

linguistic fluency? We need to abandon the relaxed, laissez-faire approach of the 1960s, when bilingualism was considered an "educational handicap", in favour of rigorous teacher education. Language policies need to fit specific needs and must be based on sound linguistic principles.

The final three chapters of the book provide the reader with state-of-the-art information as to what really happens when immigrant children talk, read, and write. At this point Edwards makes us aware of the value of acquiring sophisticated knowledge in the linguistic sciences. She demonstrates very admirably how current theories in psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, second language teaching, and learning theories are applicable in the multilingual class room. Not content only to theorize and preach, she proposes on every page ideas and information which the interested teacher can adapt and use.

It is to be hoped, therefore, that this informative, dense (but never dull) text will find appreciative readers among educators and parents.

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**Harold B. Disbrowe**

**A SCHOOLMAN'S ODYSSEY.**

**London, Ontario: University of Western Ontario, 1984.**

**183 pp. \$9.95.**

The superannuated man, according to Charles Lamb, says: "I am come to be known by my vacant face and careless gestures...I walk about, not to and fro." No such meandering for Harold B. Disbrowe after his retirement in 1965 as principal of Elmira Secondary School to round off a thirty-year career that "brought an extraordinary amount of satisfaction...through the momentous years of the twentieth century."

In his 24-chapter **A Schoolman's Odyssey** he includes stories and articles previously published in Ontario newspapers and magazines. First he focuses on his roots in rural Malahide Township, Ontario, complete with its little red schoolhouse and an eccentric but highly literate English remittance man who stirred Disbrowe's interest in classical culture. (Could the present Minister of Immigration add a few similar literates to the list of preferred immigrants for distribution across Canada?)

In 1918 Disbrowe entered the Ontario Agricultural College, Guelph, which later launched John K. Galbraith into orbit. In 1924 he received a three-year appointment to teach agriculture at the International College, Izmir, Turkey. His opportunity to serve close to the "ringing plains of windy Troy" was a trial run

for a later generation of young Canadians heading off to the "developing countries" after World War II. Returning to Canada he spent a year of "helpless boredom" at the Ontario College of Education - a "dreadful experience" - to qualify as a certificated teacher. That year of "meatless lectures and related trivia" ended his preparation for his thirty-year career in the Ontario school system.

Disbrowe began his duties as Canadians reached the depths of the "Dirty Thirties" and, as a sadistic school board secretary said, teachers were a dime a dozen. Finally he landed a contract to teach science and agriculture in a two-room high school in Stirling, a village in Eastern Ontario. The Depression had begun to release a wave of criticism of the academically biased Ontario school curriculum. Demands increased for practical subjects such as agriculture, home economics, and farm mechanics. Soon he was helping prepare course outlines for the new subjects. Each newcomer required credit comparable to that for academic studies. World War II accelerated the demand for technically trained workers; and the secondary school seemed for many a logical place for preliminary training for an ever-expanding industrial society. On the horizon was the small shadow of the computer soon to attract the attention of curriculum designers.

Disbrowe became part of a Canada-wide transformation of the Anglophone school systems. Features of the change were the arrival of the large school "plant" with its diminishing core of required humanistic and scientific studies and its smorgasbord of optional accredited vocational and recreational/artistic ones qualifying students for "high school graduation". In effect the schools had been industrialized in the sense used by James Burnham in his 1940 book, **The Managerial Revolution**. In particular a school system required an ever-increasing hierarchy of administrators and specialists of "ancillary services" to manage the branches of its complicated structure.

Ten years after retirement Disbrowe began to feel "a deep concern that all was not well with the schools of Ontario." He accuses "the progressivists and experimentalists...for the chaos and malingering in many systems in the U.S.A....which had been imported into Canada in the late 1920s and 1930s." A soft approach at first had overwhelmed many elementary schools. Then Dr. Thornton Mustard (the "infamous Dick and Jane Readers") and the Roberts Plan (one university entrance stream and several vocational ones) set the schools on the path to deep trouble: the absence of a demanding core program and the decline of discipline. Finally, thanks to the pretentious Hall-Dennis Report of 1968, came the end of the traditional system of formal education founded by Egerton Ryerson.

"Radical experts," claims Disbrowe, seduced the "politicos and senior brass"; but he does not identify the background of

these experts beyond invoking the ghost of John Dewey. Who did and who continues to train or educate the experts? One should first train his sights on university faculties of education. During the past half century they replaced the one-year Normal Schools and university departments of pedagogy. Based largely on American models they expropriated the already ambiguous word "education" to apply it to a dubiously academic discipline, **the Principles, Theories, Practices of Education**. This is a mixed bag of borrowings from the conventional liberal arts and sciences and from the fast moving industrial/business/professional world. Subdivided into special divisions, each with its array of undergraduate and graduate courses, Education became a main source for the graduate degrees for experts managing or planning to manage a complex school system and its satellite boards and teachers' organizations.

Doctoral experts in Education emerged in increasing numbers, particularly after World War II, from both Canadian and American faculties of education. Additional experts - architects, accountants, etc. - joined the professional educators. With generous support from provincial governments, administrative hierarchies helped public schools experience a vast expansion of services, curricula, school "plants", and teaching staffs with specialists for each branch of the curriculum. And a professional educator's language emerged to explain or justify the "sea change" in the complex world of public schooling. In this expansion the central purpose, if any, of a public school system became blurred.

Disbrowe, a schoolman, wants an end to "gimmicks" like the open classroom, cafeteria style "courses", and the nebulous idea of "teaching the whole child." He wants a degree of standardization of ability for incoming secondary school students, the exclusion of unwilling ones for a year or two with their later return in the hands of continuing education facilities. In his view the centre of a school system should be an academic core for all students at different levels demanding disciplined learning under excellent liberally educated teachers.

Such changes require a leaner curriculum with optional vocational and non-credit recreational/artistic courses possibly run cooperatively by the school and other community agencies. Business and industry have already established training programs for beginners and experienced workers. A few teachers and administrators have gained for selected secondary school students access to these programs. This kind of cooperative training is old hat for several Canadian universities. Why not extend it to the secondary schools?

A schoolman's views for rehabilitating a school system suggests a practical solution. Ignore educator-experts and call in teachers - from the universities and the schools. How might it work?

First, a Ministry could convene a meeting of university teachers to identify the substance and learning skills considered to be the **sole** responsibility of the public school. Second, it could convene a meeting of teachers from the schools to prepare a curriculum of the substance and learning skills identified by the university scholars. The Ministry could convene a meeting between the teachers and other community agencies to prepare a supplementary program of non-credit mainly recreational/artistic and "on-the-job" vocational activities run cooperatively by the school and other agencies.

In 1970 Ivan Illich urged the "deschooling of society" because "the right to learn is curtailed by the obligation to attend school." Harold Disbrowe has a more modest proposal to improve schooling, and hence, learning. He wants to restore the main purpose of schooling to what Aldburey Castell called "the teachers' world...the pedagogical encounter in which congenital ignorance is deliberately attacked...where other activities go on, but are derivative and peripheral."

That ignorance can be reduced only by knowledge coming from the Pierian Spring mainly controlled by scholars and teachers liberally educated in the humanities and the sciences. Why not enlist their help to reconnect the public school with the spring of liberal education? One suspects that Harold Disbrowe would applaud the effort.

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**COLLEGE AND THE LEARNING DISABLED STUDENT: A GUIDE TO PROGRAM SELECTION, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.**

**Orlando: Grune & Stratton, Inc., 1984.**  
**209 pp. \$33.25.**

In 1965, when the late Sam Rabinovitch was ready to report on his new program for learning disabled students at the Montreal Children's Hospital, the most interested audience he could find was an international conference on mental retardation. Few at that conference would have foreseen that twenty years later there would be a significant market for a book entitled **College and The Learning Disabled Student**.

Today sophisticated educators no longer confuse intellectual deficits with learning deficits. While the learning disabled student remains a puzzling and challenging pedagogical problem, teachers and parents, and these students themselves, have come to appreciate that learning disabilities are unrelated to intelligence.