

count is fascinating. She effectively locates in the New School the micro-operations of imperialist and anti-democratic impulses that she details throughout the book. In exploring “how ‘diversity’ is manufactured,” she paints a vivid picture of the institutional cooptation of radical discourses. This is a point she makes throughout the collection; it is made most clearly and powerfully here. In fact, “Anatomy of a Mobilization” successfully brings together all of the collection’s threads, acting as a kind of key or index to Alexander’s thought.

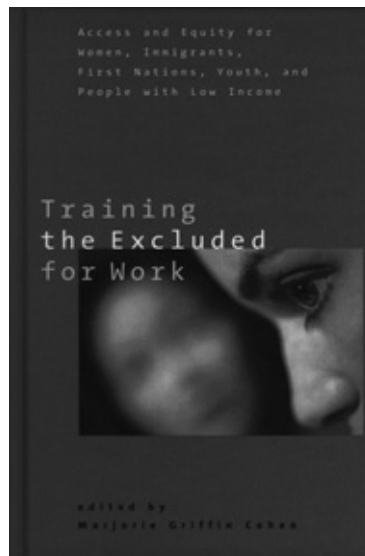
The one weakness of *Pedagogies of Crossing* is organizational. Many of the essays are very long—60 and 70 pages—and unwieldy. With the exception of “Anatomy of a Mobilization,” their length makes it difficult to maintain focus. This is in part a function of the wealth of ideas at work in them; Alexander’s great strength is in making explosive connections between seemingly disparate ideologies. Given this meeting of heterogeneous contexts, however, some tightening is needed in order to enable readers to more easily grasp the knowledge framework she is building. In some ways, this is a minor weakness, emerging as it does from Alexander’s formidable grasp of so many different ideological, historical, and geographical circumstances. In a sense, the essays’ organizational excesses speak to the current promise of transnational feminist theory as an excavator of buried connections.

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TRAINING THE EXCLUDED FOR WORK: ACCESS AND EQUITY FOR WOMEN, IMMIGRANTS, FIRST NATIONS, YOUTH AND PEOPLE WITH LOW INCOME

Marjorie Griffin Cohen, Ed.
Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003

REVIEWED BY JAN KAINER



This book analyses equity skills training in the context of a rapidly changing policy environment that is increasingly less sympathetic to the specific needs of those most excluded from the labour market including low-income women, aboriginals, older workers, youth and immigrants. All fourteen essays in Marjorie Griffin Cohen’s edited volume document the negative implications of the Canadian federal governments’ policy decision to devolve responsibility for training to the provinces.

From the post WWII era until the mid ’90s, the federal government directly funded training programs, seeing this as part of its (Keynes-

ian) responsibility for promoting economic development. Under this policy, government sponsorship training programs offered training allowances covering expenses for trainees such as tuition, living expenses, transportation and daycare. Additionally, a government contracting system paid providers for the full cost (including overhead) of delivering training programs. This scheme offered considerable access to training, even for marginalized groups. By the ’80s the federal government recognized the need to accommodate those systematically disadvantaged in the labour market. As Critoph explains, by 1991 a commitment to “assisting women, visible minorities, persons with disabilities, and Aboriginal persons was formalized in an internal directive known as the Designated Group Policy (DGP).” Programs for disadvantaged groups under the DGP (in conjunction with the Canadian Jobs Strategy and National Training Act) were quite successful especially for women who, for instance, “represented 124,000 participants or three-quarters of designated group participants in 1993-94,” an historical high mark for women’s training in Canada. These equity programs were long-term, available to people on unemployment insurance as well as to social assistance recipients.

All of this drastically changed when the federal government transferred training to the provinces in 1996. Not only was funding lost, eligibility criteria severely restricted, and the equity component (DGP) eradicated, but the policy framework underwent a radical shift moving away from government sponsorship for training to a neo-liberal market-driven approach. The cost of training has been downloaded to individuals who now assume responsibility for their own training through the aid of government subsidies such as Employment Insurance (EI) vouchers and loans. Furthermore, because the “federal government set up mechanisms that

support the development of a private market,” program delivery has shifted from the public non-profit sector to providers in the for-profit private sector. As many of the contributors point out, the new policy context disproportionately affects access to training for the excluded groups and raises fundamental questions about “what works and what does not work in equity training programs.” On the whole, programs which tend to fail are short-term and primarily serve the needs of employers, whereas those which succeed are long-term and focus on the needs of the excluded and their communities. More specifically, as Wolff and Hynes (ch. 2), Haiven and Quinlin (ch. 7), McFarland (ch. 11) and Lior and Wismer (ch. 12) demonstrate, privatization has depleted community-based vocational training: community colleges are playing an expanding role (Saskatchewan, New Brunswick) while also shortening programs to 26 weeks to match E.I. vouchers, thereby compromising the quality of education (Ontario) and, because the current system requires public and private sector providers to “demonstrate that their graduates are employable and employed,” a market-based job related curriculum is taking the place of theoretical and generalized learning. Another problem raised by the current training policy framework is a lack of commitment to equity-seeking groups. Hart and Shrimpton’s analysis (ch. 4) of equity training in the Hibernia construction project, the largest ever in Canada, showed that equity initiatives failed because the policy was poorly and ineffectively implemented; women did not gain full access to training, nor did supervisors recruit or facilitate their integration into male-dominant construction jobs. And, as Wong and McBride explain (ch.13), youth training in British Columbia has been driven by a market-based strategy that is reinforcing a polarized labour market by unfairly

slotting youth without high school education, or on social assistance, into low-wage jobs, while the more affluent possessing post-secondary education are channeled into better placements promising higher wages and job security.

What *does* work for excluded groups are programs specifically tailored to meet their unique needs; they typically are long-term, based in local communities and have strong links to the labour market. The chapters on women’s training consistently bear these findings out. Women-only programs, for instance, are often specialized to deal with the concerns of different groups of women such as immigrant women (Manery and Cohen, ch. 8) who require language and settlement training. Community-based training (CBT) is often the most effective in creating successful links to the labour market, and by recognizing that training goes beyond income creation to incorporate community support, a holistic approach that recognizes people’s relationships to their household and ethnic communities is emphasized (Lior and Wismer, ch. 12; Little, ch. 6). The Vancouver Island Highway Project (Cohen and Braid, ch. 3) was largely successful because equity provisions mandated recruitment of equity hires (e.g. women, aboriginal men) from the local community. Similarly a youth training program in central Montreal (Bourdon and Deschnaux, ch. 14) used posters to recruit at risk youth for job interviews at a computer recycling business.

A couple of the chapters present mixed results of equity training schemes. Butterwick’s analysis of life skills training (ch. 9) “offered, a life-affirming experience for many” yet it was an intrusive process “whereby individuals who are already vulnerable have their lives open to further surveillance.” Apprenticeship training (Sweet, ch. 10) for women also proved limiting as few women completing non-traditional apprentice-

ship made earnings equivalent to their male counterparts. Moreover, women in non-traditional apprenticeships, such as building trades, represent only around three percent of registrants, a figure that has not changed in almost thirty years (Braid, ch. 5).

This is an excellent collection of articles. Cohen covers a lot of ground (although I would like to have seen a chapter on disabled or injured workers). By selecting detailed case studies in areas of traditional (health care, clerical) and non-traditional (construction) work, and by placing equity training within a broader policy analysis, we can see the extent of the shift around access and the quality of program delivery. Anyone interested in training will benefit enormously from reading any, or all, of the chapters in this very informative book.

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WOMAN OF THE WORLD: MARY MCGEACHY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Mary Kinnear
Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004

REVIEWED BY CLARA THOMAS

Any account of Mary McGeachy’s life reveals a remarkable woman and a remarkably successful professional life. Born in Sarnia, Ontario, in 1901 (a date she later changed to 1904), the daughter of an evangelical Plymouth Brethren preacher, she had from