

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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*Beyond the Self-Managing School*. Brian Caldwell and Jim Spinks. Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press: 1998, 245 pages.

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

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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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Thus readers from any of those nations, as well as others, could profit from the material in the books.

In *The Future of Schools: Lessons from the Reform of Public Education* the authors begin with a brief history of the so-called crisis in public education, the positive contributions of public education to our Western nations, and a set of reasons why schools had to change. In the first chapter the initial reforms that took place in the State of Victoria from the period of 1992 to 1996 are described. These reforms began with the creation of a State curriculum framework for years K-12 designed by a specially created Board of Studies. The Board contained a cross-section of educators and others. It consulted over 10,000 teachers, and the draft document was subjected to public scrutiny and debate. Other changes included the radical reduction of state and regional level administrators from 2,300 to 600 staff, the devolution of 90% of all state expenditures on public education directly to the schools, the introduction of an accountability system that required annual reports to the Department of Education as well as triennial external assessments, and provision for the appraisal and recognition of staff. Each school was required to develop a short statement of its priorities, characteristics, and programs. This school charter represented an agreement between the school, its community, and the Department of Education. These measures were followed in 1995 by an A\$50-million program to improve literacy in primary schools.

Although varying in detail from reform efforts in other parts of the world, these features will be familiar items to most public school educators. A good portion of the book describes these reforms in some detail. In general, the reforms were intelligently derived, well implemented, and carefully monitored. A major characteristic of these Australian reforms is the close liaison between senior educators, particularly at the university level, and the government. A more common characteristic is that teachers' unions were not considered to be a party to any reforms and were seen by the government as a hindrance. Nevertheless, the government appointed an academic, Brian Caldwell, then holder of a Chair in Education at the University of Melbourne and Chair of the Department of Educational Policy and Management, as Chair of a major review committee on school finance. Once the reforms were initiated, the Department of Education funded a monitoring study of the process. The multi-year longitudinal study was co-sponsored by the various associations of school principals and carried out by staff at the University of Melbourne.

Caldwell and Hayward provide a brief review of Australia's school systems and a brief synopsis of changes over the past 25 years. The main story begins with the election of a Liberal National Coalition government in the State of Victoria and the implementation of the Schools of the Future program. The program is focused on student learning and has four major elements: a curriculum framework, an accountability framework, a resources framework, and a people framework. These changes are briefly described above. The point of departure for this book is that although these changes were necessary, they were not sufficient for the task. The book provides an agenda for further reform.

Don Hayward, the Minister of Education for the 1992-1996 period, wrote the next two chapters. He reviews his own interests and activities in education, his work as a member of the Opposition, and finally his role in the transformation processes. It is a revealing account of a politician determined to improve schools and student learning, while being required to reduce the budget drastically. The authors provide references from time to time to similarities in the written account of the British Minister of Education Ken Baker (1993), who also has published the record of his term of office during a period of radical change in English education.

The authors claim that the change process in Victoria was successful. They provide data from a three-year longitudinal study of the Victoria change process. They then analyze the history of the changes through theoretical lenses and provide a rich understanding of a major shift as occurred in Victoria. They compare and contrast their experiences with events in other jurisdictions in Australia, the US, Canada, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and the UK. This chapter makes an important contribution to the literature on change in education and is a good example of comparative analysis. From their analysis they provide a chapter on the required preconditions for successful school reform. Readers should look at this chapter carefully and be prepared to debate these ideas. They discuss the purposes of education, the role of parents, the limited role of government to fund education adequately, and the nature of learners and learning. It is in this chapter that the framework for their view of the required transformation of schools becomes evident. The policy framework for the future of schools is based on 15 elements. Caldwell and Spinks, whose work is reviewed below, describe these better in their text. The framework actually consists of several competing possible scenarios, which include a vision of the nature of learners and learning, notions of public versus private, the concepts of *entitlement*, *contribution*, and *design*. From three competing models they provide their favored model. The section is both comprehensive, drawing on experiences from various nations, and arguable.

Almost as an epilogue the authors present some ideas on the nature of political leadership, the roles of government, and the need for teacher organizations to change. It is noteworthy in this book that teacher organizations have been seen as incapable of participating in the change processes that have operated in many nations in recent years. They provide a few anecdotes about how teacher organizations can change to become effective partners in the reform of education. This is a section that teachers should consider, even if they do not agree with either the assumptions or the conclusions. Can we build a future for schools based on the lessons learned from previous reform efforts? If so, what are those lessons? The authors believe that by addressing the issues raised in their policy framework, and not necessarily taking the advice of the authors, schools everywhere can build for the future, and that the processes for success are now known. The material contained in this book will assist educational planners everywhere, but their claims are, of course, overly optimistic.

The second book, *Beyond the Self-Managing Schools: Student Outcomes and the Reform of Education*, is the third by Caldwell and Spinks on the topic of self-managing schools.

They review the history of the implementation of self-managed schools as a structural reform across the world. First adopted by the UK with its Educational Reform Act of 1988 and later confirmed by the Labor Government of Tony Blair in 1997, the reform now is evident in such jurisdictions as the State of Victoria in Australia, New Zealand, the Canadian province of Alberta and elsewhere. However, there is little evidence to indicate that these structural alterations in the governance of schools have led to improved learning of students. Moreover, the term *self-managing school* is taken to mean different things. It is a concept that is still evolving. Finally, the practice of managing a self-managing school requires skills that administrators are still learning.

They give the following definition to this form of school management:

A self-managing school is a school in a system of education to which there has been decentralized a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions related to the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities. Resources are defined broadly to include knowledge, technology, power, material, people, time, assessment, information and finance. (pp. 4-5).

Self-managing schools should be distinguished from autonomous or independent schools that are not part of a centralized system. Self-management of schools should also be distinguished from some types of site-based management or school-based management of schools, particularly as practiced in some parts of the US as these systems are not part of a centrally determined framework for achieving educational objectives.

The authors provide a history of self-managed schools and their antecedent innovations in various parts of the world. They recount the form of schools as they are found in Victoria in a similar manner as found in the Caldwell and Hayward text.

How is self-management of schools related to learning outcomes? The authors review the American, British, European, and Hong Kong literature both for and against self-management of schools, as well as the expectations that various advocates had for this reform. The review is complete and even-handed. They then provide research results from the State of Victoria experience. They conclude, "the evidence of a direct cause-and-effect relationship between self-management and improved outcomes is minimal" (p. 66). On the other hand, they conclude that the research is rich in policy implications that would provide tight linkages between various factors of school management and culture to learning outcomes. These conclusions are all plausible from some vantage point of research on learning, leadership, and management. Many of them flow from the results of doctoral studies on self-managing schools and related topics. The work is intelligent and as much intuitive as scholarly.

If self-managing schools are necessary but not sufficient reforms for schools of the future, schools require new standards, new designs, and new practices. Recommendations are drawn from many case studies of possible solutions, many based on notions of the school as a learning organization (after Senge). There are also discussions of reforms required in teacher training, teacher thinking, teacher professionalism, and teacher organizations. This section is rather didactic, is not based on much research, and accepts its recommenda-

tions without too much debate. However, it is a section that every teacher educator, leader, and association official should look at carefully.

Schools for the future must prepare students for a knowledge society. Here the authors rely on the works of Peter Drucker. On the other hand, the authors acknowledge some of the possible downside of a knowledge society and suggest as possible solutions some of the ideas found in Anthony Giddens' text *The Third Way* (1998), and which are reflected in some of the policies of Tony Blair.

The next few chapters deal with the transformation of the school for the new millennium with respect to new notions of learning, educational leadership, and school design. These are in a model introduced in the Caldwell and Hayward book that provides a vision for schooling. The vision is a seven-part gestalt in which all the parts are integrated. These chapters are wide-ranging, creative, and scholarly. Each section of the book concludes with a list of "strategic intentions for schools." These are recapitulated in the final chapter as 100 strategic intentions.

Each of the books will serve the needs of two related audiences. The first is concerned more with the processes of changing schools and school systems. The second is a comprehensive analysis of the self-managing school and the changes that will be required to provide excellent schools in the future. Much of the material in the two overlaps. Politicians and senior officials may want to read the first book; all leaders should carefully examine the second.

Readers will find the books well written and meaningful. These are not books for those who seek simple answers such as increasing choice for parents or applying market approaches to public education. On the other hand, at times the authors seem to accept uncritically some of the criticisms of public education that informed educators find unfair, such as the idea that international tests of students achievement "prove" that English-nation schools are less effective than certain Asiatic schools. But in all, these two books are sympathetic to public education, and present their ideas in a rich academic and scholarly manner. Those concerned with the continuing effectiveness of schools, howsoever that term is defined, should look at both books.

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