

## Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Ruth Streitz

*This column begins its second year under the guidance of Ruth Streitz, professor of education, Ohio State University, Columbus. With the assistance of various outstanding critics, this department will present reviews of books considered especially significant to educators.*

►Saucier, W. A. *Theory and Practice in the Elementary School*. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1951. 515 p.

With changing practices in the elementary school brought about by numerous experimental programs in the education of teachers, there is need for professional materials that meet the newer demands of education today. Saucier recognizes this and has provided a book which endeavors to adjust the elementary school to a rapidly changing society. Child development, the nature of the learner, and techniques of adjusting the curriculum to the needs and capacities of the child are all considered. As a book for undergraduates who hope to become teachers in the elementary schools of this country, this volume will prove most helpful.

### Developing Insight and Understanding

While the organization of the book follows the usual and rather traditional form, the content under the various headings gives evidence of a sound philosophy of education and a sympathetic understanding of children and their needs. It is this insight and this understanding that give the book its real significance.

Focusing attention upon the child from the first page is in itself a contribution. Then follows an account of how the child learns, and what

guiding principles should be used if the child is to become a member of society in a confused world (and since the child lives in a democracy, it is assumed that these will be democratic principles). The objectives of education and the learning processes next suggest the program of elementary education which is the curriculum and which is designed to develop in the child understandings, habits and attitudes for life in a democratic society.

### Teaching in Terms of an Accepted Philosophy

The teaching process is described in terms of the philosophy to which the school gives its allegiance. If the point of view is traditional, then the more formal point of view is presented. If the point of view is more progressive, then procedures and practices are described in terms of a more modern program.

The remainder of the book is devoted to the teaching of the most common elementary school subjects to be found in all schools. And in this again the preference is for the work to be organized around "life-like units of work and activities" although a more conventional treatment is also presented.

One of the most interesting features of the book is to be found in the first paragraph of each chapter. Here the basic ideas of preceding chapters are reviewed and attention is directed

toward the content of the chapter that is to come. This helps the reader to organize his thinking as he studies the text. Another feature is the inclusion of natural, child-like pictures of interests and activities to be found in the better schools. An excellent book for students of elementary education.—*Ruth Streitz*, Ohio State University, Columbus.

►Slawson, Maude M., *Music in Our History*, Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1951. 130 p.

Miss Slawson has done a remarkable job of assembling a collection of songs that reflect our country's development. The running historical comments throughout the book tend to make the songs more purposeful and create a feeling of unity. The suggested recordings to be used in each unit are well chosen. At the close of each chapter suggested supplementary material is listed for singing and listening, which adds up to a wealth of material contained therein. The book is as valuable to the classroom teacher as to the music teacher.

### Historical Episodes

Beginning with the music of the "Pilgrims," Miss Slawson traces the development of our musical culture through the period of the "Indians," into "Colonial Days," the music of "Washington's Time," "Pioneer Life" and the music left us by "Early American Composers." A most interesting chapter on "The Day of Thanksgiving" is included. The music used during the Northwest Expansion is followed by the musical contribution of the Negro, and the Mountain Folk. For adventure Miss Slawson turns to "The Explorers and Their Music," "The Gold Rush Days" and "Cowboys." A short but interesting unit on music in

the Civil War Period is included, followed by "The Minstrel Show," complete with jokes by Mr. Bones and Mr. Tambo. "Music About Our Waterways" includes something of the early showboat days—rivers and canals. Very interestingly done are the songs of "The Gay Nineties," "The Music of Circuses and Carnivals" and songs of "The Sea."

With the expansion of our country came the development of industries. Two interesting units follow concerning music about "Our Workers and Their Products" and "Our Inventions" and "Machines" as described in music. A fleeting glimpse from the past to the present is caught in the final unit, "From the Early Singing School to Our Modern Music Camps." This is an excellent book to accompany the broad unit which is found today in all good elementary schools where this modern form of curriculum organization is accepted in practice.—*Imogene L. Hilyard*, Grandview Public Schools, Ohio.

►Wilson, M. Emmet, *How to Help Your Child with Music*, New York: Henry Schuman, 1951. 168 p.

Here is a book written primarily for parents but equally valuable for all music educators. It serves as a sound, common-sense guide in helping parents develop the talent of their musical—or unmusical—child. Children today are naturally musical. It is important that parents and teachers alike see that the enjoyment of music is part of every child's heritage. Because the parent does know the child better than anyone else, naturally he is best fitted to encourage the child's natural development. The author does believe that, although there are many outside influences vying for the child's time, a place for music can be made. To the countless parents who would be at a

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loss about which direction to take, this book is a wonderful guide. One of the unique features of the book is the list of specific suggestions for parents at the end of each chapter. After careful consideration of these suggestions, the parent is readily aware of the role he must play in this period of early development in musical feeling and understanding.

### **Basic Problems**

In contrast to the old-fashioned methods of "forcing," Dr. Wilson shows how music can be fun to learn if parents know how to cope with the basic problems: At what age to begin lessons? How to keep a child interested in practicing? How long to practice? How to select a teacher? The chapters on "The Selection of a Teacher" and "The Relation of Parent to Teacher" are most interest-

ing. Teachers especially might find these two chapters good measuring sticks for themselves. How to select an instrument? Here again in the chapter, "The Choice of an Instrument," can be found another unique feature of the book: a detailed chart containing complete and pertinent information about the instruments. The information and pictures contained in the chapters about the instruments make the book extremely valuable to music teachers. What about "playing by ear"? Whether one believes "playing by ear" to be good or bad, the chapter devoted to the above topic is food for thought. And finally, what "kind" of music, classic vs. jazz? What about recitals, musical groups and contests?

These questions are universal problems to most parents, and in this book Dr. Wilson has done a fine job in

answering them. Throughout the book there is stress upon the importance of making it possible for every child to like and enjoy good music.—*Imogene L. Hilyard*, Grandview Public Schools, Ohio.

►Greer, Edith S. and Rotter, George E., *Learning to Know Your Pupils*, Lincoln, Nebraska: University Publishing Co., 1951. 96 p., 80¢.

Although considerable progress has been made in developing an elementary school program based on the needs, interests and abilities of the learners, many teachers are still confused by such admonitions as “. . . good teaching considers the unique potentialities of the learners,” “. . . learning the child must precede teaching him,” “. . . you're teaching a group of individuals unique unto themselves, and not a third-grade class,” or “. . . these individuals vary widely in capacities, achievements, and interests.” Unfortunately, pre-service and in-service education programs have sometimes neglected to provide teachers with practical help in doing the job.

Rural and city elementary teachers alike will welcome the recent manual, *Learning to Know Your Pupils*, by Greer and Rotter, because it provides explicit aids and suggestions for developing a wholesome program of education. In 96 pages the authors give the elementary teacher assistance in: (a) how to study and gather pertinent information on the needs, interests and abilities of his pupils; and (b) how to use the information in improving educational opportunities. The book is an “action manual” filled with suggestions for applying pertinent pupil data in improving learning opportunities. The underlying philosophy is well expressed in this statement to teachers: “Plan to make the informa-

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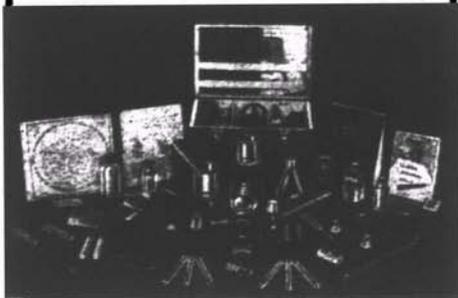
tion you gather serve the purpose for which it is intended: namely, that of understanding the child. To gather information just for the sake of having records would be a great waste of time and effort."—*Calvin H. Reed, University of Nebraska, Lincoln.*

#### OTHER SUGGESTED READINGS

Roy DeVerl Willey has completed a substantial (825 p.) treatment of the field in *Guidance in Elementary Education* (Harper and Brothers, 1952). As might be expected because of the size of the volume, Willey interprets guidance in the broadest of terms as a means of providing "an environment in which every child can grow into a socially desirable, happy, and wholesome personality." (p. 3) As a result the book deals to a considerable extent with general elementary education. The various chapters are well done and this reviewer deems Willey's book a good one. But he is a bit puzzled by a trend, apparent of late, to interpret guidance in such broad terms (as Willey has interpreted it) as almost to obliterate the field of elementary education. Is there a serious danger of professional overlapping (and potential organizational conflict in teacher education) as guidance, as a field, permeates other areas and as college courses begin to parallel rather than to complement one another?

Louis Kaplan and Denis Baron in *Mental Hygiene and Life* (Harper and Brothers, 1952. 422 p.) have prepared a useful interpretation of an important field which is strengthened by the generous use of cartoon-type line drawings by Barbara Hamilton. Ginn and Com-

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pany has re-issued that durable favorite. George C. Kyte's *The Principal at Work* (Boston, 1952, 531 p.) in a revised edition. While not fundamentally re-written, there are changes in the text and bibliographic entries which bring the material back to its original utility.—*Harold G. Shane, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.*

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