

Rudduck, J. (1991). *Innovation and change*. (Modern Educational Thought Series). Toronto: OISE Press, 156 pp., \$21.50 (softcover).

"You could build it all of marble, but it would still be a bloody school," says a 16-year old school leaver whom Rudduck quotes to emphasize the central problem of developing shared meanings about how schools change. Unfortunately, she mainly reveals how much resistance to change there is among conservative pupils. According to Ruddick, students see school as a global "good" due to evaluations that are neither analytical nor descriptive (p. 86). However, she indicates that students can, with help, come to see group work as more than just a means to complete a task, such as in copying mathematical work, without understanding it (p. 78). On their side, teachers who are confronting proposals for innovations cannot see why the innovators give them so little recognition for what they have accomplished with students (p. 30). Occasional users of group work seek a refuge from the demands of teaching; however, teachers who use group work with only lower ability students pose greater problems because this practice reinforces the belief that lower ability groups cannot think or function without group activities.

Compared to the insights shown about the effects on pupils that teachers help to achieve when they use group work, there are few new insights in Ruddock's text concerning the general problem of shared meanings. She notes (p. 58) that students at six or seven years of age want privacy in schools (e.g., a secret place for their pencils). This hardly matches the private areas created under the Winnetka plan 50 years ago! Another new approach suggested by Rudduck is the use of management training techniques to let pupils see the teacher in a neutral role through analysis of videotapes of other classes (p. 63). Similarly, pupils are rewarded by being allowed to participate in group work in conferences held away from the schools (p. 70). Later, the author says that group work activities reinforce rather than challenge established values (p. 51). Furthermore, reform efforts are an act of social affirmation which draws upon ceremony, ritual, or a language of hope (p. 131).

Whether Rudduck abandons group work to the conservatives or seeks a symbolic interpretation of change, the gap widens between her particular observations and her general concerns. She wants to avoid cooperative groups becoming supports for corporate beliefs. For this reason she briefly quotes Aronowitz and Giroux (p. 51); these critical theorists claim that students who problemize knowledge, develop dialogue with others, and make knowledge creative can become active forces in their own education. However, she fails to tell us how her studies help us to understand how students will be able to do all of that. How is the thinking about change experiences which she seeks for both pupils and teachers to be brought about? She seems to see a perfect understanding as necessary for educational policy on change rather than a

political agreement on a common goal for those who have different perspectives after the innovation (pp. 31 and 112).

Rudduck's treatment of the symbolic interpretation of change as an affirmation is even more of a patchwork of concerns than is her attempt to prevent the conservative appropriation of group work. It is almost as if she is invoking religion for support when she sees that her efforts for democracy through school-based management and clinical supervision have foundered upon opposition from many sources. Disillusionment among experienced teachers leads to gradual changes, often in their own classrooms, rather than grand alternatives for schools (p. 131). The New Right has made progressive social transformation far more difficult (p. 136). Teachers' disenchantment is likely when they have tried large school innovations (p. 139). These are the themes that are immediately linked with the very brief explanation of social affirmation.

The attempts to retrieve group work for progressive education and find new social supports for the boomerangs that innovations cause are linked with the difficulty the author has in tying personal experiences to public positions. She tries initially to relate her personal experiences as a teacher and innovator to the general problem of innovation. Unfortunately, she only succeeds in showing her admiration for a hero, Lawrence Stenhouse. About other teachers she says, "Many teachers in their period of professional training have not acquired the intellectual tools they need in order to view knowledge as problematic" (p. 34). How did she overcome the limits that she frequently ascribes to other teachers?

Rather than developing the personal knowledge of teachers, general ideals about teacher professionalism, which are not related to actual experiences, are used to support an abstract analysis. Ruddick makes dogmatic claims that professionals desire to extend knowledge and refine skills (p. 19). She also asserts that many teachers see themselves as technical experts (p. 105). However, critical studies of professions, such as M.S. Larson's *The Rise of Professionalism*, have been overlooked.

Professionalism is only loosely linked with critical reflection in the book. Teachers who have been involved with a particular innovation have a particular opportunity to reflect upon their experience (p. 92). Such an opportunity is only developed as professional boosterism. Furthermore, professionalism also becomes a cover for the progressive and analytical position on education that the author supports. She says that it is a mark of professional confidence to have students learn through discussion (p. 42). Can traditional teachers who use the lecture method never achieve professional confidence?

The association of professionalism with progressivism is only one of the loose links with current ideas that are not developed in a reasoned argument. The "teacher as researcher" idea joins the collection which includes glorified professionalism, school-based management, and clinical supervision. However,

in her conclusion the forces of light are all aligned against the powers of evil. Teachers who oppose her form of professionalism are still militant conservatives (p. 92). Government support for extended professional study has been disastrously reduced (p. 127). The public is caught in an anti-intellectual climate that limits respect to the profession (p. 24). The goblins are chasing the true believers! Perhaps the devils originate from the author's inability to consider ideological alternatives.

### **Reference**

Larson, M.S. (1977). *The Rise of Professionalism*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

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