Book Reviews / Comptes Rendus

David Hopkins and Ken Reid, (eds.), *Rethinking Teacher Education*. London: Croom Helm, 1985, 262 pp.

This volume is a major effort. It attempts to integrate the findings of two large research projects – one in England and Wales, and the other in Canada – into one book. It consists of thirteen chapters (chapter one is an introduction) which examine the organizational and programmatic nature of teacher education. There are six sections, one each on background, initial postgraduate teacher education in England and Wales, a Canadian perspective on change, the extended practicum, current issues (including special education but not minority education), and the future. The editors argue, in the Introduction, that problems and solutions can be generalized not only among England, Wales and Canada but for the Western world as a whole. This is a tall order and although individual chapters are interesting, and there are numerous problems with which we can relate, somehow the overall thrust of the work is not successful.

First of all, it suffers, as do most edited collections, from the uneven quality of a variety of authors and from a number of forms of research. Some authors offer models for change, complete with built-in conversational scenarios – an ethnomethodological approach. Others produce tables and graphs to make a point, not always well explained. Still others offer theoretical suggestions without practical examples. Some chapters have introductions and conclusions or summaries, but not all. There is a tentativeness to much of the book, perhaps because it is "Rethinking" which allows the reader to say "Yes, but....".

Although the authors attempt to generalize, the number of chapters devoted to England and Wales, eight, make this a little difficult. In contrast the two Canadian chapters and the one on North America seem out of place. This is highlighted especially because chapter two, which is background, helps the reader to set teacher education in its historical context. That context, however, is England and Wales. The development of teacher education in both the United States and Canada has been different from one another and from that in Britain. The historical development presented here does not amplify the Canadian setting.

A third problem is the societal context. The differences between English and North American attitudes toward secondary and higher educational access are fundamental to preparing teachers. It is implied that elementary teachers with degrees may be overeducated, that comprehensive school teachers need a great deal of professional courses, and that teachers of sixth form have a strong academic background. This would seem to highlight the North American versus

British differences in attitude toward the role of education as a factor in social mobility.

Although the text has a variety of suggestions for improving the teacher education process, there is an assumption that candidates for teaching have improved and there is no rethinking of entry qualifications. I would argue that besides a good academic background there may be personal qualities or characteristics which determine success in teaching and these should at least be studied. To rethink the teacher education process and not the qualifications of the teaching candidate is to tackle only half the job.

The last chapter, "The Future for Teacher Education," suggests seven *desiderata* necessary if teacher education programmes are to improve. Although none of us would argue with these, they do imply substantial additional resources, staff who are practitioners as well as researchers and a change in attitude toward teaching by the society generally. Pie in the sky perhaps in the 1980s!!!

Despite these qualifications on the book as a whole, the two chapters dealing with Canada make fascinating reading. Chapter Six, "Characteristics of Faculties of Education" by Marvin F. Wideen, identifies characteristics of faculties of education under seven headings: goals, activity, instruction, rewards, climate, leadership, and influence structure. Given these characteristics the mind-set of most faculties of education is one of preserving the status quo. In effect, the author is saying that faculties of education are poorly equipped for change in a milieu where there is a great deal of pressure for change. The chapter is in essense negative, while allowing that a few innovative programs across the country hold out hope that more wide-spread change is possible.

David Hopkins' "Drift and the Problem of Change in Canadian Teacher Education" is a corollary to Wideen's chapter. It argues that organizational change in teacher education can be explained by the concept or theory of drift, which portrays an organization's structure as a function of pressing environmental forces. Sustained pressure for change, and internal constraints over time, result in unpredictable change. The model is well documented through a study of teacher training institutions and helps explain the nagging suspicion so many of us have that, despite change activity, the essence of teacher training, remains as it has always been.

Chapter Eight, "Making Perfect? – Form and Structure in Teaching Practice," will also be of interest to Canadian readers. David Hopkins, using a North American perspective, looks at the extended practicum – an innovation which has been touted as a significant change in teacher education. More is not necessarily better, argues Hopkins. Extending the length of student teaching, or the practicum as it is called in Canada, is a necessary but not a sufficient condition for improvement in pre-service education. The quality of the experience as well as its quantity must be enhanced. The kind of supervision, the role of the co-operating teacher, and the form of the practice teaching must also change. This chapter provides a review of the literature, some ideas for enhancing the experience and practical examples to support these ideas.

Although the complete text falls short of its objectives, Canadian readers will benefit from chapters six, seven and eight which are well written, pertinent to Canadian educational problems and suggestive of ways of bringing about change.

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William L. Tetlow (Ed.) *Using Microcomputers for Planning and Management Support.* New Directions for Institutional Research, No. 44, Jossey-Bass Inc., San Francisco, 1984. 103 pp.

This volume is the 44th in the quarterly "New Directions for Institutional Research" sourcebook series published by Jossey-Bass in conjunction with the Association for Institutional Research. The Association regards this series as one of its most important publishing efforts and monitors its quality through its Publications Board and an editorial advisory board.

As is the case with most monographs in the NDIR series, this publication deals with a broad subject area of major interest to institutional researchers. As such, it can only provide the reader with an introduction to some of the main issues included under the subject area and present, as references, some selected writings from the literature. The task of the editor is to select the particular issues to be covered, and to involve those authors whose background enable them to discuss these issues briefly, yet somewhat comprehensively. This is not an easy task for the editor nor for the invited contributors. In addition, it is customary for the editor to briefly describe the general subject area in a short introduction and to summarize and synthesize the various chapters in a conclusion.

According to Tetlow, a past president of the Association for Institutional Research and an experienced institutional researcher, the purpose of this monograph "is to try to provide a metaview of this chaotic, volatile, and rapidly changing computer revolution so that readers can be informed professionals and planners." He goes on to state that "Because the technology is so new, the equipment choices abundant, the technical terms unfamiliar, and the advice contradictory and misleading, there is a clear need for a comprehensive overview of the potential uses of the technology." Taken as a whole, the nine contributed chapters (the first and last are authored by Tetlow) satisfy this objective. Specifically, this sourcebook should be very helpful to the person in higher education who is interested in taking advantage of the microcomputer to assist in planning and management support.