

Book Reviews/Comptes Rendus

The Universities and Adult Education in Europe, Jindra Kulich and Wolfgang Krüger, eds., Vancouver, B.C., Centre For Continuing Education, The University of British Columbia, in cooperation with the International Council for Adult Education, 1980. 205 pp. \$9.50 Cdn. (mailing charges included)

This is a guide book. . . and a good one, too. As a guide book ought, it offers a comprehensive overview of the subject supplemented by capsule accounts drawn from Austria, Denmark, France, West Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and Yugoslavia. Happily, it avoids the abstract and the detailed in favour of the concrete and the specific. And the subject is important: the knowledgeable reader will recollect that the involvement of the university institution in adult education has stimulated dynamic movements elsewhere in the field. The 1919 Report, for example, influenced not only the realization of adult education in the Britain of that period but also its development in other countries in subsequent periods.

An obvious hazard in comparative studies in education are the demographic, cultural, and historical differences of the countries compared. But in placing emphasis on the *structures* of university adult education, that basis is provided which makes possible credible inference of the thrust of reform in post-secondary education and its likely future.

The country accounts expose common features: the extent of overlap of university adult education with other institutional functions; the willingness of the university to accommodate to citizen pressure for access to it; and the mechanisms employed in the provision of university adult education. Two specific elements are given more or less emphasis in most of the country accounts: the training of adult educators; and research in adult education.

Within the individual country reports are reported interesting strategies in presenting adult education opportunities. Take, for example, the Swedish device, "university study circles", and its use in widening access to higher education in that country and in Norway. Consider the "auditor system" which exists in all Swiss universities. This innovation — if innovation it be since it was instituted at the University of Basle in 1460 — encourages adults to participate in university courses without regard either to their previous education or to their occupation. Poland presents a contrast: here, the popularization of learning which characterized that country for two centuries is today only represented by occasional public lectures in literature and Polish history. One reads with wry amusement that it has taken French universities only a decade to adopt structures and procedures for their new continuing education departments which, applied abroad, have hindered efficiency and effectiveness.

The "why?" questions about adult education proposals — their real value to

society – are infinitely more convoluted than the “how?” question – their implementation in programs. While this is a handbook, one would wish to have seen rather more emphasis placed on the social values held to be inherent in the variety of adult education thrusts described.

Almost all of the articles which comprise this volume have been translated into English, a fact which imposes a special burden on the editors. Some restructuring of occasional awkward passages would have improved the flow of this book.

Nonetheless, it is a practical and useful book. Moreover – and gratifying, it is an *interesting* volume with which all professional adult educators should be familiar.

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Christopher Knapper, *Evaluating Instructional Technology*. New York: Halsted Press, a division of John Wiley & Sons Inc., 1980. 163 pp.

Evaluating Instructional Technology is an informal, readable overview of several aspects of both the instructional and the evaluation processes. Dr. Knapper summarizes some of the basic principles of instructional design and briefly describes the common types of instructional technology (e.g., distance education, computer assisted instruction). The evaluation process is discussed, in general, with an emphasis on the evaluation of student learning and the steps that should precede this, such as the writing of behavioral objectives. In a chapter titled, somewhat inappropriately, “Criteria for Evaluation,” Dr. Knapper provides an introduction to various methodologies (including three research designs) and the measurement considerations of reliability, validity, and direct versus indirect assessment of learning and attitudes.

Program evaluation is also treated briefly, including such topics as the purpose of the evaluation, methodology, and techniques for collection information. Some of the characteristics of program evaluation which are distinct from the evaluation of a particular course or technique of instruction are pointed out.

Four case studies, including, for each, the focus of the study, method, results, and critique, are used to illustrate the evaluation process in a variety of settings. More generally, evaluation studies of instructional technology are classified into four types and reviewed (descriptive studies, method comparisons, experimental studies, and comprehensive program evaluations). Although some attempt is made to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of instructional technologies, the emphasis in this chapter is placed on the methodologies used and critiques of research on instructional techniques.

In the final chapter, Dr. Knapper reviews the two major issues arising from evaluation studies in instructional technology: that of matching the technique