

implications of their work the crucial and continuing importance of these theories for the curriculum. Young guides the reader through a wide-ranging and comprehensive consideration of the debates and controversies which Durkheim's and Vygotsky's work has inspired among their supporters and opponents. Of particular value in the course of the author's commentary are the clarifying connections he establishes with the thinking of philosophers such as Hegel, Dewey, Cassirer, Ilyenkov and Williams.

The positioning of the theoretical chapters first is helpful for tackling the second part of the book. The theoretical exposition of the ideas and principles underlying the curriculum continues to resonate, and enables the reader to bring a complex conceptual framework to bear on the consideration of, for example, the professional education and development of further education college staff in South Africa; issues relating to the recognition of prior learning in adult education; professional knowledge and the formation of identity; or the role of contrasting approaches to qualifications in educational reform.

The presence of the late Basil Bernstein pervades this book both intellectually and personally. The long relationship between the author and Bernstein is movingly described in a personal appreciation in the Endword, and the retrospective autobiographical strand in the writing allows readers to trace the evolution of the author's own thinking in relation to Bernstein's work. Both the theoretical and applied chapters provide an absorbing insight into Young's own intellectual journey in the sociology of education as he moved away from his earlier social constructivist perspective of viewing knowledge and the curriculum, and developed a new stance of social realism.

Reference

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An Atlantic crossing? The work of the international examination inquiry, its researchers, methods and influence, edited by Martin Lawn, Oxford, Symposium Books, 2008, 206pp., £24 (pbk), ISBN 978-1-873927-26-7

The International Examination Inquiry (IEI) has, as Martin Lawn writes in his introduction to this edited volume, almost been forgotten. Yet, from 1931, 'it was a well-funded scientific project, operating over seven years, which attracted key world figures in educational research and undertook significant exchanges of data and experiment' (7). In the chapters that follow, European researchers examine the IEI from the perspective of eight of the nine countries associated with the Inquiry. England, France, Germany, Scotland and Switzerland participated from the outset, together with the Nordic countries of Finland, Norway and Sweden, which joined later. There is, unfortunately, no chapter on the US, which was also active from the beginning of the IEI.

Across North America and Western Europe, the start of the 1930s was characterized by discussion about the possibilities for expanding secondary education beyond elite groups. The spotlight also naturally fell upon the purposes of examinations. Was their principal function to serve as a mechanism for secondary school selection? Could they be used more directly for

entry to the professions? Were they administrative tools for auditing education systems? And might they even be used as instruments to promote better teaching and learning?

Through the munificence of the Carnegie Corporation and the International Institute of Teachers College, Columbia University, a three-year grant was secured to facilitate independent inquiries in the countries concerned. The membership of the various national committees included some of the most well-known education researchers of the day, including Becker, Bovet, Clarke, Kandel, Monroe, Nunn, Piaget, Thomson and Ulich. The networks of these men – and the world of educational research at this time was, indeed, a male world – sometimes interacted with other cultures, institutions and organizations. The engaging chapter on Finland, for example, by Minna Vuorio-Lehti and Annukka Jauhiainen, focuses on the dominant figure of Laurin Zilliacus, the charismatic and radical progressive educator, who experienced Bedales School, England, as both a pupil and teacher, studied at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and opened his own school in Helsinki. Zilliacus's criticisms of Finnish matriculation examinations were taken up at pan-Nordic meetings of the New Education Fellowship, an organization that he was to serve as President after the Second World War.

The work of the IEI, Martin Lawn argues, 'is intriguing because of its lack of visibility' (25). Three international conferences were held, two at English hotels in Eastbourne (1931) and Folkestone (1936), while the third met at Dinard, near St Malo, France (1938). There seem to be no complete verbatim transcripts or newspaper accounts of the conferences, but at various points the book makes use of autobiographical fragments, including the delightful *Things I cannot forget* (1937), written by P.B. Ballard, the former London County Council inspector and leading assessment expert, an attendee of the Eastbourne meeting (12). In the absence of extensive documentary materials, the photographs of the first and final IEI gatherings, reproduced on the front cover and inside the book (34–7), take on a significance that perpetuates Lawn's interests in educational artefacts and non-written survivals, the subject of an earlier edited collaboration with Ian Grosvenor, *Materialities of schooling* (2005). The 1931 and 1936 photographs emphasize, Lawn contends, that the personnel of national sub-groups belonging to the IEI were heterogeneous:

England provided a mainly London-based education elite; Finland, its scholarly head teachers; and Switzerland, the organizing capacity of the J.J. Rousseau Institute in Geneva. Scotland used the Scottish Council for Educational Research as its organizing body; the distinctive element it contributed was a distributed network of professors, college lecturers and head teachers, and significant numbers of teachers and student teacher volunteers. (11–12)

Florian Waldow's chapter on Germany records the hope, expressed by the German delegate Carl Heinrich Becker, of Berlin University, that 'future centuries... may date the history of education from the Eastbourne Conference' (61). This did not come to pass. The IEI impetus faded away in the late 1930s as European relations deteriorated, yet it offered a glimpse of the possibilities of inter-country cooperation for UNESCO and other post-war international agencies. Some of the reports on examinations produced by the national committees during these years were of long-term significance in promoting and resolving debates and framing trajectories for assessment practices, but it is hard to escape the view that the IEI emphasized, rather than reconciled, national differences. The questions raised in the 1930s about the purpose and reliability of examinations are no less vexing today.

With some justification, the editor of this book observes that the tradition in comparative history of education has been to emphasize similarities and differences in national systems as a whole. There is merit, he maintains, in cross-border studies of the constituent features – examinations, in this instance – of such systems (21). Lawn views the methodological approaches taken by the researchers contributing to this volume as essentially scientific, paralleling in some respects the scientific, but diverse, community of experts who contributed to the

IEI in the 1930s. It is a book that should be welcomed for re-discovering a forgotten transatlantic initiative of the past, but its contribution is essentially methodological. It does not approach the question of whether there are lessons to be learned from the past. Might cross-border initiatives in the area of examinations and assessment be a worthwhile project for the twenty-first century?

As with many collections of essays, the chapters are variable in their approaches and quality. The reader might wish for a stronger editorial line on the organization of chapters, the balance of narrative and analysis and the presentation of conclusions. Intervention to modify some quirky subheadings, notably in the chapter on Switzerland, would also have been welcome. The volume is attractively priced, but it is a great pity, given the rich mix of international personnel featuring in the book, that there is no index.

Reference

Lawn, M., and I. Grosvenor, eds. 2005. *Materialities of schooling: Design, technology, objects, routines*. Oxford: Symposium Books.

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Education, equality and social cohesion: a comparative analysis, by Andy Green, John Preston and Jan German Janmaat, London, Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 226 pp., £17.99 (pbk), ISBN 9780-2302-2363-9

Overviews of broad policy themes are rarely satisfying. They are often either so general as to lack flavour, or offer spicy critique at the expense of evidence. Recent interest among western governments in lifelong learning has brought further temptations to conceptual sloppiness. To some extent, ideas of lifelong learning are so broad as to encompass virtually any learning, regardless of its content or context; yet they can also represent an attempt to institutionalize the informal learning of everyday life and group together the various locations of that learning. Little wonder, then, that policy researchers have tended either to gorge themselves in the detailed smorgasbord of individuals' lives, or pick away at a more or less elegantly formed critique. What we lack are theoretically informed analyses that are grounded in robust evidence of trends and patterns over time.

Or rather, we did. *Education, equality and social cohesion* is an outstanding study of contemporary education policies, understood in a dynamic socio-economic context. It is concerned with one of the great questions in the sociology of education, namely the relationship between education systems and social equality. It analyses an impressive body of evidence, much of drawn from existing cross sectional survey data, which the authors then marshal and compare at national level. The authors draw on a range of different surveys in order to establish relationships between different factors, covering an impressive range of countries. So, for instance, they examine the extent to which a nation's education and skills are positively associated with trust (very much so), associational memberships (weakly or negatively), tolerance (multi-faceted and complex) and income inequality (clearly negatively). They explore the relationship between inequalities of attainment on the one hand and average attainment on the other, showing that countries with narrow skills distributions tend to show lower average attainment than countries