

The key, perhaps, is that the view taken by historians and ethnographers is no more innocent of theory than any other conceptual view of events, despite the suggestion to the contrary in Adelman's paper (p. 79): "I was seeking less theory-laden observations — those of an ethnographic type." The innocent-observer posture suggests that other researchers are less aware of the tunnel-vision effect of their evidence-gathering metaphors than are ethnographers (or those who combine ethnography with history, perhaps). Maybe so. But that epistemological point is worth discussing, in a work like this, and the discussion would require some frank acknowledgement of the metaphors framing the research questions — the conceptual principles, the terms of inquiry, what the researchers go in looking for. The noticeable lack of extended commentary of this sort in the work leaves it epistemologically flat, as if it is intended to be a description of "what's really going on" rather than a metaphor-bound interpretation that complements, or competes with, other metaphor-bound interpretations of educational events.

Back to our serious student of curriculum, then. The power of a collection like this one is that it says "Look: if you approach the task of conceptualizing curriculum events and student effects from this perspective you see thus-and-such differently — indeed, you may not have noticed it before." The whole complex of methodology and what it surfaces for inspection can then function as a reflective framework for the practitioner who, after all, has to make decisions, not just be converted to a new "-ology". Those readers who can bring to the work the stance of seeking a reflective framework will find in the Goodson and Ball book a powerful one, with far-reaching consequences for the way they think about curriculum practice and, especially, the impact of curriculum on students' lives.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

M. A. Raywid, C. A. Tesconi, Jr., and D. R. Warren. *Pride and Promise: Schools of Excellence for all the People*. Westbury, N. Y.: American Educational Studies Association, 1984, 49 pp., \$4.25.

The authors of this cogent and timely report are to be doubly commended: firstly, for giving an account of many of the recent criticisms of American schooling, and secondly, for providing a measured response to the recommendations of the critics. *Pride and Promise* originated at the 1983 meeting of the American Educational Studies Association, when Charles Tesconi noted in his presidential address that not a few of the burgeoning list of schooling reports were out of touch with classroom realities. He called upon education scholars, notably those in the areas of educational policy and foundations, to provide a statement of how schools might be improved. Tesconi along with two other Association members, Mary Anne Raywid and Donald Warner, subsequently took on the task that led to this document.

*Pride and Promise's* subtitle, *Schools of Excellence for All the People*, is a common theme in the Report's six sections. The authors begin by reviewing the major beliefs behind the American commitment to public schooling. When combined with a belief that democracy depends on an educated citizenry, two convictions account for the invention and continuance of the American public school. One of these is that schooling promotes social improvement and individual realization; the other, that it assists in the successful performance of adult roles.

Such an ethos gave the public school enormous power that was not challenged by most Americans as long as the expectations arising from these convictions were being met. As many of the recent twenty or so major national reports on schools indicate, however, public schools have been losing favour. What is remarkable is that most of the calls for their improvement rest almost exclusively on matters relating to standardized tests of performance. This narrow perspective ignores the range and diversity of the tasks that have been assigned the public school. Tesconi and his colleagues reject the simplistic solutions of the new reformers, their presentism, their marketplace mentality and their failure to identify forces which link educational success to social and economic class, race, ethnicity and gender. As the same time, the authors are far from being apologists for the current state of schooling. In the ensuing sections of the Report, they discuss the kinds of excellence which tend to have been largely overlooked in the current debate.

These discussions are particularly encouraging in that they provide more than a critique of what is currently being proposed. And while the authors' arguments are not always convincing, they are not easily ignored. They give full reference to the relevance of outcomes, but at the same time they address the more complex matter of school experience, that is, not only what is done in schools, but the spirit in which it is done and what it means to the participants. They argue that neither the outcome nor experiential purposes ought to be sacrificed to each other:

We do not want 'nice' school experiences which lead nowhere and produce little learning; neither, however, do we want pedagogically efficient activities which are physically, psychologically, or morally injurious to children. (p. 9)

Tesconi's call for an environment that is conducive to a shared commitment to excellence reflects Goodlad's comments in *A Place Called School*:

The ambience of each school differs. These differences appear to have more to do with the quality of life and indeed the quality of education in schools than do the explicit curriculum and the methods of teaching. (p.14)

The achievement of a desirable school climate will not be gained by rules and regulations or by increasingly detached, top-down school practice specifications. What is needed is not teacher-proof methodologies, but teachers who have "the power to produce desired effects . . . a sense of potency, of knowing that one's efforts count" (p.15).

The belief that the external mandating of curriculum and achievement levels will lead to educational excellence is pronounced wrong-headed. It assumes that "determined teachers will simply demand the appropriate performance and the students will comply" (p.21). The authors contend that no one familiar with classrooms would accept such a scenario. They have little to say "to those who insist on superior results who have little to suggest on how to obtain them" (p.21). They would apply instead the same principles of efficacy and collegiality to students as they would to teachers. Such familiar adages as that people learn in different ways and that they learn more fully and widely in a community that respects their individuality underline many of their proposals to achieve educational excellence.

"Educating Teachers for Excellence", the fifth section of the Report, advocates major reforms in the teacher preparation programs of colleges and universities including "rigorous admission requirements and academic standards, a coherent general education, professional students that draw upon research and knowledge, and an area of specialized knowledge and expertise" (p.41).

The authors' conclusion returns to the Report's central theme that schools should be places of pride and promise for all people. They have put their arguments well and with conviction. The text is unambiguous, marginal quotations are both timely and compelling and the bibliography lists the major sources of their comments together with other current references.

The Report is particularly pertinent to Canadian educators who, if such recent events as the new set of evaluation procedures and the secondary school review in Alberta are taken into account, can no longer hold to the view that American excesses take some time in taking hold north of the border. The authors' observations suggest that current American educational reforms such as those suggested in *A Nation at Risk*, are moving North much more rapidly. It is clear that if Canadian educators are not more vocal and vigilant, they may well be heirs to a system about which Tesconi and his colleagues have given fair warning.

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Hopkins, David and Wideen, Marion. *Alternative Perspectives on School Improvement*. Philadelphia, PA: The Falmer Press, 1984, 212 pp., \$16.00 (paper).

The prevailing school improvement movement rests on the wide-spread belief that schools are, at worst, less-than-satisfactory and, at best, marginally acceptable. This belief would appear to be founded more on exhortive polemics than on empirical evidence. Regardless, however, of the reasons for its existence, this