

BOOK REVIEWS

RUBY HEAP, WYN MILLAR, & ELIZABETH SMYTH (EDS). *Learning to practise: Professional education in historical and Contemporary perspective*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press (2005). 311 pp. \$35. (ISBN 0-7766-0605-0).

This collection of essays stems from the ongoing collaboration of a group of scholars with an interest in interrogating the history of professional education across a variety of occupations. With close attention to the pertinent historical and social context, each of the contributing chapters asks how and why professional education developed in the way it has. What becomes clear in reading this collection is that professional education is contested terrain. A major area of dispute concerns the standard historical account of professional education.

The first chapter, by Bob Gidney, undoes the conventional interpretation of this history – early apprenticeship models lead to non-university professional schools, culminating finally in the transition to university based professional schools. Gidney's essay challenges this benign narrative in which an enlightened professional elite struggles to secure the professional status of their occupations through university-based education. In contrast, his essay explores tensions, conflicts, and "outright pathologies" arising from the transfer of professional education to the university. Recognizing that most histories of professional education have been written by its teachers who may have unwarranted faith in classrooms as privileged sites of acquiring knowledge, we are led to question the premise that learning best takes place in a classroom setting as opposed to work sites or the field.

The thorny question of what counts as knowledge for practice underlies much of Gidney's argument. While acknowledging the importance of theoretical knowledge, he is clear that learning to practice requires more than a simple transfer of such knowledge to the field. This raises the persistent but nebulous notion of the "art" of practice – "the ability to make judgments, mobilize intuitions, deploy rhetoric, weigh alternatives about what will or will not work in any given circumstance" – abilities which can only be acquired through the experience of practice.

A hybrid model in which both apprenticeship and classroom learning are combined perhaps offers the best of both worlds. At the same time, this shared responsibility for professional education is a source of ongoing tensions and debate between the partisan stakeholders in the process of professional education. Classroom educators are thought by the field to be out of touch with the needs of workplace for a trained workforce. The academy finds worksites are too narrowly focused on the technical skills and getting the job done to the detriment of questioning why or promoting creative development. These tensions between the “why” and the “how” may be expected and even healthy for professional education. However, within contemporary university environments, the concern for the field is increasing marginal as the priorities of the university shift towards securing research funds for its own survival and growth. Faculty members are preoccupied with the need to obtain research grants and produce publications to compete within the university environment. Teaching is necessary but unrewarded. The gap between the concerns of the professional practitioners and those of professional educators within the academy widens. These tensions between the university, the state, and the professional associations are familiar to faculty within university-based professional schools who are required to serve a number of masters.

The first chapter sets the broad framework for the subsequent chapters in the collection which in turn delve into detailed histories of the educational development of a broad assortment of professional occupations, from nursing to engineering, law to dental hygienists. These individual histories provide us with some fascinating insights into the influence of professional schools on the intellectual, social, and cultural environment of universities and, of course, the influence of the university and its priorities on professional schools. One of the interesting discoveries made in reading this book was the relative numerical weight of professional school students within universities. Histories of higher education have tended to focus on the arts college and its student as the prototype. In contrast to this received wisdom, Millar, Heap and Gidney point out that the professional school students comprise a significant proportion of the university population, somewhere near half the student body in the years they studied, 1910-50, at the University of Toronto. Their chapter explores the differing social class, gender, and sometimes, ethnicity of the recruits to these schools and their disparate experiences within them. Such large numbers within the university population challenge the expectation of both a typical “university student” and the provision of “a liberal education” for all, a purpose which the university set itself. The professional schools themselves were isolated from each other, prompting the description of the university as “little more than a vast holding company for a very disparate set of ‘academic tribes and territories’” (Becher, 1989).

Not surprisingly, the history of professional education is a gendered history, and the practitioners and educators in medicine and law have fared differently from those professional occupations where women predominate, such as teaching and social work. At the same time, the particularities of different occupational processes and the changing social context – for example, WWI – gave rise to uneven effects on gender composition within professions. In some instances and in some occupations, the transition to university training meant a loss of control to the academy; while in others, notably medicine, strong professional associations were able to retain control over curricula and licensing. These individual chapters reveal the complexity of gender analyses in the evolution of professional schools.

The theme of the relationship between gender, morality, and professional education is revealed in a number of chapters in the book. The interpretation of wartime voluntary nursing as both nurturing and patriotic allowed its practitioners to experience otherwise unavailable opportunities for adventure and travel. The professional elite who wish to advance the status of social work as a profession had to overcome the view of social work as simply an extension of women's traditional nurturing roles within the family and community. The conflict between morality and professional behaviour is most evident in the description of the struggles of Canadian medical missionaries required to situate themselves within the debates around birth control, a challenge for which their professional education had evidently not prepared them.

The historical analysis of professional education allows the reader to understand the source of contemporary tensions between theory and practice, how long standing they are and, in many cases, seemingly intractable. The framework developed in the beginning of the book gives the reader a useful framework and set of questions to apply to the individual histories that follow, each of which is a valuable account in its own right. I would have appreciated a concluding chapter to tie the individual accounts together and to draw out the implications for the various stakeholders at this juncture. The book is a useful contribution for those involved in professional education and a rich resource for reflection.

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LINDA DAVIES, *McGill University*

REVIEW ESSAY

EMPOWERING THE NOT-YETS: CHILDREN AS EXISTING PERSONS

BRIAN HOWE & KATHERINE COVELL. *Empowering children: Children's rights as a pathway to citizenship*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2005. 245 pp. \$45.00 (HC). (ISBN 0-8020-3857-3).

Images of children emerging in the seventies and eighties are wide ranging: child as ethnographer (Heath), child as social participant (Philips), child as practical reasoner (Cook-Gumperz), child as adapter (Corsaro), child as informant (Harste), and child as style shifter (Tannen). I contributed a few of my own, such as child as speaking personality (Maguire & Graves, 2001). While the titles of these images signal relatively positive views of children (Wallat & Piazza, 1988), Howe and Covell challenge and interrogate more pejorative ones. In their book, *Empowering children: Children's rights as a pathway to citizenship*, they deconstruct adult-centric views of children as not-yets, as objects needing care and protection, and as property. This well written book is an excellent, timely, and very coherent text about rethinking how reforming schools and enhancing teacher education are essential to the creation of a new culture of respect towards children. Their title encapsulates their stance towards children as persons with rights, as existing persons in the here and now. They construct a persuasive argument by drawing on the 1989 United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) (included as an appendix). While to date 192 states are "signatories" to or have in some form ratified the accord, Howe and Covell deplore the fact that too many children in countries around the world are not aware of their guaranteed rights as stated in the actual Convention.

Their refreshing activism and passionate stance on children, their rights, and rights education is reflected in their action-oriented use of language for their six chapter headings: *Denying children's rights*, *Fulfilling an obligation*, *Recognizing children as citizens*, *Educating for citizenship*, *Catching citizenship*, and *Confronting the challenges*. They make this compelling case for children's rights by drawing on scholarship and research from North America, Europe, Asia, Africa, South America, and Australia. Particularly insightful are the connections they make between children's rights, theories of education, re-

search, and practice. In this respect, the book is useful to policy makers and teacher educators who teach courses in philosophical or social foundations, sociology of education, curriculum and citizenship, ethics and research. Although support for children's involvement, participation and rights is stated in sections of Articles, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the CRC, expectations of children's agency, competence, and participation are slow to change (Maguire, 2005). This glacial slowness in viewing children as persons with rights became very apparent to me when I served as chair of my Faculty's ethic review board. Thus, I welcome the opportunity to review this book.

I have argued elsewhere that while adults and ethics review boards can construct children as "vulnerable," young children have a strong sense of their abilities to make competent decisions and challenge research agendas (Maguire, 2005). Although respect for children is highlighted in international guidelines such as those published by the CRC, Child Watch International, the MOST Program of UNESCO, and Save the Children Alliance UK, much educational policy and research, at least in the Canadian context, is still carried out *on* and *about* children and seldom *with* them. Western notions of child development are embedded in curricula and essentialist views of children as property and needing protection still abound. As Howe and Covell note, from the nineteenth to the mid-twentieth century, the property concept gave way to a new concept of children as a social and vulnerable class in need of paternalistic state protection. These assumptions were influential in a child-saving era in which a wide number of new protective laws and policies were developed, such as child welfare and juvenile justice legislation. While children's legal and social status improved, they were still considered as objects and as "not-yets," or as potential persons with a "master status of not-yet-being" (Howe & Covell, 2005, pp. 62-64).

Chapter 1, *Denying children's rights*, begins with a provocative quote from a local newspaper in British Columbia: "It undermines the integrity of the family and involves children in a political undertaking. There is a gradual erosion of parental authority and this is one more step in that direction" (p. 3). Children here were not being called to join a radical new political party or lured into cult membership. The quote from a school trustee refers to "parents' and adults' concerns about children in schools being informed that they have basic human rights" (p. 3). Since the 1989 unanimous adoption of the Convention of the Rights of the Child by the General Assembly of the United Nations, continued opposition to teaching children about their rights at school or at home or in communities persists. In this chapter, the authors cogently lay out their argument, clearly articulating the purpose of the book: "to make the case that we should embrace children's rights education in schools and not fear the prospect of children learning about their rights" (p. 7). Meeting legal commitments is not the only reason advanced for children's rights education. More importantly for me is the authors' view

of children: “Children’s rights education recognizes children as persons and worthy citizens rather than as the property of their parents or as small and vulnerable ‘not-yets’” (p. 8).

A leitmotif throughout the book is foregrounded in this chapter: “Knowledge of their rights is fundamental to children’s practice of citizenship” (p. 9). If citizenship education is to meet its goals, children’s rights, particularly the provision for age-appropriate participation in matters that affect them, must be the guiding principles for educational practice.

Countering those who fear “the 3 D syndrome” – that children will become more demanding, defiant or disobedient – they challenge current citizenship education approaches that give grudging recognition of children’s rights and fail to promote democratic values and citizenship engagement (p. 13). Howe and Covell critically deconstruct the views of children embedded in approaches such as the “not yet” approach, that assumes children to be future citizens in need of preparation, and the “constrained rights education” or the “limited rights education” approach, that narrowly focus on issues such as how fortunate children are to have the Convention’s rights to protect them.

Howe and Covell’s view of children’s rights education envisions a classroom that reflects the spirit and philosophy of the U.N. Convention of the Rights of the Child. This classroom recognizes children as citizens and promotes social responsibility and the values of democratic rights education in a climate of increasing globalization and new technologies. Indeed, the authors acknowledge Willinsky’s (2002) view of the impact of increasing access to misinformation on the World Wide Web, a place where the dot.com generation obtain their knowledge of their rights (p. 150).

Chapter 2, *Fulfilling an obligation*, presents a useful examination of the Convention and the obligations it sets forth for children’s rights and children’s rights education. Noteworthy is their cogent historical review of the evolving status of the child from property, not-yet person, and future citizen towards the Convention’s three P’s: provision, protection and, participation. Readers will find very informative their analysis of the convention, its categories of children’s rights, basic principles, and system of implementation. Readers can easily check the educational obligations of the states parties to the actual text of the Convention in the appendix and the articles that call for children’s rights education. Contrary to their obligations, state parties have failed to provide for such education.

Rather lengthy but none the less important, Chapter 3 emphasizes the importance of *Recognizing children as citizens*. Here Howe and Covell take up their previously foregrounded argument that adult-centric and narrow views of children fail to recognize “children as citizens of the present and of the

future” (p. 44). In pointing to the pathways for educational programs that show promise in fulfilling international obligations and raising social consciousness, they categorically reject deficit views of children as pre-citizens being prepared by schools to become citizens. They then move to an impressive review of the literature about citizenship and its evolving meanings.

This chapter includes well-documented evidence that schools continue to operate on the basis of outdated understandings of citizenship, failing to recognize that children are citizens of the present and of the future. The redundancy of this leitmotif here is needed and calls for a new epistemology of childhood and children. Much needed in 2006 are more positive views of children’s agency and competence, acknowledgement of pluralism, affirmation of diversity, and the global dimensions of citizenship. Howe and Covell continue to challenge simplistic arguments that see children as “partial citizens of the future,” deficient in something or other, or somehow lacking competence in reasoning and economically dependent. Such specious arguments lead to misleading distinctions and dichotomies between incapable children and capable adults (p. 61). If citizenship is to be understood inclusively, children are both being-citizens and becoming-citizens. As child citizens, they enjoy the Convention rights of participation, including “the right to be heard, freedom of thought, freedom of association, and freedom of assembly” (p. 63). While I embrace their view that “deliberation and decision-making based on careful listening to the voices of all groups of citizens, includes the voice of child citizens,” (p. 62) this chapter would have been strengthened by including concrete examples of how adults may ethically enter children’s worlds.

Chapter 4, *Educating for Citizenship*, provides very practical information about existing educational approaches: character and moral education, anti-racist, environmental and peace education, and civic education. There is much in this chapter that curriculum developers and theorists, teachers, and teacher educators might find worthwhile to engage. Offering a critique of the successes and limitations of each type, Howe and Covell argue that a human rights education approach that has interrelated goals of empowerment and motivation for social change is more comprehensive than other approaches. However, even this approach fails to recognize the current citizenship status of children and to provide teaching material of relevance to children’s daily experiences. They argue for the benefits of citizenship education contextualized within and informed by the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. However, human rights education in their view also has two important limitations. “First, it is focused on the rights that are of greater significance and more salience to the daily lives of adults than of children. Second, [it] does not recognize the current citizenship status of the child” (p. 107). They argue that when citizenship education is presented in discrete, disconnected learning units, “what children learn has been described as a cacophony of

discord and confusion” (p.108). Indeed, they concur with Alderson (1999, p. 85), that citizenship education must mean, “more than picking up litter and not killing whales.”

The title of Chapter 5, *Catching citizenship*, refers to a 2002 quote by ethicist, Margaret Sutherland: *The essence of good citizenship may be better caught than taught*. Howe and Covell disagree with her view that schools should limit their citizenship education to the teaching of political knowledge, languages, and history. They agree with Holden and Clough (1998) that the needs of society can be met if children are taught with a curriculum that develops their competence in critical reflection and provides a foundation for and practice in values-based participation. This chapter offers much practical advice to teachers, parents, and policy makers about the design and implementation of children’s rights curricula, and their essential pedagogical features, including democratic teaching, cooperative learning, and critical thinking. Drawing from examples from Belgium, Canada, and England, this evaluation data confirm a “contagion effect.” The authors argue that when children learn about their Convention rights in a democratic classroom in which their rights and citizenship status are respected, they develop positive attitudes and behaviors that are reflective of respect for the rights of others. They end this chapter with a quote from Mohandas Gandhi: “If we are to have real peace in this world, we shall have to begin with the children.” They connect the quote back to their book title, *Empowering children*: “if we are to promote and sustain democracy, likewise, we shall have to begin by empowering child citizens” (p. 149).

Chapter 6, *Confronting the challenges*, addresses remaining thorny issues in implementing systematic inclusion of children’s rights education into the school curricula. This takes readers back to school and curriculum reforms and systemic issues foregrounded in earlier chapters. “Key is the need to reform schools so that they practice children’s rights, so that a culture of children’s rights becomes the contexts for citizenship and rights education” (p. 18). While they identify major challenges to implementing children’s rights-based citizenship education, and suggest some promising means of overcoming them, the major challenges are the “persistence of traditional attitudes towards children, teaching difficulties, and the persistence of traditional school practices that together make for educational environments inhospitable to children’s rights.” They offer symbolic, token support for – rather than meaningful commitment to – the implementation of the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Rather than seeing children as voiceless victims of research, I have argued that researchers have the responsibility for seeing them as agents and active participants, listening to, hearing and respecting their voices. Howe and Covell build a similar argument but take it further and in both political and

practical directions by challenging patronizing views of children, emphasizing the importance of children's rights education, and considering the challenges in implementing a children's rights curriculum. They argue for developing a social consciousness among those who care about and care for children's well being and view children as existing persons in the here and now, with dignity and basic rights of their own.

This book is timely for a number of reasons. It comes at a time when there is new interest in Citizenship Education in curriculum reform worldwide. The authors argue persuasively that globalization does not just involve economic changes, but also changes in environmental, cultural, and social consciousness – aspects that are being overlooked by policy makers and educators. However, strikingly silent from the CRC and also Howe and Covell's text are the linguistic rights of children who live and need to negotiate more than one language context, and those who do not speak one of the mainstream languages in Canada. The book also comes at a time when the increase in child-centered, participatory action research activities with children poses new challenges and responsibilities to policy makers, teachers, and researchers about ethically and respectfully entering children's spaces and worlds.

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MARY H. MAGUIRE, *McGill University*