

The investigators were impressed by the children's "high level of concentration, orderliness, and competence." Good behavior did not suggest docility or surrender or apathy. Some children were lively and even naughty, but not for long. The visitors asked the Chinese and themselves what accounted for the "conspicuously pro-social behavior" and the remarkable stability of the children. Was it a result of China's centuries of cultural continuity? Or because most Chinese live in continuous and enduring neighborhoods? Even students' annual work periods away from home did not seem to violate family cohesiveness. Or was it because of China's commitment to national development? Or the unity and direction permeating Mao Tse-tung's thought? The observers could only speculate.

As in the USSR, and unlike Canada and the USA, Chinese out-of-school activities seemed to reinforce school values. Workers, peasants, and revolutionary leaders, used as resource persons in the schools to describe the "bad old days," fired children's patriotism to "serve the people." From the beginning, the observers noted, Chinese preschoolers were quieter, gentler, less intense, less whining, less aggressive than North American children. Kindergarten teachers emphasized group effort over individual activities and taught songs and dancing better than cognitive skills like reading and language exercises.

Kindergarten charm gave way to primary school uniformity for ages 7 to 12. Peer influence was more systematic. Little Red Soldiers, Red Guards, and Communist Youth Leaguers were prominent models. Ideology prepared the young to follow adult direction. A practical curriculum minimized theory and speculation.

Primary teachers were brisk, competent, and interested in their tasks. The children were "remarkably self-controlled, . . . committed to their tasks, and without the disorders of behavior . . . in American schools."

Junior middle-schoolers, ages 12-14, and senior middle-schoolers, ages 14-16, were conforming, dutiful, and well organized. Students had no curriculum choice, did not search for diverse information, were not library browsers. Still, the collective effort apparently produced students with high-level skills. Very talented students, often in work production situations, were creative and inventive. Revolutionary ideological messages pervaded literature and music. When middle school graduates departed for commune and factory (they have some choice about assignments,) they were given fanfare and parades reminiscent of patriotic North Americans seeing off local National Guard units.

Foreign language teaching — English and Russian are popular — seemed to employ a good deal of drill and memorization. Simple conversation using up to 2,000 words was expected after the four-year middle school.

Health care was deemed outstanding for a developing country (this was stressed by one American, a physician), even though the Chinese were self-deprecating about this and other advances. (The Chinese never boasted, always said they were trying to do better.)

The book's striking photos nicely illustrate the charm of China's children. Editor William Kessen of Yale University was appropriately cautious in blending the 13 experts' reports.

An awakened China has chosen to re-enter the world's mainstream and may well, as Napoleon once predicted, shake the earth. North Americans need to understand this old yet new giant. A good way to begin is to read this fine book about China's children and schools.

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W. James Popham, *Educational Evaluation*. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975). Pp. vii, 328. \$10.95.

M. Popham est bien connu dans le monde de l'évaluation scolaire. Il a publié seul et en collaboration avec d'autres auteurs une série de livres portant sur le sujet. Quelle est, alors, la contribution du nouveau titre? Selon l'auteur, deux raisons l'ont amené à écrire, (1) la demande accrue de spécialistes d'évaluation, (2) le besoin d'un livre de base qui couvrirait à la fois la théorie et la pratique.

En effet, M. Popham nous mène de la perspective en évaluation scolaire à la conception actuelle du domaine et de là, à la fixation des objectifs éducatifs et leur évaluation. Il passe ensuite en revue les alternatives existantes dans la mesure et l'évaluation, la mesure critériée (criterion-reference measurement), le design en évaluation, l'échantillonnage et l'analyse des données. Tout en apportant des exemples pratiques, il met en relief un grand nombre de considérations à retenir.

Un chapitre est consacré à l'évaluation des maîtres. Soulignons que ce chapitre se rapporte également à la performance scolaire. L'auteur indique qu'il ne l'a pas rédigé avec joie, mais ne pas inclure un chapitre sur l'évaluation des maîtres serait dénaturer les faits.

La mesure critériée mérite plus d'attention. Popham la définit comme un moyen utilisé pour constater la position d'un individu par rapport à un fonctionnement dans un domaine bien défini. Les résultats de classe suite à l'enseignement individualisé et l'enseignement des disciplines plus qualifiables surtout dans le secteur professionnel, par exemple, seront mieux évalués par la mesure critériée. Cette dernière est plus sensible à l'apprentissage tandis que la mesure normative est plus adaptée à la connaissance des quotients d'intelligence. Les percentiles, les rangs, les stanines ou autres mesures normatives ne donnent pas la même spécificité d'information que celle obtenue par la mesure critériée. En tout cas, l'utilisation de cette dernière n'élimine pas la possibilité de classer les étudiants suivant des normes provinciales ou nationales. Un professeur peut utiliser les deux mesures.

Chaque chapitre du livre contient des questions, des sujets de discussion, des exercices et des références qui rendent le livre intéressant, pratique et très actuel. Un index sujet-auteur à la fin du volume facilite la recherche de points spécifiques et de divers aspects dont ce large domaine qu'est l'évaluation scolaire ne manque pas de contenir.

En somme, je recommande ce volume.

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C. A. Bowers, *Cultural Literacy For Freedom; An Existential Perspective on Teaching, Curriculum and School Policy*. Eugene: Elan Publishers, 1974, pp. x, 188. \$2.95 (papers).

Everything must be examined, everything must be shaken up, without exception and without circumspection.

This peremptory demand of Denis Diderot's *Encyclopédie* (1751-1765) once reverberated all over Europe and the Atlantic world in the Age of Enlightenment. The desacralization of medieval cosmology had ushered in a new view of man and a new concept of his capacity to conquer his environment and to progress. Over two centuries have passed since then. During these years Europe and the United States of America have taken gigantic strides in scientific and technological advancement. This progress has brought untold material benefits to western society which has proudly (and perhaps, in one sense, justifiably) called itself the "First World" and labelled the society of those who failed to "make it" in technological and scientific field the "Third World". In fact, the apotheosis of technique and its control over natural and human behavior has become so much a part of western man's thinking that he has come to equate technology with progress, control of human behavior with efficiency, and such efficiency with welfare. One very alarming aspect of this ubiquitous technicism in western society has been its influence on education, the avowed aim of which has become conformity, domestication, and (even when unintended) the progressive erosion of spontaneity.

It is against this kind of dehumanizing and dehumanized education that a number of educators have long been voicing protests. The result has been a plethora of educational innovations such as alternative school, community school, open school, etc., which have bedeviled the American educational system. In short, the various recommendations put forward by the managers of educational technology and by the numerous innovators¹ have produced denatured curricula and relaxed methods of teaching which pass as experimental approaches in education but which really aim at making education effortless and meaningless. This is, sadly enough, what the Germans call Kitsch, that is a culture which simplifies, sloganizes, popularizes, and, anesthetizes human spirit. That innovation is not working well or well enough is to be seen in the sporadic murmurs and complaints of the befuddled parents who are becoming increasingly disillusioned about novelty in education.

This state of affairs naturally raises the question: What is wrong with the American public schools? Why have innovations and experiments failed? What is to be done? These are important questions which need to be answered and answered fast.² Professor Bower's

¹Educational radicalism is being increasingly fossilized into a new orthodoxy. See Michael Katz's comments on Beatrice and Ronald Gross, eds., *Radical School Reform* (N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1969) in "The Present Movement in Educational Reform", *Harvard Educational Review*, XLI, No. 3 (August 1971), pp. 342-359.

²Already one critic has raised doubts on the credibility of the existentialist educators, although he mainly addresses himself to the question: "How genuinely do the writings of such educators reflect existential philosophy?" He, however, appears to regard existentialism something esoteric and mystical when he argues that only "meditative thinking" is "truly existential". See J. Richard Wingerter, "Pseudo-Existential Writings in Education", *Educational Theory*, XXIII, No. 3 (Summer 1973), pp. 240-259.