

Book Reviews

Canadian Education Association Report
Suzanne Tanguay, Editor.
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN NATIVE EDUCATION
Toronto, Ont: Canadian Education Association, 1985
91 pp. \$6.00.

This report offers a brief survey of the developments in native, that is Indian, Inuit, and Metis, education during the last ten to fifteen years, focusing particularly on developments occurring since the national Indian Brotherhood's 1972 publication of the landmark paper "Indian Control of Indian Education," and the subsequent acceptance by the Federal Government of the basic objectives detailed in that paper.

After acknowledging the sorry plight of educational programs and opportunities for native peoples that has existed in this country for decades, the report focuses on "the governments, school boards and schools that are actively involved in native education," giving emphasis to, "the more positive developments of the past decade." The CEA absolves itself for this unrealistic bias by pointing out that its "reports are apolitical" and are intended to make educators aware of what is happening in other school boards across the country.

It is axiomatic that education programs for Canada's native peoples are not good enough. After fifteen years of involvement in native education, I have yet to meet a native person who is satisfied with the educational programs and opportunities available for native peoples. On the other hand, I have met many non-native educator-bureaucrats who are certain that all is well, or at least that everything possible is being done and that tremendous progress has been made. Asking such bureaucrats to describe the condition of and developments in native education is akin to asking Brer Fox and Brer Wolf to comment on the physical and intellectual well-being of Brer Rabbit. This is precisely the format followed in the CEA report.

Responses to questionnaires on key issues in native education provide the gist for several sections of the report. These key

issues include relationships between school boards and native students, local control, the training of native teachers, teacher in-service, and the development of relevant curricula and materials. While these are without doubt the central issues, it is unfortunate that in most instances the wrong people were asked the questions, or the wrong person was given the responsibility for answering. In the second and major section of the report, *The Departments of Education: New Directions*, where responses are attributed to particular officials, I only recognize one native respondent. She, not insignificantly, holds a senior position in one of the few provinces where native educational issues are being given the priority they deserve. Several of the responses smack of bureaucratic insincerity and in two cases of outright tokenism. Rating the twelve provincial and territorial responses, one can only conclude that more than two-thirds of the country's departments of education have no more than a token commitment to improving native education.

Similarly, the optimistic nature of the responses from school boards and other educational agencies across the country regarding the issues noted above is sullied once the reader realizes that "only school boards judged to be in an area with a significant native population" were contacted, and that of those contacted less than half responded (45.8%: 93 out of 203). Obviously even someone who is as leary of statistics as this writer can recognize half a picture when he sees it. Had those who did not respond nothing to say? Had there been no changes or developments? Could it be that nothing is happening in terms of improving the educational lot of native peoples in the areas served by the non-respondents? One must suspect that this is the case. And what of those who were not asked? The issue is not only the provision of glamorous and high profile survival schools in inner cities, of the production of glossy native studies kits and media presentations on totem pole carving and "our native heritage," but of down-to-earth, nitty-gritty but realistic, high quality education for those original peoples of this country who have traditionally lived with the land, and who still choose to do so.

I have commented elsewhere that what is needed to underpin effective and realistic educational programs for whatever people can be summarized in the simple paradigm of policy, structure, and practice (Wilman, 1981). Policy is provided through legislation which enables and requires the delivery of educational programs appropriate to a region and or people, and which clearly establishes who is responsible for the direction of those programs. Structure pertains to the services, materials, and administrative and communication arrangements required to deliver those programs, that is to the provision and training of teachers, the development of curricula and materials, and to the sort of interdepartmental, and intergovernmental communications which facilitate these. Practice refers to the actual delivery of programs at the school level, and should depend on established

policy and structure. In terms of educational programs for the majority of Canadians it does. For many of our minorities, including native peoples, it does not. As can be seen in the CEA report we have policy without structure or practice in some cases, and this can only lead to frustration and failure. We also have practice without structure or policy which leads to failure and recrimination. Essentially it is a hotch-potch of partial solutions, of well-meaning but misguided efforts, of bureaucratic indecision and procrastination. Despite the advances detailed in the report, and please don't misread me because some of the developments described are excellent, in general terms education for native peoples in Canada is still second rate. Its second rateness must be attributed to the ethnocentricity of our educational bureaucracies who have never accepted the fact that minority groups have the innate ability to act in their own best interests and to direct their own affairs, including the education of their children.

Spolsky (1978) points out that in the Center for Applied Linguistics' (1973) report, "Recommendations for Language Policy in Indian Education," local or community control of education is given first priority, and that the role of parents should be paramount in this control. Dewey, writing almost fifty years ago, almost prophetically discussed this sort of issue. He argued that educational planning should never take place without careful regard to the experience of those planned for. It is not possible to ensure a good educational experience in the present if what is planned does not relate to, is not derived from, the experience of the past. He suggested that "the trouble with traditional education was not that educators took upon themselves the responsibility for providing an environment. The trouble was that they did not consider the other factor in creating an experience; namely the powers and purposes of those taught" (Dewey, 1938).

A little closer to the present, in 1969, Harold Cardinal took up the same theme in his review of the social condition of Canada's Indian peoples, **The Unjust Society**. In the chapter entitled "The Little Red Schoolhouse: Gallons of White Paint," Cardinal attacked the issue of control:

The whole question of education has to be rethought in the light of the total needs of the Indian people. The obvious first step is the transfer of power from the people responsible for the administration of education to the people whose lives will be determined by it. No educational programme can be successful and, it follows, no society can be successful, where the people most directly concerned and affected have no voice whatsoever in their own education. (p.51)

Cardinal's concerns were reiterated in **Indian Control of Indian Education**. However, despite the advances, large and small,

made since that time and detailed in this report, progress has been and remains too slow. It is no longer sufficient to lay plans that may never reach fruition and to then blame the failure on the inadequate education or on the lack of determination of native peoples. It is no longer acceptable to offer prescriptions for cultural salvation and expect native peoples to gladly rubber stamp them. A total shift in the way educational programs for native peoples are funded, planned, and delivered is required throughout this country. First and foremost this involves the transfer of control over these educational matters to the native communities. After all, as Cardinal puts it, "How could even the most stupid Indian create a worse mess than has been handed him -- over the past one hundred years?" (Cardinal, 1969, p.61).

If you want to get to know the reality of educational programs and opportunities for native peoples in this country, don't read this report. Ask an Indian, a Metis, or an Inuk.

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Jack Keogh & David Sugden.
MOVEMENT SKILLS DEVELOPMENT.
New York: Macmillan, 1985.
426 pp. \$9.95.

Movement Skill Development is divided into three sections. The first is a brief introduction to the concept of development in the movement context. The authors stress the development of movement control, rather than perfection, in relation to often changing environmental conditions. Thus, for example, the study of movement development must include the description and explanation of catching projectiles of varying speeds while running instead of simply catching easily predictable balls while standing.

The second section of the text is devoted to a description of movement development from reflexes **in utero** to proficiency