



High Expectations: The Cultural Roots of Standards Reform in American Education (Advances in Contemporary Educational Thought Series)

William A. Proefriedt

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"'Inquiry, Not Recipes,' indeed! This book is an historically sophisticated and philosophically wise critique of the rise and fall of expectations in the gnarled bequest of American educational thought and practice. Path breaking!" --John J. McDermott, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy and Humanities, Texas A&M University

This fascinating historical account sheds much-needed light on the ideas and assumptions of the current standards and accountability movement by focusing on essential questions in education: Who is to be educated? What knowledge is of most worth? How shall we teach and how do students learn? And education toward what ends? The author then compares and contrasts how present reformers have answered these questions and how educational thinkers, including Emerson, Du Bois, and Dewey, have addressed them. By placing today's reforms in historical perspective, educators will be better able to respond thoughtfully to current educational policies and practices. Providing a thorough understanding and critique of today's standards movement, this book shows how the strengths and weaknesses of the present reform movement are rooted in a set of American cultural beliefs about individual possibility and responsibility, about opportunity and merit, and about the role of schooling in creating social change, argues that schools are not the only institution in our society that should be held responsible for the failure to close the achievement gap, encourages educators to step outside of their day-to-day practice to see that there are other ways of "doing schooling" based on our past, and offers new paths that reformers can try to address issues such as curriculum, approaches to learning, testing, and school finance practices.

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