

## Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Harold G. Shane

- Sheehy, Emma Dickson. *There's Music in Children*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1952, 152 p.

*There's Music in Children* is based upon the belief that music is a part of life, that there is music in children and grownups, and that with music, we can always begin where we are and discover more about its pleasures.

Recognizing that many grownups have had unfortunate experiences with music which make them uncomfortable and inadequate in helping children, the author makes every effort to point out ways that confidence may be built within persons responsible for guiding children in musical experiences. She states, "It is skill in understanding children, however, and not skill in music techniques that will bring the greatest rewards in fostering a child's love for music."

*There's Music in Children* advocates no one system or method in teaching music, but rather explores many ways in which children learn about music and how they use it. The concrete suggestions found within the book, while avoiding a pattern, do offer real help to parents and teachers.

### Attitude of Classroom Teacher

The author points out that the attitude of the classroom teacher toward music is a most important factor in the child's musical development. She also emphasizes that providing a good musical life for children requires the use of music in the total school day and not just in scheduled periods. Problems pertinent to the classroom teacher, such as

the place of the music consultant, use and development of music resources, use of musical equipment and the organization of the music program are discussed.

Ways are suggested in this publication for helping teachers as well as parents to provide a rich environment in which children have experiences with sound, instruments, concerts and dance. Suggested readings and recordings are listed.

Out of her rich background, secured through experiences with students at Teachers College, with teacher conference groups throughout the United States, and with parent groups, Mrs. Sheehy has produced a book valuable to those who believe that there is music in all children.

—SARAH LOU HAMMOND, School of Education, Florida State University, Tallahassee.

- Stephens, Ada Dawson. *Providing Developmental Experiences for Young Children*. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1953, 107 p.

This is number eleven in a series of Practical Suggestions For Teaching, edited by Hollis L. Caswell.

In this publication the role of the understanding teacher is discussed in relation to providing developmental experiences for children in nursery schools, kindergartens and the first grades.

The importance of sharing ideas with specialists in various fields of child development is stressed. The need for the teacher to work closely with other professional workers in human behavior

and curriculum improvement is important since the teacher must implement research.

School environment is discussed from the standpoint of structure of buildings, size and setup of classrooms, and the relation of one classroom to another. This writing points out, also, that environmental needs involve equipment, educational materials, indoor and outdoor play space as well as the teacher's skill in using these in a daily program to meet developmental needs of children.

Art, language and literature, music, science and experiences beyond the confines of the classroom are discussed in detail. Anecdotal reports from classroom situations illustrate how children learn and the role of the teacher in the process.

Ada Dawson Stephens in this publication points out to teachers of the young child that they can help each other by planning together, sharing ideas and calling in the specialists when necessary. The most pressing need today is to coordinate all reports of child development and behavior into an improved school program. Teachers may learn and grow with the children.

This monograph should be useful to prospective students, teachers and supervisors who would focus attention on current findings in the field of child development and apply these to practical experiences for children.

—MARGARET H. CASSON, kindergarten teacher, Florida State University, Tallahassee.

► Jersild, Arthur T. *In Search of Self*. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1953. 125 p.

It requires courage in this day, amidst the heated barrage of criticism being leveled at "progressive" education and in the face of the critics' sanctification

of mastery of the 3 R's as the chief goal of schooling, for an educator to come forth with as radical an idea as Dr. Jersild's in his latest book, *In Search of Self*.

Dr. Jersild stresses the strategic importance of the school—second only to the home—in determining a youngster's attitude towards himself. He suggests a re-examination of many of our established institutions which seem to discourage an attitude of self-respect in many children: our grade placement system; our norms of achievement; competition; tests, and their uses. He stresses also the significant influence of the teacher in his role of substitute parent.

One of the most interesting and substantial parts of the book is a study of the compositions submitted by children from fourth grade through college on the topics, "What I Like About Myself" and "What I Dislike About Myself." Here the author, in his interpretations, draws widely on psychoanalytic theory. A significant finding is that "The language used when people evaluate themselves has meanings that transcend differences of age, sex, I.Q. and social-economic status." "It is possible," Dr. Jersild points out, "for people to communicate on an emotional level even though they are poles apart in intellectual ability." Also, "Affection knows no grade level." "Fear is as much fear in the fourth grade as it is in college."

#### Guidance of Potential Leaders

In his searching chapter on "The Self and Its Functions," the author admits that a program for self-understanding would necessarily bring with it pain for both pupil and teacher, but with the revelation of conflicts and anxieties and their resolution, would come also self-acceptance which is an essential condition of health.

While Dr. Jersild notes the possibili-

ties of the various areas of the curriculum—literature, social studies, physical training—for developing psychological insight, he does not presume to give us a detailed blueprint for putting into practice his projected program.

Such a program promises to be a difficult task, but it is worth the concerted, constructive efforts of leaders on all levels of our educational system; especially when we consider its enormous implications, not only for individual personal happiness and improved interpersonal relationships, as Dr. Jersild points out, but also for the larger world situation. We are trying to have psychotherapists take care of our potential criminals. What of our potential leaders? Must not they, too, be guided to self-understanding so that, as leaders and administrators, they will not identify their own purposes with the good of the community and will not harness their possible repressed hatred to supposedly noble causes?

—IDA KLEIN STERNBERG, Public School 41, Bronx, New York City.

#### OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

Some unusual books which do not fit neatly into conventional categories were published in recent months. One of these with the flavor and style of a novel is Marie Rasey's *It Takes Time* (Harper and Brothers, 1953). In this self-styled autobiography of the teaching profession Dr. Rasey uses the "flash-back" technique in building her book around the life of "Dr. Marie Garn," capable and dynamic educational leader, during the period 1891-1951. Dr. Garn is a composite of many fine people we know or knew. One thinks at times he is *sure* he knows which one because Dr. Rasey's style is so authentic. Or, perhaps, in Marie Garn's unfolding career he finds bits of his own.

James L. Hymes, Jr., directs his

uniquely readable style toward the interpretation of better school-community understanding in his *Effective Home-School Relations* (Prentice-Hall, 1953). Reporting, conferring, group meetings, attitudes of parents, and various related topics are treated understandably.

Yet another book which departs from the usual categories, one which teams up R. Freeman Butts and Lawrence A. Cremin, is *A History of Education in American Culture* (Holt, 1953). These writers depart from chronology *per se* as a basis for organization of their chapters to concentrate on institutions, intellectual outlooks, and educational viewpoints during four eras: colonial, the early republic, the period of expansion, and the recent past: 1918-1951. This book is a distinctive contribution to educational foundations.

**Educational sociology and psychology.** Because of awakening interest in the contributions of related disciplines to education, Hubert Bonner's interdisciplinary approach in *Social Psychology* (American Book Company, 1953) should appeal to many readers.

Attractively and cleverly illustrated as well as scholarly is Florence Greenhoe Robbins' *Educational Sociology* (Holt, 1953). Quite effortless to read, this book manages to treat the child and the school in society thoroughly and combines with this accomplishment excellent suggestions as to good teaching and learning. Other recent publications of merit in the realm of educational sociology and psychology include B. F. Skinner's *Science and Human Behavior* (Macmillan, 1953) and H. C. Lindgren's *Psychology of Personal and Social Adjustment* (American Book Company, 1953), both of which are good studies of the nature and causes of behavior and behavior problems.

—HAROLD G. SHANE, professor of education, Northwestern University.

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