enrollment decisions), the availability of publicly- and institutionally-funded grants and loans is an important component of the financing scheme for higher education in this country. The use of grants and loan subsidies to lower the posted tuition, or “sticker price,” for a large number of students in this country has no corollary in Japan. Thus, the book is largely absent of any analysis of the impact of financial aid on college-going behavior.

In his application of the relevant economic theories, Arai does furnish limited comparisons between Japan and other countries, including the United States. The reader is thus given some assistance in relating the examples provided to this country. However, it should be understood that the strength of this volume is its elucidation of the general theories governing college-going behavior, and that the application of the theories provided by the author will be most valuable to those interested in higher education in Japan.

Donald E. Heller
University of Michigan,
Ann Arbor, MI 48109, USA
E-mail address: dheller@umich.edu

By Centre for Educational Research and Innovation.

Lifelong learning is no longer the exclusive province of the academic or wealthy dilettante. Nations as well as their individual citizens are subscribing to the concept at an accelerating rate. In an age driven by the rapid pace of technological change, lifelong learning holds national and individual promise. For developed and developing nations economic competitiveness is at stake. With lifetime employment with the same firm a thing of the past, marketable skills.

Chapter Four is a brief but commendable discussion of the cost factors that influence an individual’s decision to pursue higher education. It suggests that current policies create obstacles to equitable access. A “level playing field” is suggested. While this chapter, as are all, is enriched with graphs and sidebars highlighting specific national conditions or responses, the arguments presented are well worn.

The anonymous authors crafted four succinct essays relating to a timely subject. Unfortunately, it appears to be the work of a committee. The whole is less than the sum of the parts. The introduction and opening chapter prepares the reader for much more than is actually presented. The three remaining chapters stand on their individual merits but do not contribute to a unified whole. They are characterized by their narrow focus on a widely accepted goal in OECD member nations, the concept’s lack of an accepted operational definition has inhibited policy formation. One is offered. The definition presented spans the interval between cradle and grave. With the individual as the center of focus, it embraces the broad range of formal and informal learning activity pursued throughout a lifetime. With this broad operational definition, a complementary monitoring process is suggested. While the challenges of accommodating informal learning and the evolution of needs associated with different life phases are recognized, the requisite details of such a monitoring protocol are not provided.

The teachers’ chapter posits that strategies for transforming traditional education into a lifelong learning enterprise must include teacher input. “Successful reform does not take place despite teachers, but rather ensures that their contribution is maximised.” (Page 27) Future teachers will have to be prepared for a different environment with differing expectations. The bulk of in-service teachers, prepared before 1980, will themselves require much more than traditional in-service training. As the industrial model for instruction is replaced by an array of alternate delivery modalities, teachers’ roles and responsibilities will change. Thus in order to help foster lifelong learning attitudes in their students, teachers themselves will have to become lifelong learners.

The third chapter focuses on youth’s school to work transition. While there are variations among countries, the nature of the first job and how quickly it is found are shown to have a strong influence on subsequent employment opportunities. With early school-leavers increasingly ill suited for the evolving employment markets, the policy questions are obvious. Initiatives that partner government, employers and trade unions are offered as effective means of easing the school-to-work transition. The suggested model for a transnational youth policy is characterized by complementary and mutually reinforcing social, economic and educational components. Nordic programs that reflect a case management approach are lauded.

Chapter One posits that although lifelong learning is...
the traditional instructional delivery modalities directed
to traditional aged students. While recognizing the con-
tinuing education needs of teachers, the essays largely
hardly acknowledge those of middle-aged professionals,
tradesmen and other workers long passed their formal
schooling. Hence the text will be of limited value to
those seeking guidance for these burgeoning groups.

W. Patrick Leonard
Allegheny County Community College,
Monroeville, PA 15146, USA
E-mail address: pleonard@ccac.edu

Processes of Transition in Education Systems
Elizabeth McLeish and David Phillips (Eds.): Symposium Books, Wallingford, Oxfordshire, United King-
dom, 1998, pp. 102, Price $38.00 paperback.

Since the collapse of the communist systems in the
Soviet Union and Eastern Europe transformation has
become one of the outstanding topics in the social
sciences. It has been discussed by political scientists,
sociologists and economists and soon gained cross-disci-
plinary relevance in theoretical analyses based upon the
examination of hypotheses and models. The contribution
of education to these processes, though underexposed as
against the mainstream of the social sciences, is worth
to be given particular interest. This statement can be sub-
stantiated by the twofold role played by education as a
systemic instrument of policy-making as well as a driv-
ing force of transformation per se. The latter role has
been often underestimated in cross-disciplinary analyses,
which is surprising enough in view of the fact that the
initiators and agents of transformation are the products
of educational processes within and outside their formal
components (schools).

The authors of the booklet in review provide solid and
stimulating insight into this twofold role of education in
the transformation processes of the countries selected.
This quality becomes evident whenever the tensions
between the “macro-level transition” (of political
decisions and their implementation in the administration
networks) and the “micro-level transition” (as the con-
straints of everyday school reality) is tackled, whether in
Elizabeth A. McLeish’s conceptual introduction (p. 18)
or in the state-of-the-art comments in the respective con-
texts (e.g. pp. 32, 46-47, 58-59). Let alone this intrinsic
quality, the study is distinguished by the following four
features.

First, it is presented as the outcome of a team-based
project which was conducted at the internationally well-
reputed Centre for Comparative Studies in Education in
Oxford (Director: David Phillips). Despite the smallness
of the research group—Elizabeth A. McLeish, Julia
Bekker, Natasha Kersh, Nina Arnhold, Stephanie
Wilde—the team-based approach has laid the foundation
for a surprisingly stringent coherence characterizing the
descriptive and analytical structures of the individual
chapters. Second, it is true that the confinement of the
research objects on East Germany and Latvia cannot
claim representative validity for the post-communist
region in total. McLeash’s exemplary argument that “the
GDR was and is not a phenomenon unique to this (i.e.
the German) nation or even to the former Soviet bloc
countries as a whole” (p. 50), is certainly plausible with
regard to macro-level considerations of transformation,
but does not prove true, as soon as the imposition of
structures and curricula of West German origin on the
education systems of the restituted East German Laender
is put on the agenda. This confinement, however, is con-
vincingly compensated by the inclusion of post-apartheid
South Africa in the project, whose applicability as a dis-
tinctive research object is confirmed by Julia Bekker’s
paper. Third, all the four authors succeed in reconciling
the peculiarities of their “national cases” with the leading
questions inherent in the pre-designed model. This qual-
ity enables the reader to make comparative references to
the other education systems presented and, moreover, to
further “countries in transformation”. Finally, the th-
ematic composition of the project indicates a remarkable
balance, as concerns the transformation processes at the
national education levels in general (McLeash: East Ger-
many, Kersh: Latvia, Bekker: South Africa) and, though
only related to East Germany, noteworthy selected fields
(Arnhold: teacher education, Wilde: Gesamtschulen/comprehensive schools). The informative quality
of the two latter essays is reinforced by the authors’
detailed presentation of diversities related to the Laender
policies within the federal education system of Germany.

It should not raise any astonishment that this well-
conceptualized and thoroughly elaborated study leaves
some questions open. On the one hand the title signals
the authors’ preference of transition to transformation
as the notion to define the processes analyzed. In her
conceptual argumentation McLeash, however, applies
both notions in an interchangeable manner (e.g. p. 14),
thereby ignoring recent suggestions to demarcate their
contents against each other. On the other hand the focus
of the study is set on the political component of edu-
cational transformation “from authoritarian rule to demo-
cratic government” (ibid.). This decision is acceptable
with regard to the internal consistency of the project, but
includes a tendency towards neglecting the impact of
economic developments on the national transformation
processes in education nevertheless. Moreover, it causes
a certain incongruity with McLeash’s conceptual identi-
fication of the “economic dimension” as “an important
one” (ibid.) and with some remarks in the country-based