

and practice; reflective teaching; teacher autonomy; controversial issues in teaching; neutrality and bias in teaching; teachers expressing their personal views; teacher as role model; critical teaching; intellectual virtues; student interests; pluralism and democracy; common schooling; value disagreements between teachers and students/parents/administrators; and administrative issues.

As well, the third section offers suggested readings that could be used to supplement discussion and understanding of the cases. For example, cases 1, 15, 16, 33, and 34 deal with assessment, evaluation, and standards. The authors have included a bibliography of 16 supplementary readings that can be helpful in connection with these cases. It is important to note that the authors emphasize that the readings are suggestions and are not meant to exclusively identify the topics dealt with in the cases.

Overall, this book is a valuable resource for prospective and practicing educators and for anyone interested in education. The book helps generate valuable dialogue about relevant contemporary issues. As well, the book helps promote the value of using "discussion case studies"; undoubtedly, this edition will continue to inspire others to use the case studies in this book as well as encourage students and educators to develop appropriate case studies for their courses modeled on these cases.

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JANE GASKELL & KJELL RUBENSON, (Eds.). *Educational Outcomes for the Canadian Workplace: New frameworks for policy and research*. Toronto: University of Toronto press (2004). 260 pp. \$50. (ISBN: 0-802-08845-7).

Today there is consensus that the level of education and training in a society determines its success. In fact, the level and quality of education is increasingly becoming the way to divide societies into two clubs: those that are well off and those that are poor. It is striking that between countries, the bimodal distribution of income is due not to the concentration of the factors of production and capital but rather to the accumulation, transference and use of knowledge. During the past fifty years, the North has continued to create and use new knowledge that statistical studies suggest account for at least half of economic growth, while most of the South has been unable to generate, transfer or use its knowledge to its advantage. Within countries, at the individual level, similar patterns emerge. Those who have access to an education reap greater economic rewards than those without access. At an institutional level, the difference seems to come down to the way societies invest, organize and implement their "educational"¹ system.

Canada is fortunate to be among the rich nations, both in terms of absolute wealth and human capital. There are many reasons for Canada's wealth.

However, one of the instruments that have placed Canada in this privileged position has been its ability to organize and educate its people. Although the precise statistical links between education and economic development remain elusive, most researchers agree that a key institutional factor in economic development is educational policy.

In their edited text *Educational Outcomes for the Canadian Workplace: New frameworks for policy and research*, Jane Gaskell and Kjell Rubenson share their journey with an interdisciplinary group of Canadian scholars. This team emerged from having won a five-year strategic research network grant from the Canadian Government. The research group was comprised of Western Canadian practitioners and academics from the public, private and not for profit sectors who were interested in relationships between education and training and the Canadian economy. The network was “to encourage multidisciplinary and multicultural interaction and communication and to transfer the research findings into practice” (p. 221). The book, one of the products of the research network, explores both individual and societal benefits and shortcomings (outcomes), that accrue from a well-funded Canadian educational system.

The authors begin with an introduction that provides a short review of the outcomes of the Canadian educational system, an overview of the objectives of the book and a primer on human capital theory. Here, Gaskell and Rubenson suggest that British Columbia, the source of many of the text case studies, provides a laboratory for analyzing the modern approach to human capital theory. This approach emphasises the micro over the macro, individual firms over societies, and attempts to understand what skills count, and how a skilled labour market affects economic success. The introduction foreshadows the disciplinary approach to this multidisciplinary edited text by economists, policy analysts and educators.

Part 1 of the book, written by economists, addresses the issue of “What Skills Matter in the Economy” and focuses on the formal educational system. In Chapter 1, Craig Riddell reviews overall Canadian investments in education and observes that Canada has one of the highest proportion of high school and non-university post secondary education degrees and diplomas in relation to OECD countries. He indicates that there is a significant “sheepskin effect”² in the Canadian labour market. He concludes that:

Policies aimed at improving cognitive skills such as literacy should focus on formal schooling. Policies designed to increase work experience can lead to earnings growth but they appear unlikely to enhance the cognitive skills of the workforce. (p. 47)

While Riddell looks at the educational system in general, Robert Allen, in Chapter 2, explores educational programs associated with the modern technological revolution. In this exploration, Allen argues that the tech-

nological revolution has created the need for a wide spectrum of skills from education, the humanities, the social sciences and technology. “. . . rapid economic growth in the 1990s increased the demand for graduates in all fields” (p.77). For Allen it is not the production of new technology-often created by a technically skilled labour force – that drives the economy but rather the use of the technology, that often hinges on the other fields of knowledge.

Part 2 of the book explores “Achieving Equity.” Three chapters explore this fundamental social policy issue using an assortment of methodologies from the social sciences. The chapters focus on the disadvantaged as a group, aboriginal people seeking higher education and welfare mothers. The researchers study each group to understand better how macro and micro policies affect individual and group educational outcomes and equity. In Chapter 3, Derek Hum and Wayne Simpson explore the factors related to participation by Canadians in training activity beyond formal schooling. In their extensive analysis of data using a life-cycle model, the authors found that educational attainment and age had significant effects on participation. They conclude that adult education has not been a force for equity for the disadvantaged in Canada. “Francophone, black men, adult male immigrants, persons with disabilities, those not employed, women with permanent jobs, self employed men and unionized workers all receive less training than their opposite counterparts” (p.110). In contrast, they found that the more educated obtain more education. From their data, it appears that the adult education system has not closed the equity gap!

In Chapter 4, Atlanta Sloane-Seale, Lori Wallace and Ben Levin provide a case study of the Manitoba Access Program. This Program began in the 1970s and bases itself on two fundamental principles: first, all people need equality of access to higher education and second, people need equality of conditions. The program review illustrates how access to a University program successfully aided aboriginal participants achieve improved employment outcomes and a better life. Of interest is that “about 40% of the 2400 students admitted to the program had graduated” (p.123). Compared to other similar programs, this is a highly successful program.

In Chapter 5, “What Outcomes Matter to You? Exploring Welfare Policy and Programs from the Perspective of Low-Income Women,” Shauna Butterwick suggests that her data “stands in sharp contrast to the account by Sloane-Seale, Wallace and Levin.” In general, Butterwick describes accounts of women depicting endless barriers to accessing services needed to obtain better life conditions. Whereas Sloane-Seale and colleagues’ chapter is a tale of hope, Butterwick’s is a tale of despair. Welfare policy is not helping those in need to obtain the education and training required to access the largess of our society!

Part 3 of the text provides three cases that attempt to link policy and practice. In Chapter 6 Lara Lackey explores the Skills Now! Program introduced in British Columbia in the early 1990s. The author described the Skills Now! Program as a “forward-looking skills training plan to make sure students, workers and the unemployed get the new skills for new jobs in our changing economy” (p.161). Lackey looks at the policy through three lenses: 1) policy as rhetoric, 2) policy as philosophy and 3) policy affecting economic change. The contribution of this article is in its review of multiple voices. Many actors in the public arena provide the author with a critical perspective on the Skills Now! Program. Making these perspectives visible teaches us the complexity of policy in action.

In Chapter 7, Jim Gaskell, Cynthia Nicol and Li-Ling Tsai take readers on a journey of how British Columbians’ struggled with defining and implementing a program of ‘applied academics.’ In their chapter, they trace how various actors within two school districts attempted to integrate occupational and academic curricula. Their study highlights the difficulty of engaging in innovation in a multi-stakeholder world. In this case, the interests of teachers, parents and students involved in secondary education needed to be aligned with those interests in the tertiary educational system and the world of work. In general, the authors found that the lack of clear connections between high school curriculum and either the world of work or university entrance dramatically affected the extent to which the innovation was accepted by parents and students.

In Chapter 8 Garnet Grosjean presents a review of co-op education. The chapter explores the school-work relationship by tracing the evolution of co-op education. “Co-op education combines academic and experiential learning by rotating students between classroom and workplace contexts” (p. 206). The chapter reviews who has access, who is served and what is learned. The chapter reviews some of the outcomes of co-op learning and suggests that previously held beliefs about co-op learning are paradoxical:

The structured rotation of co-op education appears to put learning flows in reverse-with workplace learning not only providing scaffolding for classroom learning but also making it come alive. Second, co-op education is developing into an elite program rather than a social equalizer. Third...more than half of co-op students include graduate education as part of their future. . . (p.217)

The conclusion of this text is a set of reflections by the authors on the “Learning from Research Networks.” The chapter indicates that it is quite difficult to bring together a variety of people from government, academia, not for profit organizations and the private sector into a cohesive research network in order to learn together, create and share knowledge and develop better approaches to knowledge utilization. Furthermore, it suggests that even within the academic groups, significant differences in values, approaches,

status, language (of disciplines) and risk taking represented serious hurdles to overcome for the group. A different set of hurdles existed between the academics and non-academic members. In other words, the last chapter explored a series of process concerns and insights on “managing” research networks.

This chapter has been written in the hope that more tale telling can increase understanding of how the organization of research shapes its practice and its results. (p. 235)

Reading between the lines one got the sense that the authors felt a bit like they were “herding cats” over their five-year research experience.

While the authors expose the difficulties of managing the research endeavour in the final chapter, I am happy that they prevailed and put together this timely text. Although the researchers and the case studies focus on Western Canada, the issues they touch are Canadian. For non-Canadian readers a short summary of the uniqueness of the Canadian educational system would be of some help, as it has evolved in very different directions from systems in the United States and other parts of the developed world.

The text addresses questions of critical importance to the Canadian society. Throughout Canada, employers operate in an environment that demands a highly trained and flexible labour force. Employers invest significantly in their labour force and expect that the publicly funded system of both formal and non-formal training provide an education that can meet employer’s needs and requirements. Unfortunately, there is little consensus on how to develop this “flexible” educational system linked to a quality labour force. Furthermore, it is unclear how many resources should be devoted to this endeavour. While expenditure patterns vary across the country, Canada remains one of the highest investors in education of all the G-7 countries. In this context the authors show that the problems faced by creating a high quality labour force is complicated and in need of careful attention.

While the text provides interesting data and descriptions about educational outcomes and program frameworks, it does little in the way of guiding us to policy choices. What are the set of policy options that would guide Canada to obtain better educational outcomes, outcomes which have a more even distribution across all segments of Canadian society, and which are within a system that uses its resources cost-effectively? The text offers little in the way of guidance.

In summary, as I reflect on my experience reading this publication, Gaskell and Rubenson provide a well-edited text. The authors write clearly and use a minimum amount of uncalled for jargon. It is in the author’s words a book that “communicates across differences.” I needed some more synthesis work from this collection, however. While the text was successful in providing the

reader with a range of interdisciplinary and cross boundary research on the outcomes of education, the authors miss out in providing some direction for the future of this important area of policy research. Perhaps this will occur in their next networked research venture.

NOTES

1. Instruments used by society to provide learning opportunities to its citizens.
2. Sheepskin effect is a term used to denote someone who obtains a degree from a formal institution

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