

used for racist ends, to exclude blacks from enjoying voting rights on the grounds of their illiteracy. It has, on the other hand, repeatedly laid down that, because a person cannot read or write, he or she should not be assumed to be mentally incapacitated, or otherwise incapable of exercising the normal right and functions of social, political and economic life. It has also, by its decisions, tended to impose upon the literate, in their dealings with those who are not, a duty not to take advantage of their incapacity. But as society has increasingly operated under complex, written contractual arrangements, this protection has become more of a burden on the system. Even with this protection the liberty of the illiterate person, significantly and several times called a deviant by the author, is devalued to a growing extent.

This book confines itself to illiterates in one society, that of the growing United States, and was no doubt aimed at a North American readership. One cannot criticize the author for this: he has done a studious and painstaking job in a very large field. The USA is, however, quite special, even among constitutional democracies, so that it would be unwise to assume that American experience has been, or is being, repeated elsewhere. Professor Stevens admits to having stressed the primacy of the individual rather than society. The cases he cites, as one might have expected in an American context, do the same, to an extent that might be considered excessive in some countries. The American legal tradition, based as it is on English common law, but also on a written constitution, is significantly different from those of most mainland European states, not to mention many other parts of the world. So this book's analysis does not necessarily offer answers for those working in other societies. It does, however, suggest a number of questions which might usefully be put in other contexts.

It is difficult to pinpoint a target audience for the book. The author himself gives no guidance. Although it should provide few difficulties for the intelligent undergraduate, it is unlikely to be recommended as a textbook, whether in law, social history, or education. It does not treat a topic central to the syllabuses of any of them. Nevertheless it deserves to be read widely, by students, practitioners and teachers in all of these fields and by social scientists generally. It is a thoroughly sound piece of work, contributing to our knowledge of an area about which we have assumed more than we have known.

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THOMAS, R.M. and KOBAYASHI, V.N., eds. 1987. *Educational Technology – Its Creation, Development and Cross-Cultural Transfer*. Oxford: Pergamon Press, 275 pp.

This book contains a collection of papers especially prepared for the Western Regional Conference of the Comparative and International Education Society, organized by the University of Hawaii in December, 1986. The theme of the conference became the title of the book.

After an introductory chapter, the book consists of four parts each dealing with one of the following so-called educational technologies: electronic computers, television/radio, print media, and operating systems. An essay, introducing each part, reviews highlights in the history of the technology featured in that part. Each part consists further of two chapters, the first of which directs attention to conditions in the advanced industrial societies in which the particular technology has been created and developed. The second chapter focuses on the transfer of that technology into societies referred to as developing, underdeveloped, or less-developed.

Each part also shows a different way of analyzing conditions that influence the development and transfer of educational technology. Part I (computers) offers the approach of a decision-making model, part II (radio/television) a 'lessons learned' perspective, part III (print media) a 'contrasting viewpoints' perspective and part IV (operating systems) a sociopolitical, historical analysis. The first editor wrote the introductory chapter on the nature of educational technology, while the second editor is the author of the final chapter on the meaning of educational technology in the modern world. The authors of the other chapters were chosen for their expertise in the types of educational technology they had to discuss, while the first editor is the author (in one case co-author) of the introductions to the four parts. The purpose of the book is, according to the editors, to offer an analysis of conditions affecting the creation, development, and cross-cultural transfer of four varieties of educational technology (p. 3).

Reading the book from the perspective of a scientific and professional interest in educational technology as a problem-solving approach, I was (and other readers will be) disappointed. The title of the book is for two reasons to some extent misleading, and promises too much. First, the reader expects a comprehensive discussion of the creation and the development of educational technology and its cross-cultural transfer. This is not the case, not only because of the scope of the book as a collection of thematic conference papers, but also because of the selection of the media that are discussed: three major, but no 'little media' (in the meaning of Schramm 1977).

Secondly, the scope of the book adheres to a too limited definition of educational technology, viz. the instrumental one, instead of the broadly accepted problem approach of educational technology. The central idea of the latter approach is that educational technology refers to the process, and the knowledge and ability to develop solutions for educational problems. In the context of such an approach, the instrumental definition has its place, that is educational technology in the meaning of technology (= instruments) in education, but it is certainly not the dominant one as is suggested in this book.

In line with this instrumental approach are remarks that teachers have a lack of understanding of technology (p. 51) and are demonstrating a resistance to changing their instructional roles (pp. 116, 117), suggesting that the shortcoming is only on the side of the teachers, and overlooking the fact that much technology is presented to them so poorly prepared and devoid of clear and validated instructional materials and examples, that nothing else could be expected from them.

Another surprising aspect of the book is the way the concept of an operating system is used. An educational operating system is called a planned, persistent, standardized way of promoting learning (p. 197). This suggests that an operating system should be consciously designed and planned. But then, as an example, the evolution of the French educational bureaucracy and its export to a former colony is analyzed from a sociopolitical, historical perspective. Although this is one of the more interesting chapters in the book, an educational technologist will wonder why this topic is discussed and not, for example, the earlier mentioned 'little media'. One may wonder who is seen as the audience for this book. Given the low level of knowledge expected from the reader (for example in the introduction to the part on computers), the way in which certain technical aspects are treated (for example, calling a punch-card system an example of modern technology for data input, and the remark that an individual equipped with a micro-computer and a photocopying machine can publish printed matter of professional quality, while not explaining that at present desktop publishing is within the possibility of educators) suggests that the book cannot be meant for educational technology professionals.

This does not mean that the book does not contain interesting articles. The way in which the four main topics are treated, the contrasts between the developed and the developing countries, as well as the different perspectives in the four parts offer many interesting data, ideas and issues for critical discussion. Especially those interested in comparisons between the industrialized and the developing countries may find this book useful, if handled critically.

Reference

Schramm, W. 1977. *Big Media, Little Media*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.

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