

part of the book that actually deals with the logistical aspects of this process, and provides practitioners with a comparative treatment of this process. Keegan presents a typology of distance teaching systems, and touches upon aspects of practice dealing with students and staffing, the choice of medium, administration, economics, and appraisal of selected systems. For those involved in institutional or governmental provision of distance education, the presentation of these topics will serve as a good introduction to the current status of the field.

Keegan has attempted, in this book, to present an overview of both theory and practice in distance education. In this attempt, though, he may have fallen prey to the too common desire to place within two covers all that is known about one subject. He would have been more successful had he decided at the outset which direction to take, and then had proceeded to take it. By attempting to do too much, he may have presented us with too little.

Robert J. Carley and Mark W. Waldron
Conestoga College, University of Guelph

John D. Dennison and Paul Gallagher, 1986, *Canada's Community Colleges – A Critical Analysis*, Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press.

In *Community Colleges in Canada* the authors set out to answer one fundamental question: "How might Canada's new colleges best serve Canadians and help shape the Canadian future? (p. 6)

It is evident that Dennison and Gallagher understand the diversity of provincial approaches to college level education across the country and recognize the complexity of the task they have undertaken. The book follows a straightforward organization that successfully introduces a complex subject to the neophyte and focuses the knowledgeable reader on major policy themes. A historic framework is established by outlining the evolution of vocational, CEGEP, community and transfer colleges during the past quarter century. The authors then address issues which are critical to the future of Canadian community colleges.

The work returns repeatedly to several evolutionary themes. Changing economic conditions, shifting public policy concerns and vacillating federal government priorities have affected all colleges in significant and similar ways. During the early sixties most provinces were concerned about educating the "baby boomers" – particularly providing vocational training leading to employment. In a wave of economic optimism political support for the colleges was strong. Each province adopted different postsecondary, vocational education policies and organizational structures to train a rapidly expanding labour force. But by 1980, federal and provincial policy issues were revolving around deficit reduction, accountability and cost efficiency. The colleges' honeymoon with Canadians was over.

The stark challenges facing the Canadian community colleges after a period of dramatic growth are clearly illustrated. Those relating to governance direction and mission, accountability and evaluation, labour relations, accessibility, general education and educational quality are stressed. The book defines an important watershed in the history of the colleges: the line between unbridled growth and experimentation on one hand and reassessment and retrenchment on the other. Dennison and Gallagher provide a good deal of critical food for reflection as the colleges enter a period of evaluation and rationalization.

By virtue of the complexity of the issues, and the diversity of the institutions, the book cannot comprehensively deal with the challenges it raises. It does, however, assess the key themes of each issue. For example, the authors consider such topical questions about governance as the composition of governing boards, government control versus institutional autonomy, articulation and coordination, the community role in educational policy setting and participative decision-making.

The style of the book is one that freely mixes objective research with interview perceptions and the opinions of the writers. It also flows from fact to philosophy and history to aspiration. It might be argued that the style contributes to its readability but may detract from its continuity.

The community colleges have evolved to become a major arm of Canadian postsecondary education. They exist at the cross roads of provincial social policy, economic constraints and federal human resource strategies. They each reflect a different evolution and unique community expectations. The preparation of a history of these institutions is an enormous undertaking. To further outline the challenges confronting the college movement in Canada is only achievable by synthesizing the commonalities of evolution and the dominant issues. In this overview of the colleges in Canada, Dennison and Gallagher have provided students with an eclectic history of the Canadian community college movement, a summary of policy issues and a framework for further study.

Richard Hook
Humber College of Applied Arts and Technology

Barry J. Fraser, *Classroom Environment*. London: Crom Helm, 1986

This book is the eighth of the Croom Helm Curriculum Policy and Research Series edited by William Reid and Ian Westbury. In it, classroom and school climate has been investigated as it affects the relationship between curriculum [input] and learning [outcome]. The book reports on the research that has been done, the measures that have been developed, and the potential these have for studying the environment as a component of education.

While most of the research is directed at elementary and secondary schools, at least one instrument reported on as tested, the College and University Classroom