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proceedings of the joint international conference of the Adult Education
Research Conference (AERC) (45th National Conference) and the Canadian
Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE), l'Association canadienne
pour l'etude de Feducation des adultes (ACEEA) (23rd National Conference)**

Edited by Darlene E. Clover; with the assistance of Julia Shinaba and Catherine Etmanski.

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Preface

Adult Education for Democracy, Social Justice and a Culture of Peace

Our strategy should be not only to confront the empire but to mock it . . . with our art . . . our stubbornness, our joy, our brilliance, our sheer relentlessness and our ability to tell our own stories, stories that are different from the ones we're being brainwashed to believe.

Arundhati Roy, World Social Forum
Porto Alegre, Brasil, 2003

A practice of the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE) /L'association canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes (ACÉÉA) is to create a general theme for its annual conference and to organise a panel and discussion on the topic. This year's theme is *Adult Education for Democracy, Social Justice and a Culture of Peace*. We chose this as a way to open discussion around increasing global acts of violence, aggression and war that affect our work, our communities and our lives. For many people around the world, these times are at best disheartening, frightening and confusing and at worst, demeaning, degrading and deadly. The dominant discourse of a new world order and the act of what Arundhati Roy calls 'empire-building', paints a complex, multi-dimensional and a dynamic world into the corners of 'good or bad' and 'right or wrong'. Citizens worldwide, particularly in and from the majority world, are experiencing a dramatic decline in rights and freedoms and an increase in racism and other forms of oppression, abuse and intolerance. And while the women's movement has made great strides over the decades, violence against women seems to carry-on unabated.

Whether we teach in universities, colleges or communities, whether we teach critical perspectives in adult education, English as a second language or computer upgrading skills, we encounter learners and co-workers who are troubled by the directions in which the world is being lead. This conference is an arena in which we can share our concerns, innovative educational practices, political strategies and theories as we envision new futures and ways of teaching and learning for a different world.

Scope of the Papers and Conference Organisation

While somewhat bleary eyed from editing well into the night and over weekends, and extremely grateful to those of you who actually read the precise conference paper instructions, we are overwhelmed and excited by the vastness of our field, by the fascinating and important studies we undertake, by the global scope of our work, by the community connections we make, by the thought-provoking questions we ask and by the diverse, dynamic and often dichotomous theories with which we engage. Some authors address the moral and ethical issues we face as adult educators in today's complex world while others focus on rights, freedoms, social or environmental justice. Spirituality, hope, creativity and the very nature of how we teach are also areas of research and debate. Together they demonstrate that adult education for democracy, social justice and a culture of peace must clearly focus on the range of human intelligence and the multiple ideas, visions and practices available for reflecting on experience and making sense of our world.

Within the framework of the practice of the Adult Education Research Conference (AERC), we have slotted only one paper presentation into each 50 time period. This means,

however, that with a conference this size - 91 papers, three symposia and 14 roundtables - we have more concurrent sessions which makes choice difficult. In an attempt to address this, we have woven quite diverse themes and topics into each block.

We have also incorporated elements into the overall design of the conference which are intended to enhance informal learning, dialogue, and enjoyment. These include the Dean and CASAE President Reception, the conference dinner which includes the infamous adult educators' cultural talent show, an organised walking tour of Finnerty Gardens, and a closing panel which brings us all together to collectively reflect upon what we have learned and shared and to bid farewell. In addition, we have ventured to weave arts and crafts into the fabric of the conference and these Proceedings.

Popular Education in Action: Arts, Crafts and Theatre

Aroko believed that while art could not completely solve many social dilemmas, it could solve one problem: "the loneliness of spirit" (in Farkas 2000, p.1). Wyman (2004, p.14) argues that "at their simplest level, the arts...bring aesthetic pleasure and gaiety to our lives." Appanduri (2001, p.6) suggests that while the world today can be characterised by "disjunctive flows that generate acute problems of social well-being, one positive force that encourages an emancipatory politics is...the imagination." And Nourbese Phillip (1992) notes that culture and the arts are not the insignificant sites of struggle many think them to be but their power lies in masking that fact.

Within this framework of spirit, politics, aesthetics and defiance, we have put together an exhibition of community arts/crafts work by women from Canada and New Zealand¹ that runs the duration of the conference. The visual artworks are what Wyman (2004, p.14) refers to as an "exhilarating panoply of the creative outpouring of a human community." The works themselves and the creative educative process involved in their creation are stimulants of imagination, spirit and dialogue, catalysts for personal, social and environmental transformation, tools of justice, empowerment and emancipation, and channels of energy, challenge and resistance. They are too objects of beauty and resilience, purveyors of his/herstory and arenas for scholarly research and intellectual debate. But arts/crafts are also, as Patrick Overton (1994, p.94) argues, "something that can cause outrage and indignation" as they challenge stereotypes, and dare to ask questions and tell stories that we might not wish to hear and show images that we might not wish to see. This act is important precisely because it cultivates the capacity to reflect on issues that open a vision of human possibility so that together, we might begin to challenge the morality of many social, economic, political and military priorities. Since meetings with arts/crafts are never endpoints in themselves, we hope you will be challenged by your encounters and that your seeds of creativity will be watered (Greene, 1995).

In addition to the visual arts/crafts exhibition we have a popular theatre event. The play is titled *Get A Real Job* and was created by Myths and Mirrors, a feminist issue-based cultural organisation in Sudbury, Ontario. The piece humorously and poignantly explores the trials and tribulations of working in a Call Centre and efforts to unionise in an inhospitable workplace.

A Note of Thanks

1 We would like to acknowledge the support of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) for the funding support.

No conference happens without the tireless work of many people and we conclude by acknowledging those who were truly on the front lines.

Papers, symposia and roundtables are at the heart of academic conferences. We are most grateful to Shahrzad Mojab, Andre Grace, Rachel Gorman, Bill Fallis, Tara Fenwick, and Kiran Mirchindani of CASAE as well as Tom Nesbit, Elice Rogers, Talmadge Guy, and Lisa Baumgartner, the AERC Steering Committee, for their adjudication work. Special thanks also go to Jennifer Sumner, Daniel Schugurensky, and Angela Miles of CASAE for their work as members of the student paper award selection committee for CASAE. Tom Sork and Bill McQueen, responsible for maintaining the AERC and CASAE websites respectively, entered the numerous updates and changes with efficiency and generosity. Many thanks also go to those who took the lead in organising the pre-conferences: Tom Nesbit, Richard Darville, Guy Ewing, Ralf St. Clair, Shauna Butterwick, Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Shahrzad Mojab, Robert Hill, Andre Grace and Kiran Mirchindani. We would like to thank Beverly Whyte who, with limited support, managed to attend one of our meetings, organised volunteers and shook the bushes for student participants. Thanks as well to those of you who took pity on us and stepped in to volunteer: Mary Ann Fenimore, Cornelia Dragne, and Shirley Follen. We are also most grateful to the Dean of the Faculty of Education, Budd Hall, for his financial and in-kind support.

An enormous thank you goes to Julia Shinaba and Catherine Etmanski who brought ideas, energy and skill to both the Proceedings and the Arts Exhibition. We were also exceedingly fortunate to have the assistance of Lisa Mortimer. From the moment she came on board and her wisdom and finesse became clear, we simply implemented the old African proverb: *For those who excel at their work we have nothing to give, but more work.* We are also deeply indebted to the artist-educators who took time off work and agreed to spend days away from busy, creative lives to give us joy, food for thought and essence.

As those who have gone before us know the Organising Committee is key to any conference and it is often faced with formidable tasks which try patience and set nerves on edge. In spite of this, the formal and informal meetings of the core team - Diane Anderson, Catherine Etmanski, Lisa Mortimer, Julia Shinaba, Ione Wager and myself - were filled with laughter, satire, professionalism and grace. Working with you was a great pleasure and together, we did endure.

Finally, a note of thanks to all of you for attending this year's conference. We are honoured in the Faculty of Education, University of Victoria to host this joint international conference of the Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) and the Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE)/L'association canadienne pour l'étude de l'éducation des adultes (ACÉÉA). Enjoy....

Darlene E. Clover
Conference Organiser
University of Victoria

**Joint 2004 International Conference on Adult Education
Adult Education Research Conference (AERC) - United States of America
Canadian Association for the Study of Adult Education (CASAE-ACÉÉA)
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