

Places Where Teachers Are Taught

John I. Goodlad, Roger Soder, and
Kenneth A. Sirotnik
San Francisco:
Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers, 1990

Anyone who has ever asked, "Why doesn't teacher education reform?" should read this eye-opening qualitative study of teacher education in 29 institutions ranging from small liberal arts colleges to research universities. The study chronicles nearly two centuries of unrelenting crises in mission, leadership, funding, and curriculum.

Even today research universities tolerate, but rarely respect, funding for and curriculums in teacher education. The authors ask: Should colleges of education emphasize research and writing to compete for scarce resources and prestige on campus, or should they emphasize teaching to earn relevance and credibility in the field? If they emphasize scholarship over relevance, then how can they ever transform education? Conversely, if they immerse themselves in practice, then how can they achieve the prestige that scholarship confers?

Concluding that all professional schools encounter this perennial dilemma, as well as marketplace demands and pressures from policymakers and bureaucracies, these writers wistfully recommend that teacher educators return to what they do best: teaching. Professors of education must merge teaching with "praxis," for example, the "knowing in action [which reconstructs] knowledge in the context of practice" (p. 403). They must generate and disseminate new knowledge that can transform education. The research university may be the ideal forum for this transformation, the authors believe, if professors of education can (1) seize leadership to improve teaching throughout the university and (2) form strong coalitions with local schools and other community institutions that will profit from exemplary teaching.

Available from Jossey-Bass Inc.,

Publishers, 350 Sansome St., San Francisco, CA 94104.

—Reviewed by Christine Roberts, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

Improving the Urban High School: What Works and Why

Karen Seashore Louis and Matthew B. Miles
New York:
Teachers College Press, 1990

The restructuring movement has forgotten the lessons of the planning change and effective schools research: the hard work of improvement happens in the school. By focusing on the toughest cases—urban high schools—Louis and Miles remind us that "changes are based on steady and patient efforts to work within the school as it exists, while maintaining a vision of what can be" (p. 15). Based on a thorough analysis of 5 improving high schools, buttressed by a survey of 200 more, *Improving the Urban High School* offers useful advice to principals, teachers, and central office staff. Louis and Miles' findings contradict top-down, national change models and emphasize the importance of extensive planning and continuous coping incorporating all staff.

Take the "vision thing." Louis and Miles show that a vision does not originate with a leader who communicates it to the troops. Staff members together build a vision together that integrates ideas of teachers, the principal, and outsiders. They may no longer play the MacArthuresque role, but principals perform a vital function by symbolically signaling the importance of the change process and incorporating others so the vision is shared. The result is fewer implementation problems and more active coping.

Improving High Schools is not a quick read, but it offers necessary advice for schools serious about reforming.

Available from Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027.

—Reviewed by William A. Firestone, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

The Teacher-Curriculum Encounter: Freeing Teachers from the Tyranny of Texts

Miriam Ben-Peretz
Albany, New York:
State University of New York Press, 1990

... teachers are encouraged to see their major role in the partnership of curriculum development as that of informed and creative interpreters who are prepared to reflect on their curriculum and to reconstruct it.

The Teacher-Curriculum Encounter takes the reader beyond the traditional dimension of curriculum development to the implementation and revision stages. In case studies Ben-Peretz underlines the active role teachers can play whenever they create any form of curricular materials. She also describes instruments and procedures that can help teachers endeavoring to interpret curriculums to uncover "curriculum potential." The final chapter addresses teacher education and staff development implications.

This book would have benefited if the author had added two other pertinent topics: the importance of orienting teachers to work closely with textbook editors to create desired materials and the technology that permits teachers to down-link from satellite content to their classrooms, which reduces their dependency on hard copy.

Our profession must find ways to empower teachers to be choice makers, adapters, and creators of curriculum materials and to systematically reflect on their teaching practices—and this is what this book offers. Supervisors and teacher educators will find it especially useful.

Available from State University of New York Press, State University Plaza, Albany, NY 12246, for \$12.95 (paper).

—Reviewed by Jerrold D. Hopfengardner, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.

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