

Bryan Hiebert.

STRESS AND TEACHERS.

Toronto: Canadian Educational Association, 1985.

60 pp. \$6.00.

Bryan Hiebert has written a comprehensive, readable, and well-documented report on Stress and Teachers for the CEA. He fulfills his goals of summarizing research on teacher stress in Canada, and presenting that research within a model which he describes as both contemporary and conceptually sound.

The first section of the report focuses on defining a model of stress, the second discusses research related to teacher stress in Canada, and the third contains suggestions for coping with stress.

In his section on the definition of stress, Hiebert must be congratulated for avoiding the pitfall common to many recent popular writers on this subject. The common jumping off point for discussion on stress has generally been the Holmes and Rahe Index of Stressful Life Events. Hiebert would classify this list as an environmental model. Hiebert supercedes this approach and moves directly to an interactional approach of the type pioneered by Lazarus *et al.* This approach takes the position that stress is not static and objectively measurable (such as a "stressful life event" – i.e. loss of spouse, moving, etc.), but is, instead, individuals' response to a stimulus, based upon 1) their assessment of the implied danger and 2) their assessment of their own resources to respond to that danger. This is what Hiebert would classify as an interactional model. In this model a stressor can be perceived either as a potential for danger or a challenge to growth, depending upon the individual's cognitive appraisal of danger/resources. Hiebert works with this approach and produces a very acceptable definition of stress: "A complex psychological and physiological reaction to a situation that approaches or exceeds a person's self-perceived ability to cope with that situation."

Hiebert cautions teachers, particularly, to recognize the significance of individual differences in responses to situations. He points out that 70% of articles reviewed on teaching indicated that on the basis of statements of personal opinion, teaching was described as stressful. Since a definition of "stressful" must be subjective, reading this material which assumes that teaching is stressful can set up a negative self-fulfilling prophecy, and, he says, make teachers more vulnerable.

Sources of teacher stress appear to have considerable consistency in the research reviewed by Hiebert. What seems to be most frequently perceived are areas of overload pressures, interactions with disruptive students, as well as with administrators and parents. Hiebert points out that pedagogical concerns are notably absent from the research, reinforcing the

interactional model: areas where teachers feel competent are perceived as less stressful. Clearly then, teachers would be seen to be needing skill development in dealing with the non-pedagogical aspects of their jobs. This, however, is only one aspect of stress prevention. Another, an outgrowth of Pines and Aaronson's work on coping approaches, is recognizing the aspects of the situation that are amenable to change, and which will respond to an individual's attempts to effect change, and recognizing those areas which are not responsive to change, where the best response will be making changes within the individual.

In this respect, Hiebert reviews research on a variety of attempts at stress reduction training, including counselling, support groups, workshops, and such.

In dealing with stressor management strategies, i.e. strategies that reduce the pressure in a situation on the assumption that people will be better able to cope with the situation, Hiebert discusses environmental changes effecting the physical environment – i.e. light, sound, air filtration, etc., but he does not seem to present any data on the actual psychological environment which can erode so many teachers' coping ability. Little work seems to have been done on the attitudes of caring and valuing of teachers; these seem so significant.

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David Pepper and Alan Jenkins, Editors.
THE GEOGRAPHY OF PEACE AND WAR.
Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1985.
222 pp. \$19.95.

This is one of the many publications on Peace and War and Security with particular reference to nuclear war; it is, however, one of the first to claim that its basis is geography and to be available in North America. So much for the status of geography. At a time when a positive welter of atlases on battles, strategy, and medieval military history is flooding the catalogues, this may, at first sight, be a dubious claim. On the other hand, Pepper and Jenkins have had the conviction and courage to abandon the geographers' almost eternal search – quest? – for scientific ability which has hamstrung geography as both a teaching subject and a major source of general knowledge. It is with these major attitudinal changes in mind that this reviewer examines this publication.