

## Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Ruth Streit

►Caswell, Hollis L. and Associates. *Curriculum Improvement in Public School Systems*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1950. 462 p.

This book is unique in its organization and as such will prove invaluable both to students in the area of the curriculum and to the practical curriculum workers in the field. Beginning with well chosen background materials which indicate the need for continuing curriculum improvement the first part of the book presents various programs indicating the development of the curriculum movement in American education. This is followed by an appraisal of these programs and also some "indication of the kind of administrative provision considered desirable to facilitate sound curriculum work." A statement of general criteria for the evaluation of curriculum programs completes the first one hundred pages of this volume.

By far the major portion of the book, some three hundred pages, is devoted to "Reports of Current Curriculum Programs" in six selected city school systems, one county school system, and two state school systems making a total of nine comprehensive reports extending from Philadelphia to California and from Battle Creek to Florida. The last twenty-five pages are devoted to "Selected Curriculum Materials." This excellent bibliography is classified by cities, counties, states, as well as by the instructional fields of Art, English, Geography, Health, Social Studies, Science and the like.

"Background Materials for Evaluating Programs of Curriculum Development" indicate the historical development of the curriculum in this country. Beginning with Chapter I, "The Changing Curriculum," the authors mention the various schools of psychological thought and then turn directly to the impact of social change upon the school program. Chapter II, "Current Demands for Curriculum Change," continues the social emphasis upon education. Pointing out the need for international understandings, improved inter-group relations, education for family life, ideals and love of country, conservation education, understanding atomic energy and finally evaluating the demands for change. Chapter III, "Development of Organized Curriculum Programs," begins the real review of the various attempts at curricular change.

These chapters do give good background materials for curriculum improvement, but they also leave out some excellent materials which are also basic to modern curriculum change. There is no mention of significant biological findings and only a brief reference to the newer psychology and the importance of child development.

While it is recognized that there are limitations as to the physical size of a book and that it is impossible to include every aspect of the curriculum within its pages, nevertheless to devote less than a page and a half to "child study" does seem a very serious omission in the light of current educational thought.

The real meat of the book is to be found in the second part devoted to "Reports of Current Curriculum Programs" and comprising Chapters VI to XIV. In these pages the officials of six city school systems, one county school system, and two state school systems have described their particular school situations. They have analyzed their needs, mentioned their administrative organization, discussed their curriculum activities, and evaluated their programs. It is both interesting and refreshing to observe the variety and extent of curriculum change in terms of particular situations. No two reports are alike and this in itself should encourage other school systems to forge ahead in the improvement of their own schools in terms of their own needs rather than to feel secure in the copying of what has been accomplished elsewhere. As a report, which is what the authors call this book, it is most helpful and stimulating. As source material for others working in this area it is comprehensive.—*Ruth Streitz.*

#### SUGGESTED READINGS

► English, Horace B., *Child Psychology*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1951. 561 p.

Professor English has sectioned his latest book into a number of useful parts around which a semester or quarter of study may be organized. Some of the sections include "Discipline and Authority," "Emotion," "Motivation," "The Child's Intellectual Life," and "Achievement, Friendship, and Love in the Development of Personality." Each is developed with care.

The illustrations and photographs are useful in this new book, but even more might have been included to justify more fully the hard-to-read enamel-finish paper. The text as a whole is a welcome addition in a field which

boasts a number of commendable contributions.—*Harold G. Shane.*

► The Association for Childhood Education International, *Helping Children Grow* and *Pictures of Children Living and Learning*. Washington, D. C.: The Association, 1951. 82 p. and 131 p., respectively.

These two recent booklets mesh together so well that the reviewer has chosen to consider them as one for purposes of presentation. *Helping Children Grow* is in the tradition of the dozens of fine pamphlets produced by the ACEI during the past two decades. It is longer and more handsomely produced than most, however. As a guide to the selection of materials which contribute to child growth it acquires added interest because it originally was prepared for Education Service Centers in Occupied Germany. Good procedures, materials, and developmental activities are blended skillfully in its pages. The price is \$1.25.

*Pictures of Children Living and Learning* is made up of dozens of pleasantly captioned photographs on large (8½" x 11") pages. The illustrations are organized to suggest the intelligent use of *space* (indoors and out), the importance of wise use of *time* with children, and the ways in which they learn through contacts with *people*. The last half of the book artfully suggests, photographically, what makes for good curricular experiences. The pictures included originally were in a kit of 114 used in German Education Centers during 1951. They are discussed in *Helping Children Grow* which is reviewed in the preceding paragraph.

This charming and pertinent collection of photos sells for \$2.00 and is well-worth the money for teacher education and in-service education purposes.—*Harold G. Shane.*

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