

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Ruth Streitz

►Gans, Roma, Stendler, Celia B., and Almy, Millie. *Teaching Young Children*. New York: World Book Company, 1952. 454 p.

Three highly capable and well-known writers and teachers have done something unusual in *Teaching Young Children*. They have managed to combine sound, authentic information regarding young children and a readable, often delightful style.

The first part of the book brings freshness and warmth to a look at children in their cultural matrix and includes a first-rate and compact chapter on the development of the child. It concludes (p. 44-45) with a "New Charter for Young Children" which may become a classic of its kind.

A thoroughly adequate section of four chapters deals with organizing and evaluating learning experiences during early years in school and leads the reader into an examination of good teaching in the various fields of subject matter. The writers seem clearly to realize that the desirable school is one in which children learn more rather than less subject content, but do so *not* because of drill and pressure but because the essential unity and inter-relatedness of children's experiences are recognized and respected. At the same time stress is laid on individuality and wholesome development. Teaching and learning are seen "... in harmony with a deep understanding of children and their world. No child should be threatened or in any way hurt by being expected to do what he is not ready or

able to do. Each child should be encouraged to continue to explore his world while he gains new skills." (p. 192.)

The concluding chapters are a practical yet creative interpretation of good school organization and planning with an outstanding portion devoted to discipline as the increasing social control of group and individual self-direction.

Teaching Young Children is a contribution to the literature which will have meaning for the undergraduate yet also serve to sharpen the insights of the experienced teacher. Administrators of limited background at the early levels of education will likewise find it a concrete help.—*Harold G. Shane*, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

►McNerney, Chester T. *Educational Supervision*. New York: McGraw-Hill Co., Inc., 1951. 341 p.

The majority of books in the field of supervision have, on the whole, shown little change or improvement in the underlying conception of this most important aspect of education. To many, supervision is still some kind of inspection by a person from the superintendent's office who gives approval or disapproval for various school practices. To a few, supervision is regarded as a quality of human relations which is based upon respect for personality and for which leadership is thought of as "a contribution to the establishment and attainment of group purposes." Somewhere between these two points of view this book takes its place.

Choice of Words Indicates Underlying Philosophy

In the preface and in the editor's introduction the choice of words leads one to believe that this is a book for schools that have gone beyond supervision by inspection and the use of subjective judgment in evaluating the work of the teacher. This hope is borne out by the author's own words which say that "the public school program must objectively reflect the heart beat of democracy." However, as one reads on, it becomes evident that supervision is thought of more in terms of line and staff administration than in terms of democratic values determined by group processes. The following quotations illustrate this point: "The school administrator informs his staff". . . ; "individuals responsible for the supervisory process might visit each teacher and tell them to develop some plan for achieving the objectives". . . ; "teachers should be permitted". . . and so on.

There are many pages devoted to worthwhile things for supervisors and superintendents to do in the improvement of educational practices. Many publications are cited, many illustrative charts and check sheets are presented, and many topics and questions are listed. For the graduate student in education looking for a source book which presents the field of supervision ranging from the traditional point of view to the modern acceptance of theory and practice, this book will serve a distinct purpose. For teacher training institutions interested in showing the development of the field of supervision from formal to less formal practices, this book definitely indicates the growth in thinking that has taken place in American education. However, for those all too familiar with the educational lag in American schools,

there is regret that more enthusiasm is not in evidence for the practices that are indeed forward looking. For example, fewer pages are devoted to ways of working together in a democratic school situation than are given over to lists of things that should be done by the person responsible for educational supervision.

Supervision for Tomorrow?

No doubt much of the seeming neglect in developing democratic procedures in supervision is due to the author's attempt to write a book that will serve many different school groups at various stages of growth. But for those who have a deep and abiding faith in the democratic processes at work in the improvement of school practices, the book is disappointing. The last chapter, "Supervision for Tomorrow," expresses some fine democratic ideas, but somehow the tone of the book makes one feel that tomorrow is far away and that the here and now must wait.—*Ruth Streitz*, The Ohio State University, Columbus.

OTHER CURRENT PUBLICATIONS OF READER INTEREST

Bonaro Overstreet has prepared a readable, useful volume in *Understanding Fear in Ourselves and Others* (Harper and Brothers, 1951, 246 p.). Of at least equal interest to ASCD members is Samuel Tenenbaum's *William Heard Kilpatrick* (Harper and Brothers, 1951, 318 p.), an unsentimental but sympathetic treatment of one of the three or four great living personages in American professional education today.

Also recommended are Margaret Mead's Inglis Lecture for 1950, *The School in American Culture* (Harvard University Press, 1951, 48 p.) and a contemplative volume by Ward Madden, *Religious Values in Education* (Harper

and Brothers, 1951, 203 p.) which is concerned to a refreshing degree with ideas rather than the much discussed issues in this field.

In the realm of methods and practices several books, recently called to this reviewer's attention, merit the study of school workers. These include the 30th Yearbook of the Department of Elementary School Principals, *Elementary School Libraries Today* (The Department, 1951, 415 p.), Mildred Dawson's *Teaching Language in the*

Grades (World Book Company, 1951, 341 p.), and C. N. Stokes' *Teaching the Meanings of Arithmetic* (Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1951, 351 p.). All three volumes have a practical flavor. Dr. Dawson has documented her work well and Dr. Stokes proposes many specific ideas for making number concepts concrete and clear to children although his programs by age levels may arouse some of the inevitable controversy over specific grade placement.—*Harold G. Shane*, Northwestern University.

New-World Education Series

Teaching Young Children by *Roma Gans, Celia Burns Stendler, and Millie Almy*

A sound, practical, and fresh approach to the teaching of children from age four to age nine, drawing upon recent research in pediatrics, child psychology, and sociology. \$4.00

The Public Administration of American Schools

by *Van Miller and Willard B. Spalding*

A detailed study of the principles and problems of public school administration. Broad in scope and practical in application, it stresses the importance of effective democratic leadership in schools that will sustain the American way of life. \$4.60

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