

in the concept of lifelong learning, as well as in the host of non-formal associations whose activities fall outside the frames and classifications of the statutory system. It is, after all, unnecessary to appeal to the rhetoric of the deschoolers which tells us that, "Enough is enough;" equally unnecessary to appeal to an ascendant counter-culture whose motto is, "Do your own thing." It is necessary to take note of the findings of eminent scholars in the field of educational studies, not to mention such reviews of the available research literature (e.g. the Rand report on "How effective is schooling?") which point unerringly in the same direction.

The Rise of the Schooled Society presents the record to date. The book moves at a measured pace, pausing by the way to reflect on the implications of the growth of the pedagogical juggernaut. Time now to sit back and await its logical follow-up, presumably under the title of *The Decline and Fall of the Schooled Society*. Believe it or not, it is later than we think!

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Douglas Myers, ed.
THE FAILURE OF
EDUCATIONAL
REFORM IN CANADA.
Toronto:
McClelland and Stewart, 1973.
200 pp. \$2.95.

Why is it so difficult to make lasting changes in Canada's educational systems? Free schools have largely vanished; programs funded and hailed as panaceas have been cut off, and in place of high expectancy we find disillusionment and economizing. Where is the confidence of the fifties that we could inaugurate a renaissance in Canadian school systems? Why is it that, suddenly now, we perceive the changes that were made in those confident years as short-lived and precarious?

Douglas Myers has an answer for these questions; it is stated

most clearly in the first reading of this small collection where Michael Katz likens the educational bureaucracy to a box. The box holds many items and these can be arranged and re-arranged in various ways. When we thought we were making major reforms, we were actually only re-arranging the contents of the box. Significant reforms, if they are to last, will require changes in the box itself. Ever since about 1880, the educational box in North America has had the same basic structure, that of bureaucracy. Its walls are Weber's bureaucratic characteristics: hierarchy, division of function, specialization, precision, continuity, rule-following, and discretion. In addition, education on this continent has represented conservative forces, an "attempt of the 'better people' to do something to the rest;" hence compulsory attendance and class bias. If reform is to succeed, it will have to reach into and change these basic characteristics; such lesser programs as reshaping curriculum or classroom organization or time tabling or evaluation procedures simply ignore these structural components or even reinforce them. In any case, they are only a changing about of the contents of the box while its walls efficiently keep out everything that fails to fit the traditional shape.

Other readings treat various aspects of Canadian education: universities, federal-provincial relations, Canadian studies, and community involvement in schools. Five articles tell about recent happenings in five geographical areas: British Columbia, the Prairie Provinces, Ontario, Quebec, and the Maritimes. It is stimulating to read these with Katz's box in mind. Could we really conceive of major changes in hierarchical structure? Or in any other of the elements of our bureaucracy? What changes? Anything so radical would wrench the whole system into some very different shape. But that is what reform means!

There can be nothing dull about reading of current developments with such questions in mind. The

reading becomes a debate in one's head: "Perhaps *that's* why that experiment petered out." "But changes in that area could never be made unless societal attitudes changed." "True, but isn't societal change exactly what is going on apace?" Possibly we are now living in the first period since 1880 when the box could be given a really different shape.

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Kenneth J. Weber.
YES, THEY CAN!
A PRACTICAL GUIDE
FOR TEACHING
THE ADOLESCENT
SLOWER LEARNER.
Agincourt:
Methuen Publications, 1974.
195 pp. \$7.95.

Yes, They Can!, the title of Kenneth Weber's book, aptly expresses the attitude which the author would like to pass on to teachers of the adolescent slower learner. But there is little of evangelical fervor here; rather, Mr. Weber attempts to convince the reader of the validity of his title by presenting a great many practical approaches and activities which, apparently, he has developed from his own experience as a classroom teacher. The book, indeed, is a teacher's "practical guide" rather than a textbook on the adolescent slower learner. Three-quarters of the book, all of Part B, is devoted to practical classroom techniques. The first thirty pages, Part A, are devoted to a case study description of the students and to an attempt to dispel a few of the "myths" (for example, "train them for employment") sometimes surrounding these students. Part C contains brief discussions of such matters as the importance of measuring progress and the necessity of effective classroom management.

An important feature of this book is that Weber offers suggestions based on "the realism of the classroom, where weak budgets, overcrowding, lack of ma-

terials and other day to-day problems can make lofty objectives seem painfully remote" (p. 32). The case studies are real ones (p. 7); much of the advice is "based on practical experience" (p. 169). The advantage of this approach is that the reader is encouraged to follow the suggestions because he has Mr. Weber's testimony that they can work. The disadvantage — and major criticism of the book — is that the reader may be *limited* by Weber's rather special perception and personal grasp of the task of teaching the adolescent slower learner.

Weber's perspective is obviously that of the teacher of English. This is evident, for example, in the chapter on "Creative, Logical and Critical Thinking" where he responds to the possible objection, "But problem solving isn't English!" (p. 115). It is obvious also in the diagrammatic representation of curriculum with which he introduces Part B. There is little here that could be regarded as a program of activities (such as orienteering, art/design work, recreation activities) or as a program of guidance or counselling. Furthermore, for a book dealing with the *adolescent* slower learner, it contains very little information on the characteristics and needs of the adolescent, and less on common learning styles (with appropriate teaching styles) of adolescent slower learners. But even the teacher of English might be somewhat dismayed by Mr. Weber's rather cursory treatment of developmental drama and television and his lack of attention to non-verbal communication. Most of these criticisms occur because the sub-title of the book, "A Practical Guide for Teaching the Adolescent Slower Learner," misleads and, in misleading, diminishes the value of what Kenneth Weber has attempted in *Yes, They Can!* However, as a personal testimony, as a compilation of observations, and as a compendium of teaching ideas, Kenneth Weber's book is of value in that it can make the classroom situation not only more tolerable but also more stimulating for