BOOK REVIEWS

Goodson, I. (1997). *The changing curriculum: Studies* in *social construction.* New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 210 pp. (Softcover).

Curriculum scholars recognize Ivor Goodson as one of the leaders, if not *the* leader, in the areas of curriculum theory and history. A prolific and critical pedagogical historian of the dimensionality of power theorists, Goodson's concepts for "class, power, social regulation, macro-micro level interactions and contemporary educational practice" (p. xxxiii) are examined and reflected upon within the framework of a political, historical curriculum journey in *The Changing Curriculum: Studies in Social Construction.*

This is an exciting book for two reasons. First, it allows the reader to sense the growth in Goodson's theoretical development from the perspectives of both his personal and academic life. Second, the text is beautifully crafted in what I would term rhetorical essays that entertain and inform those of us in North American education who are not as familiar with his work as we should be.

There is a tendency to overlook or even to avoid reading the introduction to any text written by another author. Joe Kincheloe, however, provides a thoughtful and important framework for the book. From the first words, the reader sees Goodson as a person whose own life experience of poverty led him to question the significance and viability of curriculum as it related to his humble beginnings. Kincheloe paints a powerful portrait of the struggle against oppression that Goodson overcame as he examined the evolution of curriculum that safeguarded the monopolistic views of mainstream British society. While Goodson makes clear references to his early life experiences within the body of the text, the biographical underpinnings for his work are much more potently presented by Kincheloe.

Each chapter weaves a thread for understanding the ideological forces that construct student perceptions of school and the subsequent nature of that influence upon their school experiences. Constructed upon a class structure where different orders or classes are offered different curriculum expressions, Goodson contends that subordinate classes have historically been offered technical and commercial courses that only require concrete thinking strategies. On the other hand, a richer and more abstract thinking curriculum has been offered to higher classes. Goodson believes that such curricular decisions are politically and socially structured and that educators at all levels have ignored how power interests have influenced curricular reform, instructional methodologies, and formats for identifying student achievement and success.

Curriculum from the Goodson perspective is embodied in who we are and what we do rather than in disembodied collections of knowledge to be transmitted as isolated bits of information that are disconnected from the lived experiences of students. The latter perspective maintains a Calvinistic stance that avoids examination of "how a society selects, classifies, distributes and transmits its educational knowledge" (p. 48) and ignores how these issues are related to power and social control. Building upon a Bernstein legacy of the social constructionist study of the curriculum, Goodson accepts the Foucauldian premise that power produces knowledge. He supports his arguments throughout the text by providing initially a detailed historical comparative analysis of French psychiatry and psychiatric knowledge with English schooling and the school knowledge of geography, and subsequently by his examination of the classical curriculum of American private schools. Each example highlights the "socially constructed set of beliefs that internalize and legitimize power relations within society" (p. 177).

As a reviewer, I feel somewhat apprehensive in attempting to critique the work of a major curriculum theorist given that the depth of discussion in this text demands more than one reviewer can provide. The book is an exciting read for those who know Goodson's work well, as it provides a synthesis of his theoretical constructs. It is the kind of book that we will want to go back to time and time again. However, I see its major strength as an ideal

text for new graduate students in curriculum studies, many of whom conceive of public education as the great equalizer across social classes. Goodson forcefully rejects this premise. Many of these graduates may argue that the North American public educational scene does not include the historical baggage that represents British education or private education in the United States. Goodson's book, however, provides an excellent launch pad for examining their own instructional practices. Perhaps even more important, it will sensitize them to the role they play in maintaining the political and social constructs that continue to marginalize many of their students. Goodson advocates a second look at topical educational issues such as computer technology and subject specialties which he refers to as the "docile bodies" (p. 108) of professional power, so that teachers and teacher trainers "ensure a discussion about teacher roles, pedagogies, and relationships that are closely related to actual choices with which the teacher will be confronted in his or her working life" (p. 158). This book is a giant step in effecting such a discussion.

Ruth Hayden
Faculty of Education
University of Alberta

Putnam, D., Kidd, D., Dornan, E., & Moore, P. (Eds.). (1995). *The Journal Project: Dialogues and Conversations Inside Women's Studies.* Toronto: Second Story Press, 224 pp. (Softcover).

I usually finish reading a book before I start the review, but here I am on page 37 digging for my pen. I am on a plane and this book has touched a chord so I will treat this review as if it were a journal entry because that is exactly what the book is – it is a series of journal entries by at least 50 women responding to their experiences in women's studies courses.

In *The Journal Project*, the vital and life giving aspects of a Women's Studies class are illuminated in the intensity of the journaling experience – the sudden realizations of sisterhood, the confusion of identities, the anger, the sadness, the fear for our