

EDITORIAL

ADDRESSING DIVERSITY, CHANGE, AND GENDER IN THE CLASSROOM

Most of us, since childhood, have been fascinated by stories about the Aboriginal, or native, peoples of Australia. Even so, few of us could envision the difficulties experienced by Aboriginal children as they enter the “white man’s” school, unless we have made ourselves familiar with the education of Canada’s own native population. Kaplan and Eckermann describe a fascinating study of Aboriginal children and the degree to which they experience identity problems and culture shock. It is an interesting parallel to North America’s misunderstandings about the education of Native American children.

Equally as interesting is a study done by Mai and Burpee about the teaching of the “new geography” in East Germany. In some ways, Canadian educators may see some of their own future problems in keeping geography current as Canada, and especially Quebec, experience population shifts, socio-political changes, and, perhaps, even border shifts. East Germany, having experienced reunification with West Germany, provides a model for us as to problems to anticipate when textbook material must be adapted to many socio-political modifications.

A study conducted by Reynolds and Smaller on gender relations among Ontario teachers in the era of the 1930s gives us a picture of just how differently men and women teachers were treated, both salary-wise and socially. The study uses much “public material”, such as newspaper items and school board records, to demonstrate what can now be clearly seen as discriminatory practices in terms of how men and women were recognized for their contributions to education.

Prof. Ivie applies the use of metaphors to the teaching of critical thinking. He has built his ideas on some of the current writings of people such as Joseph Campbell to show just how powerful metaphors

can be, and how much they shape an individual's critical thinking ability when these metaphors, or paradigms, dominate society's principal way of interpreting the world.

In the section, Reports from the Field, Prof. Duquette reports on a field study conducted with associate teachers and student teachers relative to their perceptions about the benefits of a professional development program – one that is considered a matter of partnership between the two groups.

The second report, written by Prof. Gurney, describes a project regarding the use of computers in the teaching of mathematics at a grade nine level. In summary, the report seems to indicate that gender may play a factor in some of the differences found.

W.M.T.