

Others take clear positions. Novak strongly supports greater use of technology (though without any evidence that technology will either improve outcomes or reduce costs). Lam's two chapters both attack government policy—in one case because of Manitoba laws that gave the Minister more power and limited teachers' collective bargaining rights. The second attacks governments generally for cutting funding to schools, thus demonstrating a lack of understanding of education as a key social investment. Lawton, on the other hand, argues that additional investment in schools is both unaffordable and inefficient.

Policy advocacy is an entirely appropriate approach, but the reader is left wondering about the purpose of advocacy in this book. Is it intended to shape a particular view of finance issues, or to introduce readers to a range of positions, or, as in some chapters, merely to lay out some of the issues in as neutral a way as possible? In the event, the book has some of each, resulting in a rather unsatisfactory melange.

The gaps and differences in stance could have been alleviated perhaps, with a fuller introduction that mapped out the larger field of education finance and located the chapters in it, something like providing a picture of the completed jigsaw puzzle and marking on it the many missing pieces. A final summary chapter might also have served the same purpose, drawing threads together and acknowledging the inevitable gaps and limitations.

Finally, it is unfortunate that the book is so poorly produced. It appears that no copy-editing was done as the book is replete with missing or incomplete references, as well as grammatical and typographical errors. These begin in the list of authors and preface and extend through just about every chapter. It is a production standard most of us would not accept from students' papers. The lack of an index is also frustrating and limits the book's usefulness for teaching.

I have no doubt that this book will be read and used, in part because of Lam's accurate contention that there are so few Canadian sources in this area. I hope that the editor will consider a further volume that meets more of the objectives he has rightly set.

*Knowing Her Place: Research Literacies and Feminist Occasions.*

Lorri Neilsen. Great Tancook Island, NS: Backalong Books, 1998, 288 pages.

Reviewed by *Ann Sherman, St. Francis Xavier University*

This interwoven collection of essays and poetry, interviews, and field notes leads us through the journey Lorri Neilsen has taken on her road to uncovering a fuller understanding of what it means to be a researcher and to be a woman doing research. Each of the segments, events, and feminist occasions described in the book help us to understand better the research languages, literacies, and discourses she has sampled throughout her life. Pinar (1996) suggests any discipline or research area can be treated as discourse and analyzed as such. To

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do so, he says, requires studying the language of the discipline. The book provides a remarkably accurate depiction of the struggle many women researchers encounter in our research and academic lives as it explores and plays with the language and discourse of the research paradigms Neilsen has experienced.

Traditionally, men's discourse has been more highly valued publicly than women's, and feminist scholars urge women researchers "to take apart the dominant male discourses that define woman according to man's image of himself, and to articulate woman's difference in and through language" (Pinar, 1996, p. 495). How we as women researchers bring meaning to our work, how we interpret it and legitimize our own discourse has been an important contribution to reconceptualizing research by feminist scholars. However, both males and females are encouraged in this book to examine who they are as researchers and the consequences of what they do as researchers. Neilsen provides a beautifully written commentary on this process. When we do this, she says, "the field benefits from our disclosures and our revisions, and our willingness never to give up on either" (p. 9). In Neilsen's autobiographical reflections come a more complete understanding of the researcher as a person, not only of the person as a researcher.

Neilsen describes the overall evolution of her researcher journey, explaining that the book tracks "her development as an individual researcher working in writing and reading education, and her learning to participate in the broader community of researchers and educators" (p. 8). At times, the abrupt change in style from section to section leaves you viewing her life as a series of snapshots or film clips from different aspects of a lengthy pilgrimage. As such, her changing style provides the reader with Neilsen's written life from different paradigmatic genres including poetry and prose responses, segments of dialogue, and long descriptive passages, and these contribute a wholeness to the journey that would be missing if written completely in one style.

Neilsen loves language and uses it to expertly draw the reader into her personal life. Her metaphors helped me visualize her agony as she struggled with a quantitative paradigm and the statistical analysis of the quality of student writing. She describes it as follows:

It was though I had been driving in the open countryside, had decided to take a side road suggested by others, doggedly pursued the road until I found myself in a dense maze of narrow alleys in a small town, each alley closing off options behind me. Now I was trapped, far from the open landscape where the promise of writing had first beckoned, reduced to tinkering with minutiae, waiting patiently for the result which would break the gridlock and set me moving again. Everything depended, it seemed, on statistical significance. (p. 31)

The inward reflection takes place in different ways throughout the variety of styles of writing used in the book and is a compelling autobiographical experience that invites you into the exploration. "All experience is the product of both the features of the world and the biography of the individual. Our experience is influenced by our past as it interacts with our present" (Eisner, 1985, pp. 25-26). Her use of autobiographical metaphor as she draws on these connections between past and present allowed me to follow 20 years of her

personal research perspectives as she weaves them into and through what she describes as "renovated inquiry processes."

As Neilsen recollects the process of renovating her own journey as a researcher, she comes to a fuller understanding that "everything we know is at once out there and in here, as is everything we will come to know" (p. 261). This journey includes the acquisition of research "literacies," which she defines as a "complex and emergent understanding of inquiry in a post-everything world. Time and enculturation have combined to make inquiry a terrain where I live, rather than a place I visit on occasion" (p. 262). As she makes this transition, you feel yourself piecing together segments of your own stories of revisions and shifts and wondering if you too have reached this point in your personal journey of discovery. Pinar (1996) described the search for a methodological fit by saying "I am lost in a world not of my making, in a personality not of my own" (p. 519). Neilsen's journey reminds me of my own feelings of being lost, feeling like a paradigmatic misfit as I struggled with transitions in languages and thoughts. At the same time, this memory of discomfort challenges us to think more carefully and reflectively as we enter new research relationships with others.

Immediately, the frankness and honesty of these stories and poems engaged me as a reader, and her stories rang true as stories that were also my stories. I found myself laughing as I remembered myself as a researcher in similar situations: the naive arrogance of the first research project and the frustration of being unable to bend other people's words into the all-too-rigid framework that I used at the time. I recalled the memory of my own metamorphosis from one research paradigm to another. Neilsen takes us to our own research discoveries and dilemmas that often remain invisible and makes them more visible to each of us. Included is her own problematic relationship with language and scholarly identity, and with exceptional clarity she explores the conflicts and dichotomies experienced in the encounter with different understandings. Beyond the quantitative/qualitative, she writes to understand other conflicts and connections that she has encountered, both questioning and clarifying "public and private," "institution and individual," "abstract and concrete," "theoretical and practical," and the interconnections of these ideas on this feminist research journey of hers.

At times the book is intimate, providing personal and private wanderings and wonderings about her work and the direction her life has taken. You feel immediately connected to her life and to her as a researcher, whether it is in her rich descriptions of a day at her cottage or examples from her research at a number of stages of evolution. Both in what she says and in the way she says it Neilsen continually challenges us to recognize the role of the personal and the autobiographical in research. I agree with Neilsen that all inquiry is autobiographical and "just as literate behavior has its own fingerprint ... the way we approach inquiry and the agendas and issues in which we become engaged are unique" (p. 265). We cannot remove ourselves from our experiences and inquiry, and "autobiography [as] a medium for research ... expresses the particular peace its author has made between the individuality of his or her subjectivity and the intersubjective and public character of meaning" (Grumet, 1990, p. 324).

Neilsen's book is important for qualitative researchers who are interested in exploring their identities as researchers, and in the author's case the meaning of research as related to the experiences of being a woman. Nielsen's research story speaks to those of us who are interested in the way our own motives, personal histories, locations, and interests are embodied in our writing. The metaphor of journey in her autobiographical account of her evolution as a researcher is one that invites inquiry into our own journeys in order to examine further the ways that "the growth and life of the researcher are written into the text" (p. 10). Although the book will be of interest to those beginning their own research, it will especially be a comfortable fit for those of us who have struggled to understand the paradigm shifts that we have undertaken almost beyond our control, shifts taken because our own life journeys draw us into previously unexplored areas. Paradigm shifts do not occur painlessly, and it is encouraging to discover one's own experiences in the discursive lives of others. Reading Neilsen's descriptions, immersing oneself in her language, can help provide encouragement and support for those who wish to explore paradigms new to them.

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*The Future of Schools: Lessons from the Reform of Public Education*. Brian Caldwell and Don Hayward. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press, 1998, 189 pages.

Reviewed by Robert R. O'Reilly, University of Calgary

These two books are part of the Falmer Press Series *Student Outcomes and the Reform of Education* under the general editorship of Brian Caldwell, Dean of Education at the University of Melbourne, Australia. The series is concerned with the reform of public education and its impact on outcomes for students. Caldwell is an author of both of these books: the first as co-author with self-managing school advocate Jim Spinks, and the second with Don Hayward, Minister of Education for the State of Victoria in Australia when many of the current reforms referred to in these publications were initiated.

In both books the major focus is on events in the State of Victoria in Australia. However, the narratives are set in the context of activities in the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Canada.

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