

## Significant Books in Review

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►Shane, Harold G. (Ed.). *The American Elementary School*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1953, xi. 434 p.

We have had for many years several excellent textbooks designed to introduce the prospective teacher to the nature and operation of the elementary school. However, we long have needed a book on the elementary school which would include material not usually included (or needed) in an introductory text. We have particularly lacked a treatment of elementary education which would give adequate attention to contemporary theories and practices but which would place these in their historical and philosophical settings. This need has now been met by the publication, under the sponsorship of the John Dewey Society, of the *American Elementary School*.

Each chapter of the book has been prepared by an individual author or, in a few cases, by coauthors. All of the contributors are acknowledged leaders in the fields in which they have prepared their chapters. The volume has been expertly edited by Harold G. Shane, and the result of all these efforts is a happy combination of scholarship and good writing.

The range of topics treated in the book is very great, but the content in every chapter is related intelligently and usefully to the central purpose of the book. This objective is to give a complete picture of the American elementary school in its historical and contemporary setting. Though it is not possible in the confines of this

review to comment on individual chapters, the authors and the editor are to be complimented on the degree of integration they have achieved.

There are several types of people who will find this book unusually helpful. For the graduate student, who is concentrating in the field of elementary education, it will be an authoritative reference source. It will also be useful to those whose major interest lies in other areas of education, but who wish to gain understanding of the elementary school. Both administrators and teachers will appreciate the book as the most comprehensive single volume available on the subject.

It is the hope of this reviewer that the use of this book will not be confined to those in the profession. There must surely be large numbers of intelligent lay people who are disturbed by the current attacks on and defenses of the American public schools, and who are looking for guidance. Many of these attacks—and, sad to say, many of the defenses—are increasingly superficial and hysterical.

This book should provide the lay citizen, who really wants to know what kind of institution the elementary school is, a chance to understand the issues, the problems and the challenge public education offers in the twentieth century. Whatever can be done to encourage the general public to pass beyond the stereotypes, the prejudices and the "folk-wisdom" which clutter contemporary thinking about the schools will be a social service contribution of great importance.

It would be totally incorrect for readers of this review to infer from these remarks that the purpose of the book is to sell a bill of goods either to the profession or the public. This is a book with a coherent and well-supported point of view, but the point of view it presents is based on evidence which is documented for all to see and consider. It is precisely for this reason that its potential value is so great.

It is to be hoped that the greatest contribution of Shane and his associates in this book will be to help lead large numbers of citizens to a better understanding of one of their most important institutions.

—G. MAX WINGO, professor of education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

► Cooper, Shirley and Fitzwater, Charles O. *County School Administration*. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1953.

*County School Administration* attempts to provide an overview of a complex phase of educational administration and organization. One of the major contributions is the emphasis given to the political and sociological developments as well as the current status of the total county organization in the United States.

The able writers make a successful effort to indicate the significant contributions which county systems can make to the total educational program in America. The place of the county organization is interpreted as a frequently underrated and misunderstood facet of school administration. Its importance and status are explained with clarity. The writers note that specific operating principles are difficult to specify in an area of school administration which encompasses such variations as (a) direct management of

school programs by the county administration, (b) county officials who exercise what is primarily a service function, and (c) variations between these two extremes.

Profitable reading is included for any present or prospective county administrator, for all persons who deal directly or indirectly with the school office, and for a person interested in the total structure of general school administration. In emphasizing the constructive role of the county school administrator, needed reorganization of existing county units in states appears to be relegated to a secondary consideration. More emphasis might have been given to this latter phase.

—JACK CHILDRESS, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

#### OTHER RECENT PUBLICATIONS

DURING the past publication year, 1953-54, a number of volumes distinguished for the quality of their content, their educationally provocative ideas, their literary style, or their success in combining two or more of these attributes have passed across this reviewer's desk.

The deadline for the final issue of *Educational Leadership* is now at hand and many first-rate publications continue to compete for space in these columns. Partly to resolve the dilemma of how to apprise the reader of the advent of a number of good titles, an effort is made below to review many of these volumes briefly.

#### **Administration and supervision.**

The person interested in educational leadership, be he teacher or principal, superintendent or consultant, will be stimulated by Gordon N. Mackenzie, Stephen M. Corey, *et al.*, who have contributed *Instructional Leadership* (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1954)

to the current and important writings in this field. It is a book with substance because it is based upon three years of cooperative experimentation shared by the Institute of Teachers College. Hollis L. Caswell, in his foreword, summarizes the features which help to make the book one of particular value to consultants and administrators. (1) It presents a carefully reasoned conception of the nature of educational leadership, (2) it demonstrates how a group of school leaders can test more objectively than is customary the success of their efforts and modify their plans in the light of the evidence they obtain, and (3) it gives some indication of the effectiveness of various activities in improving instructional leadership.

Also of interest in the realm of educational leadership, especially to the superintendent, is Charles E. Reeves' *School Boards* (Prentice-Hall, 1954), perhaps the most comprehensive treatment currently in print.

**International education.** Probably no American educator is more qualified by interest and experience to deal with the deeper educational meanings of world-wide cooperation than is Carleton Washburne. In *The World's Good* (John Day Co., 1954) he sketches with bold, sometimes controversial strokes wherein he thinks this good lies. Throughout his chapter is the strong conviction that, "Despair and helplessness can lead us nowhere. Faith in man's potentialities for mutual helpfulness and ever-increasing wisdom can lead us toward the goal of world-wide peaceful cooperation for the well-being of all." (p. xiii)

Yet *The World's Good* is more than mere idealistic theory. It reviews examples of how the "entire structure of world consciousness" can be strengthened in the schools; prejudice dimin-

ished, democracy fortified. The book faces with candor current ideological conflicts and the question of why men fight. A substantial portion of the volume—over half—treats the United Nations with warm sympathy. Dr. Washburne concludes his statement with a moving essay-chapter, "Patriotism and World-Mindedness." In brief, he asserts "... the patriotism that education should instill in children, youth and adults—is based on the realization that: 'In the world's good is your own, and in yours, the world's.'" (p. 281)

**Elementary education.** Books dealing with younger children sometimes tend to be a bit sentimental on the one hand or a bit too cold and businesslike on the other—although there are notable exceptions. In the latter group is Emma D. Sheehy's sound yet readable *The Fives and Sixes Go to School* (Holt, 1954). Drawing on her rich experience, Mrs. Sheehy presents a charmingly written, well illustrated book which deals first with the general qualities of a desirable program for children's early years in school. She then details with flavor and verisimilitude the areas in which children gain experience (dramatic play, language arts, science, social living, etc.), and concludes her work with two helpful chapters on pupil records and the school's relationships with parents. Mrs. Sheehy's book is an unusually valuable addition to the literature.

R. L. Morton, long-time student of the ways in which number concepts are effectively developed, adds to his detailed contributions with *Teaching Children Arithmetic* (Silver Burdett, 1953). Less lengthy than his earlier three-volume series, Morton's most recent work packs a great deal of factual information and practical suggestions into 566 pages.

The Board of Education, New York

City, continues its sponsorship of helpful "how to do it" curriculum materials with *Developing Children's Power of Self-Expression Through Writing* (The Board, 1953). Cooperatively planned and developed, this paperback 171 p. booklet reviews the field in an able manner.

**Secondary education.** Two "paperbacks" merit mention in this area: J. W. M. Rothney's *The High School Student: A Book of Cases* (Dryden, 1953), a highly useful tool, especially for the undergraduate junior or senior, is one of these titles. The other is Flora M. Daly and Leo F. Cain, *Mentally Retarded Students in California Secondary Schools* (The State Department of Education, 1953), a widely applicable 200 p. volume of interest to educators in the other 47 states.

**The university.** Invariably an interesting and stimulating author, Robert M. Hutchins again provides an educational conversation piece in *The University of Utopia* (University of Chicago Press, 1953). Based on a series of lectures given at the University of Chicago in 1953, Hutchins' book deals with the hazards to U. S. education as it faces ". . . certain peculiar dangers." His foci are difficulties stemming from *industrialization* (" . . . the prime aim of life . . . and education is [not] the development of industrial power"), from *specialization* which has ". . . dire effects upon . . . a community of the learned," and analogous threats. "The deepest values of the American tradition," Hutchins concludes, ". . . are the values of Utopia," and Americans ". . . have their own tradition, their own genius, their own spirit to guide them." (p. 101-103.)

**Tests.** A timely overview of a topic of concern to both parents and teachers is presented in *Judging Student Progress* by R. Murray Thomas (Long-

mans, Green, 1954.) It is well-illustrated and comprehensive for an introductory treatment of teacher-made and standardized tests, the study of social relationships, pupil participation, recording and reporting student progress, and related topics. This book should enjoy substantial popularity as a college text.

**Social studies.** The National Council for the Social Studies has published *Social Studies in the Senior High School* with the able editorial guidance of Eunice Johns (the Council, 1953). It is part of a distinguished 5-volume pamphlet series concerned with the social studies and ranging from the kindergarten-primary level through college.

**Of general interest.** In an already long column, space restrictions preclude categorization and adequate comment on the following volumes of import to readers:

Harry and Bonaro Overstreet, *The Mind Alive* (Norton, 1954), a worthy and uplifting analysis of channels to personality improvement . . . Hilda Taba, *Leadership Training in Inter-group Education* (American Council on Education, 1953), the second volume in an important series.

Luella Cole, *Psychology of Adolescence* (4th ed.; Rinehart, 1954), attractive re-issue of a standard work . . . G. M. Blair, R. S. Jones, and R. H. Simpson, *Educational Psychology* (Macmillan, 1954), strong contender for a place with other recognized texts in the field . . . Esther Lloyd-Jones and Margaret Ruth Smith, *Student Personnel Work as Deeper Teaching* (Harper, 1954), symposium of recognized leaders' views on collegiate personnel practices.

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