

BOOK REVIEWS

THE DISSENTING TRADITION IN AMERICAN EDUCATION

JAMES C. CARPER & THOMAS C. HUNT
PETER LANG, 2007
\$32.95, 286 PAGES

Reviewed by Ellis A. Joseph

Carper and Hunt have consistently produced scholarship treating religious traditions in American education. Their scholarship is always characterized by rigorous and detailed documentation. This book is no exception. This work is buttressed by 1,009 notes, many of them explanatory in nature.

The authors have determined that the scope of their investigation covers the Catholic dissent in 19th century New York City; the 19th century Catholic parochial school and institutionalizing dissent; the Bennett Law and its repeal as a source of dissent; Bible reading and the Edgerton decision in questioning the prevailing orthodoxy; Protestant dissent in the 19th century; the Christian Day School movement and new Protestant dissent; the topic of the state and the Protestant dissenters; and the resurfacing of the practice of homeschooling.

The scope and rigor of this work reminds one of a philosophy of educational history of another era, the era of Edgar Wallace Knight, Ellwood Patterson Cubberley, and Lawrence A. Cremin, among others. These authors, along with Carper and Hunt, were not merely content to dismiss the practice of history by averring that history can only be an imaginative interpretation of the past. No doubt, history is partly an imaginative interpretation by the historian; it is also an endeavor which allows the student to decipher what was with some degree of certainty. Carper and Hunt have done a remarkable job of properly blending imagination with a supportable presentation of what was in the dissenting tradition.

Despite the rich tradition of the American common school and its value to our country (remember Commager's "our schools have kept us free"), the reader of the *The Dissenting Tradition* would do well to pay attention to the lessons from dissenters Carper and Hunt believe we should observe. These

lessons would remind us that the history of dissent in schooling has also kept us free in the best sense of freedom.

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LITERACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE: READING, WRITING, VIEWING, AND COMPUTING

FRANK B. WITHROW
SCARECROW EDUCATION, 2004
\$23.95, 107 PAGES

Reviewed by Sarah E. Crosske

Media has become a staple in contemporary life. The Internet, video games, and television are all common instruments to people young and old. But what happens when the young sacrifice some of their learning for these modern conveniences? In *Literacy in the Digital Age: Reading, Writing, Viewing, and Computing*, Withrow discusses the impact of technology on education, and more specifically on a child's developing literacy. Children are not only responsible for cultivating literacy through reading and writing, they also need to be conversant through computers, television, and other digital media.

Withrow begins to explore the digital phenomenon through the first chapter by posing the question: How do children learn? Withrow recounts a rhyming email exchange with his great-grandchildren. He was able to practice an important developmental literacy skill through the avenue of technology. The author reports the learning experiences that young children can gain through television shows and video games. Parents need to take a participatory role when children are coalescing their literacy skills with technology, more specifically with television. "One area that is critical in television viewing is to help the child understand advertisements that are directed toward them" (p. 15). It is a parent's and an educator's duty to create conscious consumers of media.

A literate student needs to be able to comprehend material that is laden with varying levels of difficult vocabulary. Withrow discusses the process of developing phonemic awareness and vocabulary. An advanced vocabulary