

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Ruth Streitz

►Spears, Harold. *The Teacher and Curriculum Planning*. New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1951. 163 p.

This is a *big* book even though the content is within one hundred and sixty pages. It is big in the sense that it includes big ideas expressed in simple terms. This in itself has sometimes been considered a sign of greatness! What the quality of the book will prove to be as teachers and administrators use it is a question that cannot be answered now, but one thing is certain: All will be challenged by its directness, its clearness and its accompanying illustrations which the author draws so cleverly.

"One Picture Worth a Thousand Words"

Without the cartoon drawings the content would have had to be expanded many times over, thus re-enforcing the old Chinese saying, which modern advertisers now use, that "one picture is worth a thousand words." The cartoons together with the brief script carries out the author's purpose in dividing the book into four parts to discuss "the meaning of the curriculum since so many of us use the term in so many different ways," "the foundations of the curriculum, that is, its relationships to other elements in the social setting," the development of "principles that govern actual school re-organization" and "the operation of the curriculum once it is installed in the school."

The Teacher the Focal Point

Throughout the book the author makes clear the fact that the point of

emphasis is the teacher and that without her understanding and help no real curriculum change is possible. Under the section heading, "The Meaning of the Curriculum," Spears lists nine principles which are applicable to curriculum planning in all schools but which are especially pertinent to those schools where a modern philosophy of education is emerging. His use of contrasts is especially effective as it permits the reader to see "what was," "what is" and "what should be."

Insight into Human Values

The social implications of education are to be found in Section II dealing with "The Foundations of the Curriculum." Here constant reference is made to the school and "its unique cultural setting," "the school as an integral part of the community," the school's "responsibility to raise society to better levels," "the cultural values of education set in terms of the culture in which the child lives rather than in terms of the cultures of the past" and that "a curriculum cannot be transplanted successfully but must be grown from its own native soil." The insight into human relations which the author displays is one of the most stimulating aspects of this book. Teachers will indeed take heart for this down to earth and realistic approach to the curriculum.

Section III is devoted to "Curriculum Study." Here again procedures are stressed in terms of the interaction of the teachers, the children and the school administrator in relation to all aspects of the curriculum. Thus a most

modern philosophy of leadership permeates this entire section. Section IV entitled "Administering the Curriculum" sets forth school administration at its best because of the insight and understanding of child development which is implicit in every page.

This is a stimulating book and a "must" on every educator's reading list.—*Ruth Streit*, The Ohio State University, Columbus.

►Mendenhall, C. B. and Arisman, K. J., *Secondary Education*. New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1951, 424 p.

The book, *Secondary Education*, is written for all teachers—for those who are contemplating teaching as a profession, for those who are now in training for teaching, for those who are beginning teachers, and for those who have taught a number of years and are continually testing their practices in the light of their contribution to the development of growing boys and girls.

Principles of Action

The aim of the book is to introduce various aspects of modern secondary school teaching. Its primary intention is to stimulate thinking about classroom problems, to develop sensitivity to conditions which inhibit or facilitate learning, and to encourage a disposition to create and to employ new techniques and procedures. Old and new practices are examined critically and principles of action are developed.

The authors stress that teaching must be characterized by initiative, imagination, and experimental attitudes. There are many aspects of American life which are conducive to this point of view. The settling of America with its numerous frontiers, the utilization of vast reserves of natural resources, the unparalleled use of the machine

(which brings scientific processes into the ordinary affairs of everyday life) and the advancement in the applied sciences, all point to an experimental attitude which characterizes American living.

The basic knowledge necessary for effective citizenship can be learned best in an atmosphere characterized by democracy at work. It is to be remembered that democracy as a way of living is essentially a creative, cooperative enterprise. It is the authors' conviction that democracy must be lived in order to be taught effectively. Therefore, the school can no longer remain aloof from present day living. To serve as a unifying force in American life, the secondary school necessarily must be designed to do a job of social engineering; must have a consistent point of view of its own; must interpret its functions in terms of the larger challenge; and must continually examine itself in the light of the personal and social needs upon which its re-dedication is to be postulated.

In order to further their convictions that democracy must be lived to be taught effectively, the authors present a setting in which modern secondary school teaching takes place. They are concerned with principles, problems, and suggested practices of classroom operation. They discuss the professional life of the teacher both in and out of the classroom. A series of questions, problems, and anecdotes gleaned from beginning teachers in the field and teachers in training on college campuses as well as "hints to beginners," the contribution of experienced educators in service, are presented.

The book is neither prescriptive nor exhaustive but is a resource to stimulate creative thinking and professional growth.—*Ruby Hess*, Shawnee Hills School, Lima, Ohio.

SUGGESTED READING

► Reutter, E. Edmund, Jr., *The School Administrator and Subversive Activities*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951. 136 p.

Recent and current interest in "American" teaching in public schools makes Dr. Reutter's book particularly timely. He notes that 26 states now require loyalty oaths, that 22 disqualify disloyal teachers, that 14 forbid membership in "subversive" groups, that 19 restrain teachers from advocating or presenting "subversive" doctrines, and so on. His purpose (p. 4) is ". . . to develop guiding principles for administering restraints on alleged subversive activities of public school personnel."

In his final chapter (p. 101) Reutter gives a useful list of points bearing on the problem. Ten specific recommendations (p. 106 ff.) with which he concludes should be of interest to administrators and teachers alike. The book is well-documented.—*Harold G. Shane*, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

► Wilder, Amos N., Editor, *Liberal Learning and Religion*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951. 338 p.

Here the reader, interested in religion as it bears on education, will find over a dozen essay-chapters dealing with religion in higher education. The authors clearly make the point that it is wholesome and desirable to bring ". . . students in college under the influence of scholarly and inspiring teachers of religion in order that American medicine, law, politics, business and indus-

try, and finance [may] in the years to come have ethically enlightened leadership." (p. 6)

Parts of the book are difficult to read because of high-level theological abstractions which are included (e.g., cf. p. 92), but, in general the point is clearly made that "If we want . . . religion to make its contribution to the life and culture of a people, it must have its place in the higher learning." (p. 237)—*Harold G. Shane*, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

► Faunce, Roland C., and Bossing, Nelson L., *Developing the Core Curriculum*. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1951. 311 p.

Growing interest in the core curriculum should be stimulated by this recent contribution to curriculum literature. At the same time the core concept (often loosely interpreted) should be significantly clarified for the reader.

Actually, Faunce and Bossing have done considerably more than treat narrow aspects of the core. They have contrived successfully to examine education for older children and to suggest ways of improving it. Core curriculum is defined as ". . . those learning experiences that are fundamental for all learners because they derive from (1) our common, individual drives or needs, and (2) our civic and social needs as participating members of a democratic society." (p. 4) From this broad base the authors interpret the development, values, nature, and applications of the core, the core teacher, administration of the core, and similarly related topics.—*Harold G. Shane*, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

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