Dwyer, Peter, Wilson, Bruce and Woock, Roger. *Confronting School and Work*, Sydney, Australia: George Allen and Unwin, 1984, 175 pp.

Confronting School and Work promises a lot. The authors say they will explore the effects of social and economic change on young peoples' perspectives on school and work. They want to "grasp the intricate relationships between macro-economic and social forces and the realities of peoples' everyday lives". At a time when macro-economic forces are producing widespread unemployment for youth and cutbacks in educational expenditures this kind of analysis is of critical importance.

The three authors are Australian academics who have worked extensively with teachers and students in "inner urban" schools. They have been responsible for developing innovative programs to help youth make the transition from school to work. They are working in an academic milieu ehich has fostered a number of recent critical studies of education, most notably Connell et al's *Making the Difference*, the field work for which they cite frequently.

The book, is, then, an exciting project. It tackles a problem of great significance from within a sophisticated problematic. The trouble is that the authors have trouble combining an analysis of everyday experience with an analysis of large scale change in Australian society. In this slim volume, they tend to skip from one level of analysis to the other without doing either in a satisfying way, or showing how the two are related.

The difficulty is illustrated in the first chapter. It starts with a discussion among three young people about their prospects for work, and moves to a brief summary of the dominant perspectives of youth in three different schools, one wealthy, one rural and one working class. Little information is given about where the data comes from, or who the students are. The entire discussion takes ten pages. At this point, the chapter jumps to some general statistics on unemployment in Australia and on school retention rates. Next there is a summary of recent government reports on youth's transition from school to work. The chapter concludes by highlighting two alternative views; one that schooling should be oriented towards "basic skills and vocational training" and another that education should improve "the intellectual skills and practical resources of all students", through more flexibility in school provision. The chapter also points out that the political rhetoric about youth's problems in transferring from school to work obscures "the underlying integration of the Australian economy into a new order of international economic structures".

The first chapter, then, raises a whole variety of issues, provides various pieces of the puzzle but jumps abruptly from one thing to the next. Chapter two is a surprise as it seems to start all over again reviewing Marxist theories of hegemony and the agency of the working class in cultural formations. This is another piece of the puzzle, but we never get back to the three students' problems or the three schools which we heard a bit about in chapter one.

The book touches on a wide variety of issues, including the effects of technology on the workplace (deskilling and displacement), world economic trends, positive themes in working class culture (solidarity, lived knowledge, informality, labour power), gender relations, Australian educational policy since the second world war, the new conservatism, and a review of some government funded projects for youth. In this array of information there are many things of interest, and various insights into how to understand the problems of youth. The book is well worth looking at for some of the examples of Australian policy, and some of the critical insights it offers. However, the lack of integration of the book is frustrating. As a Canadian academic interested in both new policy suggestions and new ways of doing an analysis of youth, school and work, I ended the book as much in agreement with the author's aims as I started, but not much more enlightened about how to proceed to do work in a Canadian setting.

Many of the issues in Canada are similiar to ones in Australia. We also face rising school retention rates, higher youth unemployment, state cutbacks in services, a declining manufacturing sector and trade position, the export of capital to N.I.C.s, a re-emphasis on basic skills and job preparation, and an attempt to make youth unemployment a problem different from general unemployment. But little academic work of a critical character can be found in educational journals on the problem of youth unemployment. As the government

jumps into new policy initiatives designed to alleviate youth unemployment, while cutting back on funding for education at all levels, Canadian academics would do well to take a closer look at the issues and enter the debate of which this book is a part.

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Singhal, R.P. *Revitalising School Complexes in India.* Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press, Inc., $13.75 (U.S.).

This is a valuable book for educational planners, administrators and teachers. It is packed with information and carefully based interpretation. Some chapters tend to favour a little too much technical analysis but this need not take away from the interest and relevance for the general reader.

Dr. Singhal provides some convenient overviews (with some key tables) of the Indian scene: isolation between neighbouring schools, alienation between schools and other educational institutions of higher order, problems of inadequate monetary inputs and the need for optimum utilisation of available resources. He also provides profiles of integrated planning for school complexes and identifies some significant predictors of the revitalising process. Two important concerns are school-community relationships and effective institutionalization of the innovative experiment.

The major theme of the book concerns effective adoption of innovative changes in school systems and analyses of constraints which may typically block such efforts in India or similar situations elsewhere. The problems include a resistance to change (among teachers, heads of schools, educational administrators and even the community), inadequate involvement of teachers, an overemphasis on (autocratic) centralised planning, and absence of a strong political will or support (according to Dr. Singhal's analysis the failure of the School Complex Innovation in Bihar was caused mainly by the change in the state government . . . "When the new Education Minister announced that the scheme was to be withdrawn . ."). In contrast, the success of the Maharashtra experiment indicated that integration (properly coordinated linkages between change-agent activities and client activities) and decentralisation are crucial for success of any innovation. "The system of 'school complex' and the principle of 'rapport' which constitute vital elements of RBP (Rapport Based Programme) in Maharashtra are important instruments of participative and non-authoritarian functioning of schools and the department of education" (p. 139).

It is particularly important, in the context of Indian education, that the change being planned through any innovation be 'incremental' rather than of any 'fundamental' type. Quoting the OECD Report (1974) on the "Creativity of Schools", Singhal observes that while fundamental changes need both inducement and coercion from outside the school, the incremental change - affecting as it does the practice of the teacher rather than his role - depends on the nature of internal organisation and relationships in it. The integrated planning model of the RBP School Improvement in Charholi (Maharashtra) aimed quite realistically not at altering the teacher's role but at introducing some significant changes in that role.

Dr. Singhal presents an optimistic report of this change with an encouraging account of the feasibility of the Maharashtra experiment for other states in India.

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