

*Research Notes and Correspondence/  
Notes de recherche et correspondance scientifique*

Editorial: A New Department

*William Bruneau*

In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Europe, when “scientific” journals were young, readers looked forward to reading tales of strange new lands, of creatures unknown to the “old” world, of new devices and methods for the discovery of knowledge. These items appeared in long “récits circonstanciés,” what we might now call “contextualized research reports.”

In this and later issues of *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation*, we would like to adopt something of this ancient practice. Our new department of “Research Notes and Correspondence/Notes de recherche et correspondance scientifique” provides space for forms of historical argument and discussion that do not fit the rubric of the classic “article.” We have in mind to publish discussions about underutilized archives; to invite methodological enquiry and debate; to outline regions of historical investigation new to our community; to spur historiographical argument (and the present issue contains just such an argument); and to provide for constructive questioning of articles previously published in *HSE/RHE*. There may be still other ways this department may serve the interests of our community, and we invite our readers to suggest them.

Lucy Townsend and Elizabeth Johnson have opened up, in this current version of “Research Notes and Correspondence,” discussion about developing traditions and practices among journals in the history of education. They pay special attention to three journals, and raise questions from a standpoint just now reaching the attention of many of our readers. The Townsend-Johnson enquiry might have quite different results if carried out in academic communities in Europe, North America, Africa, or Australasia. In Europe we know of regularly published journals in the history of education in France, Belgium, Germany (at least two), Austria, Switzerland, Poland, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands, Italy (at least three), the United Kingdom (at least two, and probably several more depending on definition of terms), Spain (two at least)—and this European list is, we think, already out of date! One wonders what may be the result of analogous enquiries into European traditions and practices.

On another front, Campbell Ross discusses problems of argument he detected in an article published in fall 1995 in *HSE/RHE*.

Both research notes are, in one or more senses, about developing traditions and approaches in the history of education. We hope these first entries in our new department will encourage others to consider the meanings and future implications of publication practice among us all.