recognize that concepts and issues relating to teaching/learning interactions are not addressed in this book and perhaps it was not the intention of the authors to do so. Nevertheless, brief reference to this literature would make the novice reader in the field aware of these individuals who are a part of the answer to the question, "what is Canadian about Canadian adult education?"

Chapters 6 and 7 explore in more detail than Chapter 3 the degree to which federal and provincial relationships and the country's understanding of the social contract have influenced the impact of public policy on the types of programming seen in Canada. In Chapter 6, this is done by describing modes of government response with Canadian examples. In Chapter 7, it is done on a province by province basis. There appears to be some overlap between these chapters; one gets the impression the chapters were written individually not jointly.

The next chapter describes the growth of adult education in Canada in the post-war decades: the impact that this has had on its development as a field of study and research, and the increasing professionalization of adult educators. Here we learn the important role that Roby Kidd played both in Canada and internationally in professionalizing the field; also described is the emergence of the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), an important network for Canadian adult educators.

Chapter 9 focuses more specifically on the principal Canadian events of the last two decades. This is done within the frame of adult education as a social movement and as a governmental response. This is an important aspect of adult education and, as I mentioned earlier, needs highlighting for the reader who may view adult education within a more institutionalized frame; however, it would have been helpful if training/retraining in business and industry had also been included in the picture that was created of adult education in Canada over the past two decades. This chapter also draws out implications for the future. For instance, questions are raised about the cohesion of the field, and the present trend in adult education to focus on vocational and academic rather than social issues.

The final chapter is a useful addition to what is an introduction to the field of adult education in Canada. For the reader who wishes to explore specific areas in more depth, the authors provide suggested readings for the six major areas dealt with in the book.

The book is soft-cover, well-bound, printed on white bond, so it's easily readable. However, it uses an older citation format with footnotes at the bottom of each page rather than at the end of chapters; as well, there is no complete list of references nor a bibliography at the back. For a reader new to the field, a more accessible and efficient citation system would be helpful.

Overall, the authors have done a commendable job of synthesizing international and Canadian perspectives. They raise a number of important questions for all of us to consider regarding the future of adult education in Canada; as well, they provide us with the first Canadian foundations text in the field.

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REFERENCES

- Cranton, P. (1989). *Planning instruction for adult learners*. Toronto: Wall and Thompson.
- Darkenwald, G.G., & Merriam, S.B. (1982). *Adult education: Foundations of practice*. New York: Harper and Row.