

## Significant Books in Review

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► Reeder, Edwin H. *Supervision in the Elementary School*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1953. 386 p.

Concerned with both theory and practice, *Supervision in the Elementary School* makes in each aspect a significant contribution to educational literature. The development of the theory is noteworthy and somewhat unique in that it is comprehensive and insightful and at the same time so simply put and easily understood that the reader is likely to say, "Why didn't I think of that?" While the development of theory in some books has a tendency to be vague and fuzzy, the treatment here is simple and clear; and while some accounts of practice tend to ignore any consistent theory, the practice in this book is pointedly devoted to application of the earlier developed theory. The second part of the book, and slightly more than half of it, deals with practice.

Democratic supervision is a term almost as maligned by lack of clear-cut definition as is democratic administration or democracy in the classroom. The meaning of democracy in supervision is set down in this book in both theory and practice so clearly that even those who read rapidly will understand.

While this book is a valuable one for the library of departmental supervisors and general supervisors of instruction—the principles are generally applicable to these positions—it is invaluable for the elementary school

principal who sees his job as more than financial, organizational and building housekeeping. The tenor throughout is that the principal's important responsibility is leadership in the improvement of instruction. From the very down-to-earth "Introduction," in which a typical day in the life of an effective supervising principal is detailed, to the last few pages, which offer a look at "The Future of Supervision," emphasis is upon the building principal as a supervisory leader. Three chapters are devoted specifically to teachers meetings and several others deal with aspects and problems of supervision that often find their situational reference in teachers meetings.

One of the most interesting and important chapters in terms of contribution to the literature in supervision is one that does not deal at all with what a supervisor does. It is called "The Problem of Power Relationships" and considers problems of selection, retention and promotion of school personnel in the realistic setting of organized power groups.

There is not a page or portion of one in *Supervision in the Elementary School* in which Reeder forgot that he was writing a book that would prove helpful to supervisors and supervising principals who actually are doing a job. The book is intended as a textbook in courses in elementary school supervision or in courses for elementary school principals. It is an excellent book for these purposes and

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every bit as valuable for the libraries of supervisors and principals in service.

—J. HARLAN SHORES, professor of education, University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois.

► Brown, Edwin John. *Managing the Classroom, The Teacher's Part in School Administration*. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952. 424 p.

Although this book was written for prospective teachers, Dr. Brown has treated the problem of classroom management in such way as to be of help to experienced teachers. The discussion of the problem is divided into four parts.

Part I, "The Nature and Principles of Classroom Management," is a carefully written section. It orients the reader to the general problems of classroom management and seeks to give very practical suggestions for the solu-

tion of these problems. The teacher's relationships with the pupils, the administration and the community are discussed in a very realistic manner.

Part II, "Classroom Management for Pupil Growth," will be as useful to teachers with many years of experience as to a first year teacher. The problems of attendance and membership, achieving self-control, guidance as a management function, and incentives and motivation are recurring problems which many teachers experience. The chapter on incentives and motivation is particularly absorbing.

Part III, "Some Ways and Means of Securing Results," should be read by all teachers. Whenever there is an attempt to get a problem census with a group of teachers these are problems that are likely to be raised by a majority of those present. Detailed suggestions

are given for getting started, organizing the classroom, grading, recording, reporting and promoting, organizing for study, assisting pupils in improving their study habits, and evaluating teacher-pupil effort. A short review of these sections before starting the school year should help a teacher to get off to a better start.

Part IV, "The Teacher and the Learning Situation," should help the person who is actively seeking to improve his personality and his ability to work with colleagues.

Throughout the book a brief history of the problem is given and the reader is brought "up-to-date" on the progress made toward the solution of the problem. Practical problem situations are presented frequently and questions are raised which help one to develop his own philosophy or method of attack.

At the end of each chapter questions are raised for discussion purposes. A carefully selected bibliography is included.

—CLAUDIA PITTS, supervisor, Arlington County Public Schools, Arlington, Virginia.

► Levinson, Abraham, M.D. *The Mentally Retarded Child*. New York: The John Day Company, 1952. 190 p.

Even if the author of this book had not been so sympathetic in his treatment of the subject, the present volume would be a consolation to the parents of the mentally retarded child.

When the parent learns here of the large incidence of mental retardation, he knows that he is not alone in his misfortune. His feeling of guilt, frequently a concomitant of having borne a mentally defective offspring, is considerably assuaged when he discovers that heredity is seldom a factor in mental retardation. He finds that many of the possible causes are accidental,

such as, for example, premature birth, hemorrhage of the brain at birth, or encephalitis. Despite his paucity of knowledge in the subject, the reader will feel encouraged when informed of methods of prevention in some cases, of experiments in methods of treatment, of the value of psychological testing, and of special classes and educational programs for training the mentally retarded child to usefulness as a member of society. Also heartening to the parent is the knowledge that in his attempt to help his child he can be one of a team of experts, including psychologist, otologist, speech teacher, nurse, social worker and classroom teacher.

While the author addresses himself to the average parent in simple, non-technical language, the book can be read with profit by teachers, psychologists, social workers and also by lay citizens, who should be made aware of this serious social problem which exists among a substantial segment of our population.

The inspiring introduction by Pearl Buck is quite fitting to the spirit of the book which gives unfortunate parents hope and incentive to carry on even among conditions apparently conducive to despair.

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

#### OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

An important American woman writes of her life to date in *Out of These Roots* (Little, Brown and Company, 1953). This is the skillfully written and absorbing autobiography by Agnes E. Meyer which, in initial chapters, relates the story of her childhood and early maturity and introduction to the political scene. "Unfortunately," she notes, "there are multitudes who hate to think for themselves and are grateful to the person who does their think-

ing for them. . . . The art of leadership is one which the wicked, as a rule, learn more quickly than the virtuous. This is one of the reasons why our big-city machines are so corrupt. . . ." (p. 135). But aside from astute comments and appealing memories of persons she knew well (such as Paul Claudel, the poet, and Thomas Mann of *Magic Mountain* fame), Mrs. Meyer's book is of especial interest to educators because of a notable chapter, "The Battle to Improve Public Education," because of her description of efforts to improve public health, and because of the abiding faith in democracy which she radiates: ". . . it is spirit—spirit free, indefinable, all pervasive, that holds us to its revelations even when we seek to escape them." (p. 374).

A book which has been widely read but never reviewed in these columns deserves belated mention. This is George Sharp's fine study of *Curriculum Development as Re-education of the Teacher* (Teachers College, Columbia University, 1951). In a successful effort to help educational leaders analyze the problems of staff re-education for dynamic curriculum improvement he develops the pertinent idea that such improvement is inseparable from the guidance of teachers' personality development. "In moving from the older conception of the curriculum to the new," he points out, the task "is not so much a matter of the teacher's having to unlearn all he has learned," as it is "a matter of his re-orienting himself to the school situation." (p. 2.) Some of Sharp's most salient points are developed during his commentary (p. 27. ff.) on factors influencing value change. All told this volume is a highly significant contribution to better understandings of the subtleties and challenges involved in creating more effective school climates.

Paul Witty has added yet another to the several books, deservedly popular, which have come from his pen during the past 15 years. The newest: *How to Become a Better Reader* (Science Research Associates, 1953). This volume is essentially a substantial self-help handbook embodying in its 304 clearly printed pages work materials and exercises for those who would read and comprehend more fully.

Paper-back books sometimes are slighted by readers in favor of more "permanent" appearing publications. This mistake should not be made with regard to the 1953 Yearbook of the New York Society for the Experimental Study of Education, *Problems and Practices in New York City Schools* (The Society, 1953). Despite the geographical limitation (the New York area) imposed by the Yearbook Committee, of which Joseph Mersand was chairman, the material is rich and varied. Prepared by persons working in public education, it conveys the authority of practitioners-on-the-job.

Among other books received for review which are likely to be of interest to readers are Harold Alberty's thorough revision of *Reorganizing the High School Curriculum* (Macmillan, 1953) and Lawrence M. Stolorow's *Readings in Learning* (Prentice-Hall, 1953), a volume for the advanced student. The literature of intercultural education has been broadened and deepened by Gerhart Saenger's *The Social Psychology of Prejudice* (Harper, 1953), and elementary teachers will find valuable and delightfully presented material in the illustrated handbook, *You Can Teach Music* (Dutton, 1953) by Paul W. Mathews.

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