

Dennis Phillips, Kenneth Howe, and Ernest House have added much to our contemplation of research, its methods and applications.

Lagemann seems to presume that there is a correct way to think about research, and her comments frequently belie the mainstream assumptions that shape her presentation and analysis. The fact that Lagemann does not clearly reveal or discuss her own obvious preferences and assumptions would easily lead an unsophisticated reader to conclude that there is, in fact, one true path that should be followed by educational researchers and policy makers. Though I might agree with many of the assumptions that characterize her presentation in this regard, it is essential that such a work acknowledge the range of differing views and the assumptions and values that underlie them. There is intuitive appeal to the faith in a technocratic model as a basis for educational progress, and fundamental values to which virtually all educational researchers assent, yet, if educational research has taught us anything in the past century it would seem to be that there is, after all, not one best way. Educational research is and has been shaped by a complex amalgam of ideology and circumstances. Lagemann's work helps elucidate the 'what' of this complex history, but falls short of helping us understand more deeply the 'why.'

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Majors, R. (Ed.). (2001). *Educating our black children: New directions and radical approaches*. New York/London: Routledge Falmer, 271 pages.

The high calibre writings that make up this book illustrates how far the field of multiculturalism and/or ethnic studies has come. Some 35 years ago, multicultural literature was inaugurated via published conference proceedings and books of readings. This volume defines the cutting edge of the field by elaborating new directions and radical approaches to resolving inequities in one specific ethnic sector. Unlike less focused volumes, every writer in this collection targets the subject, in this case the difficulties encountered by African American youth in British schools.

Five major sections make up the book, each comprising three or four significant essays penned by academics from England and America. The sections include: Tackling Historical and Contemporary Education Problems, Radical Black Approaches to Education, Reflections on Social Exclusion and Inclusion, Rites of Passage, Manhood Training and Masculinity Perspectives, and Mentoring and Education. The appendices

include illustrative scales, questionnaires, and post-role plays used in related studies, followed by an annotated list of contributors and an index.

The book's introduction, penned by Richard Majors, outlines the current status of Black children in England's schools. Apparently Black students are victims of racism and differential treatment and are often excluded from school functions. In a second essay, David Gillborn observes that even the most recent political changes in Britain "give little or no cause for optimism that racism is finally to be addressed seriously in education policy" (p. 13). Maud Blair echoes this sentiment: "Black children were more likely to be placed in lower sets and streams was also observed ... a school that is successful for Black students [is] like finding a needle in a haystack Black students feel they are unfairly treated by teachers" (pp. 29, 31, 33).

Part Two of the book continues in a similar vein, describing the mis-education of Black students in the British educational system, and pleading for an African-centred orientation to knowledge. Diane Pollard and Cheryl Ajirotutu describe the results of a successful African American immersion school, and Diane Reay and Heidi Mirza praise the "sacred space of blackness" that Black supplementary schools provide (p. 100).

Part Three is a hard-hitting section, claiming that "There is growing evidence that the exclusion of Black young people reflects the operation of deeply held, but complex, differential expectations and assumptions" (p. 107). Richard Harris and Carl Parsons note that "The experience of permanent exclusion from school is deeply damaging to the pupils and distressing for the parents and carers" (p. 137). Several writers in Part Four of the book support this finding with similar observations: "Teachers dismissed Black students as irritants or people to be pitied because they lacked a full understanding of the mainstream cultural backlash which Black students routinely received" (p. 145). While these claims may appear harsh, all are backed by ample references to extensive studies.

The final essays in the collection document a hopeful alleviation of the inequities suffered by African American students by offering descriptions of successful intervention techniques and mentoring experiments. Harvey, for example, points out that the road providing a healthy learning environment for African American students will not be smooth. He argues that:

A culturally competent system of care 'acknowledges and incorporates' - at all levels - the importance of culture, the assessment of cross-cultural relations, vigilance towards the dynamics that result from cultural differences, the expansion of cultural knowledge, and the adaptation of services to meet culturally unique needs. (p. 159)

Educating Our Black Children is a unique collection of well-researched, theme-written essays illustrating the depth of contemporary ethnic studies. It is a must reading for serious scholars who have strong convictions that something can and must be done to alleviate the inequities that many ethno-cultural communities must suffer in a supposedly democratic society.

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Jones, B. (Ed.). (2000). *Educational leadership: Policy dimensions in the 21st century*. Stamford, CT: Ablex, 176 pages.

This collection is the first book in a new series, *Educational Policy in 21st Century*, which is sponsored by the National Policy Board for Educational Administration (NPBEA). NPBEA is an umbrella grouping of the established organizations representing elementary principals, other school administrators, school board members, state officers of education, college educators, and professors of educational administration. The work should indicate the horizons of all those in the business of educational leadership.

The perspectives presented are limited to generalities. The tone is set by the opening chapter prepared by James Cibulka. He lists six dimensions, such as public or private ownership, which he claims are linked to the general theory of new institutionalism which some people in the social sciences and education develop as an alternative to traditional theories of organizations. The new institutionalism shows how similar innovations emerge in different schools and systems of schools and are maintained for long period unless similar large scale alternatives are mobilized.

The theory and six dimensions are general and lead only to arbitrary selections of innovations. Private education is the first topic considered by Martha McCarthy, but does not consider how administrators become entrepreneurs or why teachers and administrators may move from bureaucratic systems to competitive schools. Charter schools, included as a private form of education, are not seen as a possible extension of school based management. Decentralization is one of Cibulka's six general dimensions, but there is no separate chapter or later discussion in the book on the varieties involved in decision making.