

Book Reviews

**Leonard L. Stewin, and Stewart J.H. McCann (Editors).
CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL ISSUES.
Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1987.**

This text is a compendium of issues that confront teachers in today's schools and classrooms. The editors have provided an overview of original readings oriented to a senior undergraduate audience of various backgrounds. It would seem that they have been successful, as this book could be used in the classes they suggest: educational foundations, sociology of education, and Canadian studies. There are 44 articles focusing on contemporary issues concerning school in society, and the predominant emphasis is on how those issues affect teachers' work.

There are nine major sections: 1) human rights in Canadian education; 2) the impact of computers; 3) standards and value conflicts; 6) social problems and issues; 7) the education of exceptional children; 8) teacher training; and 9) Canadian education in the future.

The editors have drawn on the work of important people in their fields, and have endeavoured to represent both the breadth of the country as well as of the issues involved. Ronald Ragsdale (OISE) has written on computers in education. Bernard Shapiro (Commissioner of the 1985 Report on Private Schools in Ontario) has written with Brian K. Davis on private education. Donald Wilson (UBC) has an article on social issues. Lawrence Bezeau (UNB) writes on the important issue of the financing of Canadian education. And David Livingstone (OISE) continues his important work on the possibilities of educational reform.

But this book is more than a collection of illustrious authors. The text emphasizes changing social trends: centralization, finance, accountability, technology, rationalization, and human rights. The articles

are not difficult, and while this would be a disadvantage to a graduate audience, or to an expert in the field, it is an advantage for the audience intended. For both teachers and administrators this book is a good introduction to the breadth of research in Canadian education.

Stewin and McCann's text is a broad overview of the field, and a useful one; and the selection of articles conveys the sense that social issues in Canadian education are different. However, a major issue not treated in the text is the fundamental differences provincial and regional divisions bring to education. Differences persist in per capita and per student spending, the availability of libraries, retention rates, the extent of dependence of school finance on the economy, and administration. While there are similarities in provincial systems, the differences must be explicitly addressed in a study devoted to the articulation of problems facing Canadian education today.

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Ratna Ghosh and Mathew Zachariah, (Editors).
EDUCATION AND THE PROCESS OF CHANGE.
New Delhi: Sage Publications; 1987.
pp. 301. \$36.00

This is a quite remarkable collection of essays which were derived from a conference held at McGill University in 1985. A dozen speakers, mostly Indian, who either hold important positions in India, or who teach about that country in universities outside, discussed a wide range of broadly educational aspects of social development in India since independence was achieved in 1947. One of the editors, Ratna Ghosh, writes in her introduction that the "conference aimed at taking a comprehensive look at the role education has played in the reconstruction and revitalisation of Indian society over the past four decades," and its purpose was "to rekindle interest in India as an area worthy of scholarly study in the social sciences, particularly in education."

There is little doubt that the aim has been achieved. Western educators who have read these well written papers will have gained at least a superficial understanding of the relations of education to changes in the social structure of India with all its disconcerting complexities and inter-relations. They will have seen something of the antagonistic forces of change on the one hand and of inertia on the other. They will see how education, which in the euphoric days following independence, was seen as the major instrument of advance, can also retard growth. In the system of