Book reviews

BOOK REVIEWS

Hughes, Philip (ed.). (1991). *Teachers' professional development*. Melbourne: ACER

This collection of eight papers contributes to ACER's *Teachers in Society* series. The editors of the series specify that they seek to make links between the context, the education and the work of teachers. Through making such links they hope that the role of the Australian teacher will be better understood.

In the opening chapter, Philip Hughes provides a snapshot summary of the historical context of teaching and then focuses the attention of the reader on the primary concern of the book; teaching and factors which impinge upon the process. Teacher development is identified as one of the crucial issues for good teaching due to the stability of the teaching force and the changing context of the role. These two conditions have important implications for teachers and for teacher educators.

Hughes highlights issues which will be taken up by other contributors and provides a sketch of what is to follow in each chapter.

Against a backdrop summary of major educational reports and studies conducted in Australia during the last decade, Cherry Collins stresses the discrepancy between teacher development policy and practice. She suggests that in this time of change it is appropriate to examine what we have learned from past practice and what should be incorporated into new State and systemic structures. Collins also discusses "tasks facing teacher development", suggests that the "problem is political" and poses the question of "what next?".

Michael Scriven makes a strong statement on the relationship between teacher evaluation and teacher development. The position he advocates is that "teacher development is a sham unless based on evaluation". In a powerfully stated assertion, Scriven outlines some basic principles of teacher evaluation and development, expands his argument that "much current writing about the relation between teacher evaluation and teacher development is fundamentally wrong" and provides evidence from the literature for his claim. He proceeds to analyze the relationship of evaluation to development and summative to formative, and provides suggestions for casting evaluation within teacher development.

Bob Connors presents the results of a state-wide research project which sought to determine the development needs of teachers. Then he outlines a philosophy which supports four paradigms of professional development and argues for the importance of balance amongst the four. In concluding, Connors asserts that professional development is "a complex, continuous growth process, as teachers have different professional needs in differing educational contexts and at different stages of their careers". The paper ends with a recommendation that the needs of the teacher and of the system should be acknowledged and addressed.

Bevis Yaxley explores progress in the research area of teacher thinking and draws implications from this work for teacher development. In this chapter, teacher development programmes are seen as a means of assisting teachers cope and deal with changes in their professional, personal and economic lives. Both a theoretical stance and a practical application are offered.

The sixth paper, by John Baird, turns the reader's attention to the act of reflection and describes research which indicate its potential for individual and group development. He discusses the many uses of the term reflection and its subsequent hazy meaning. Observation, reflection and action are identified as key elements of teaching and learning and the process of reflection is discussed in relation to the outcome of metacognition. Three studies which focussed on the importance of reflection for intellectual development are presented and recommendations for implementing teacher development through reflection are offered.

Terry Evans and Daryl Nation present results of a research study which studied "primary teachers who commenced their fourth year of Bachelor of Education degrees as external students in Victoria in 1986". Three elements of social life - gender, accessibility and social class - are used as organizers for the discussion of research outcomes. The authors relate their research to the broad context and issues of distance education and its importance and relevance in the professional development of Australian teachers. They point out that against the background of factors such as remote schools and part-time study, which often necessitate reliance on distance education, "teachers' professional development courses can be seen as a process and resource with

which teachers are able to build their present and future careers".

In the final chapter, Ray Costello relates the professional development of teachers to issues of policy and the power of the bureaucratic model. The quality of education in Australian public schools is presented as a matter of public concern especially as it relates to the resources expended. The restructuring of State managerial systems is in part a reaction to the public's uneasiness. Costello maintains that developments such as the end of enrolment growth, the centralization of wage control, and a new form of central control have in fact increased not reduced the power of the bureaucratic structure. A new model is proposed which Costello calls a professional management model which "reflects the influence of the professions and their organization and management, and of some contemporary ideas of management found in modern business corporations." Objectives and accountability of the new model are discussed as are the issues of professional appraisal and professional development within the context of the self-managing school.

The rate and state of change in public school systems across Australia increases the importance of the professional development of teachers. This collection of papers raises questions, addresses issues, provides possible solutions and informs the debate. The work is timely and contributes to researchers and educators awareness of the content and context of "Teachers in Society".

GLENDA CAMPBELL-EVANS

Chapman, J., Angus, L., Burke, G. and Wilkinson, V. (eds). (1989). *Improving the Quality of Australian Schools*. Australian Education Review No.33, The Australian Council for Educational Research, Melbourne, 162 pages.

This book contains 12 papers presented at a national seminar conducted in 1989 by the School Decision Making and Management Centre (Faculty of Education, Monash University) in conjunction with the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.

The papers are divided into three sections: Government perspectives, the context, and key areas in the pursuit of quality. They were presented at the seminar by people from three spheres of influence: politicians (John Dawkins,

Joan Kirner); academics (Lawrence Angus, Gerald Burke, Ken Eltis, John Freeland, Geoffrey Partington); and educational administrators, consultants (Sandra Brown, Rob Bluer, David Instance, John Lowe, Peter Hamilton, Barry McGaw, Malcolm Skilbeck).

In his paper, John Dawkins points out that the Commonwealth Department of Employment Education and Training does not employ a single school teacher anywhere. He also observes that although education systems are still controlled and run by the states, they do have a national outlook and are working towards a consideration of national issues. Discussion then proceeds on matters arising from Commonwealth initiatives such as *Strengthening Australia's Schools*, the Hobart Declaration, the Curriculum Corporation 'mobility issues' and award restructuring.

Like John Dawkins, Joan Kirner provides an overview of priorities in light of the OECD Report *Schools and Quality*. She argues that quality schooling will not be achieved unless all students including the least advantaged share in its benefits. Of particular concern to her is the sidelining of social justice by corporate managerialism and instrumentalist thinking.

David Instance and John Lowe open the context section by showing how the basis for the climate within which education developments occur, has changed from expansion and optimism to contraction and pessimism. They argue that while this shift generates pressure for educational reform, structural reorganisation at the system level will not enhance quality schooling if classroom pedagogical practices remain untouched. They also discuss how the complexity of the socio-economic context affects interpretations of quality schooling. In their view, simple contrasts between left versus right, progressive versus traditionalist, egalitarian versus elitist no longer provide a valid framework for categorising the diversity of perspectives making up the debate on quality education.

Malcolm Skilbeck takes this point a step further. He suggests that because criticisms of educational performance often boil down to political and ideological exercises, much quality work already occurring in schools is disregarded. Similarly, an obsession with narrowly defined 'standards' rather than the *nature* of standards, impedes genuine attempts to grapple with educational goals and values and how they might be embodied in the curriculum.

To complete the context section, John Freeland embarks on mapping the emergence of a new educational 'settlement'. He distinguishes 'settlement' from 'consensus'. Settlement entails arrangements, compromise and the potential for ongoing conflicts of interest and struggle. Consensus signifies cohesion, agreement and the cessation of conflict and struggle. Looking to the future, Freeland speculates on what a new provisional settlement in the debate about quality education will be. Among other things, he considers it will integrate "the on-going internal dialogues of the education arena with the external dialogues and debates about the roles of the market and the state, about inequality in general and as it relates to particular disadvantages groups, about industry and labour market policies, and about welfare and the family." It will also synthesise objectives concerned with equality, participation, quality and efficiency.

The second half of the book consists of seven chapters on key areas in the pursuit of quality. Sandra Brown and Peter Hamilton begin the section with a proposal to take the partnership between schools and systems beyond the old decentralisation-centralisation dichotomy. They emphasise that only schools and teachers, rather than education bureaucracies, can improve learning outcomes. However, to become fully empowered to do so, they requiries support from central bureaucracies, unions, and parent groups. That means, "strong central leaderhip in the areas of curriculum definition, resource allocation, industrial relations and quality control" coupled with "strong managerial and educational autonomy for schools."

Ken Eltis also maintains that teachers are essential to educational improvement. He uses the OECD Report *Schools and Quality* to help identify major issues and concludes that "there is no simple prescription of ingredients necessary to achieve high quality education" The pursuit of excellence in education, he argues, can be depicted as $a+b+c+d=e$. An ample explanation of this equation appears in his paper.

Robert Bluer signals his perspective on *Schools and Quality* through a number of sub headings: attracting good teachers, preparing effective teachers, maintaining good teachers, and the changing role of teachers. He sees award restructuring as providing an important impetus to the improvement of teachers' career development prospects. This requires an increase

in resources. However, warns Bluer, unless extra resources are tied to fundamental reform, they will not be forthcoming.

Resources, as a key area in the pursuit of quality, also feature in Gerald Burke's paper. For him, a central principle is that, "the distribution of the resources, the effectiveness of their use, and who makes the decisions about their use, are clearly critical in answering the questions - quality of *what* and for *whom*?" After detailing trends in finance and resources and the effective use of them, he makes an important observation: pay increases may fail to raise the quality of teachers if their professional autonomy is restricted by a corresponding increase in prescribed student and teacher assessment.

In a brief and to the point paper, Barry McGaw confronts the issue of whether educational standards have declined by asking: Who has evidence? What evidence is there? What benefit is there in gathering the evidence? Despite lack of conclusive data on these matters, McGaw feels that educators should cooperate in systematic testing of educational quality. Effective monitoring of school outcomes, he says, benefits schools and systems and can satisfy increasing demands for accountability.

Geoffrey Partington examines the theoretical assumptions of the OECD Report, takes the education industry to task over its reluctance to collect data on achievement, and proposes a way ahead. He argues that, "What is required is not a national curriculum without systematic monitoring of educational achievement, but systematic monitoring of educational achievement without a national curriculum." Moreover, says Partington, parents should not only have a wider choice of schools, they also need full and accurate information about curriculum content and student achievement in order to exercise that choice.

The final chapter written by Lawrence Angus, offers a response to the broad themes of the book, which are: understanding quality, quality and values, teacher professionalism and managed education, educational policy and educational change, community participation in establishing quality schooling, and quality for all. His closing comments provide a fitting tribute to the value of *Improving the Quality of Australian Schools*: "Educators need to be assertive both in articulating their values and in taking a more

proactive stance in relation to educational policy. In this way, despite the myriad of voices and interests in the education debate, at least the voice of educators will be heard. This volume offers one such contribution to that debate."

ROD CHADBOURNE