

Kenneth Blackmore and Brian Cooksey. A Sociology of Education for Africa,  
George Allen and Unwin, London, 1981, pp. 274

Blackmore and Cooksey have attempted to write a fairly old-fashioned sociology of education text-book related to Africa. They provide a competent introduction to education in pre-colonial and colonial Africa before examining the role played by education in social inequality in Africa and the sociology of the school, the teacher and the curriculum. The larger issues of socio-cultural change, economic development and the African political structure related to education constitute one third of the book. As far as it goes the book is a staid presentation of the sociology of education in an African context. Unfortunately the sociology of education, wherever its applied to, has moved on considerably in the last decade. It is strange that any sociology of education text-book fails to mention 'progressivism', 'positivism', 'phenomenology' or Bernstein's 'codes', B Bowles and Gintis' Schooling in Capitalist America, Sharp and Green's Education and Social Control or Braverman's Labour and Monopoly Capitalism. Whether the authors are unaware of the significance of Bourdieu's notion of 'cultural capital', Gramsci's Selections from the Prison Notebooks, or Michel Foucault's contributions is unclear although one would have to assume so. In their discussion of the role of the teacher and whether teaching is a profession no mention is made of standard works in this field.

Parts of the book make interesting reading but on the whole it is a flat treatment of a subject which has undergone a major revolution since M.F.D. Young's Knowledge and Control was first published in 1971.

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