

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Paul M. Halverson
Contributor: Harold G. Shane

Under direction of Paul M. Halverson, associate professor of education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, this regular feature column will attempt to present critical evaluations of books and other materials considered to be of special significance to school people. This department will attempt to select timely and outstanding books and to solicit the assistance of eminent critics in various fields in the writing of reviews.

THE EMERGING SELF IN SCHOOL AND HOME. By L. Thomas Hopkins. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954.

IMPROVING SOCIAL LEARNINGS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL. By Pauline Hilliard. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1954.

THE DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM. By Lucille Lindberg. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1954.

It is noteworthy that Dr. Hopkins' latest book should come off the press at approximately the same time that books by two of his former students appear. Throughout all three runs a common thread of educational philosophy and psychology which places a great premium on the individual's own unique experience, in and out of school, as the fundamental ingredient of learning. Hopkins' is the most comprehensive conceptualization of the three, but Hilliard and Lindberg give concrete support to Hopkins in the form of many insightful examples from life in the elementary school.

The Emerging Self takes its place

beside *Integration—Its Meaning and Application* and *Interaction: The Democratic Process* as an exciting reading experience. One may not always agree with Hopkins' ideas, his degree of emphasis on certain major concepts, and his way of expressing what he so strongly believes. But a careful reader cannot fail to know better where he stands on major philosophical and psychological issues after exploring with Hopkins the challenges which confront modern education.

Consider what Hopkins proposes as the major tasks of the schools: "The first is to help today's adults to keep the world stable until a more mature younger generation can grow up. The second is to educate children in a period of eighteen to twenty-five years through a natural learning process which they can and will use to continue their later development. The third is to help today's youth in secondary schools and college to understand so clearly the real meaning and purpose of home and family life that they will give their children the advantage of a better learning process and expect it to be continued in the schools."

The major portion of the book is devoted to this "better learning process." The prevalence of the term "biological process" is the key to Hopkins' psychology of learning. Hopkins draws from many disciplines, including phenomenology, psychiatry, social psychology, and child development to undergird his basic premise that "man makes the quality of his life out of the materials of his world—himself and his external environment." He indicts education which hopes to develop a mature human being by misleading him "into believing that he should pattern his life after that of some relatively great geniuses of the past while disparaging his own ability to create ways of making his life better in the present."

Such challenging statements set the stage for Hopkins' proposal for curriculum making and teaching-learning processes, and for his consideration of controversial areas such as the relationship of individual needs to group goals, and the role of the school in promoting moral values. But through it all runs his basic argument—man's best hope must be a *process* hope. As such, this book is reminiscent of *Integration* and *Interaction*, but represents a richer, more persuasive document from the pen of a man who has lived this process experimentally for many years.

It is small wonder that Drs. Hilliard and Lindberg pay tribute to Dr. Hopkins in their prefaces when one finds statements such as these in their volumes:

HILLIARD: "But education must assume a positive role in producing individuals who can live in greater harmony. The school has been trying to discharge this

tremendous responsibility by giving children more and more information garnered from the experiences of man in the past, and by applying this information about society's problems in the selection of bodies of knowledge to be taught. The school has even sought diligently to understand how children grow and develop and learn in order that teachers might apply these principles toward more successful teaching of the facts, information, and concepts which seem important to them.

"However earnest these efforts, education is forced to realize that the approaches used have not produced satisfactory human relations. Therefore, it would seem important to explore a different approach."

LINDBERG: "Many schools are giving children a wider variety of experiences and a more permissive classroom atmosphere. Teachers, through their studies of individual children and groups of children, are seeking ways to develop creative thinking and social skills. . . . But democratic process must be a basic part of school programs if the teaching of democracy is to be effective. At present a great deal of effort seems to be directed toward perpetuating outworn patterns; there is little evidence of attempts to help children find ways of meeting new and emerging problem situations. Teachers need to study group process and to experiment with ways of using it."

These two books explore democratic processes by citing examples of the possibilities inherent in elementary classrooms. They argue that examination of their own school experiences in democratic living will provide children with better understanding of themselves and others than studying primarily the experiences of others. In such democratic classrooms improved

social learnings and skills of cooperative planning and action will accrue. The evidence which they provide from elementary school classrooms is persuasive, and should encourage teachers to experiment with similar situations suggestive of potentialities for these kinds of learnings.

As such these books, together with Hopkins' *The Emerging Self*, constitute an important combination of theory and practice which could do much to vitalize learning experiences in the elementary school, and for that matter, at secondary and higher education levels.

—Reviewed by PAUL M. HALVERSON, associate professor of education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND ITS CRITICS.

By V. T. Thayer. New York: Macmillan Company, 1954.

HOW WE FOUGHT FOR OUR SCHOOLS.

By Edward Darling. New York: W. W. Morton and Company, 1954.

The above recent publications are discussed together because they represent to this reviewer two attitudes which have developed in the current dilemma of how people of good will toward public schools should behave in reaction to attacks on public education.

There are many who believe that a cool, objective leadership is needed, based on the logical persuasion of research findings and democratic value in education, and a faith in the wisdom of an informed people. Others insist that these times demand fierce champions of the public schools who

“fight fire with fire” and are resolute in their counter-attacks on all fronts.

The first book, one in the series of distinguished Kappa Delta Pi publications, is a scholarly job which analyzes current challenges to public education with particular emphasis on sectarian attacks. Some attention is also paid to the problem of academic freedom in days such as these. The book concludes with proposals for action on the part of people interested in preserving free public schools. Chief among these proposals is the development of more intimate relationships between school and community to provide a surer basis for creating understanding of the what and why of modern education.

There are no startling, novel ideas in this book. Thayer has succeeded in his deliberate, unhurried appraisal of the current scene in making very clear the issues which are at stake, and the forces which are in opposition. This scholarly, detached approach leads to a series of dramatic questions at the end of the book which may leave some readers in a condition which hardly allows them “to live without certainty and yet not be paralyzed by hesitation.” However, Dr. Thayer's book deserves thoughtful reading by those not given to a search for panaceas.

Quite in contrast is Darling's *How We Fought For Our Schools*, a documentary novel written in collaboration with members of the staff of the Center for Field Studies of the Harvard Graduate School of Education. Here is a book which gives one a feeling for the rough and tumble life of a school board and its chief administrator, embroiled in a community crisis

over the schools. One's reaction to the realism of the situations and characters of the novel may depend on the recency of his own firsthand experience in public school affairs. Although some of the characters may appear to be too bombastic and many of the situations to be overdrawn, one recognizes the same elements which many communities have experienced of late.

The constellations of issues and forces at times become hazy as they intertwine with hostilities, prejudices and petty problems of the people involved. As the book draws to its close, victory is won, temporarily at least, for the forces supporting the public schools. But one has the uneasy feeling that only a temporary respite has been gained, and that perhaps "the fight for our schools" is not the answer. At least, it does not solve the problem of creating a unified community upon which to build a school program dedicated to the best interests of children and youth.

And so we return to the dilemma—what is the role of people who support the concept of free public education in 1954? These two books will stimulate the reader's thinking in a time when increasingly one is called upon to define his role, and to act upon it.

—Reviewed by PAUL M. HALVERSON, associate professor of education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

Other Publications of Interest

Administration and educational leadership. Clarence A. Weber has managed the neat trick of developing a book with a somewhat narrow topic which is neither repetitive nor tedious in PERSONNEL PROBLEMS OF SCHOOL

ADMINISTRATORS (McGraw-Hill, 1954). It is written both skilfully and authoritatively and should be exceedingly useful, say, in seminars enrolling students who have completed some of their introductory graduate classes. Similarly attractive but better suited to less advanced students is William A. Yeager's treatment of the administration of staff personnel: ADMINISTRATION AND THE TEACHER (Harper, 1954).

Yet another current and choice treatment of staff personnel is Willard S. Elsbree and E. Edmund Reutter, STAFF PERSONNEL IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (Prentice-Hall, 1954). It is comprehensive, scholarly, and successfully avoids a pedantic pattern. Also in the general realm of educational leadership is Fred C. Ayer's FUNDAMENTALS OF INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION (Harper, 1954). Dr. Ayer has packed a tremendous amount of information into 523 pages including an exceptionally fine application of a consistent philosophical viewpoint to the various phases of supervision.

Educational foundations, psychology and curriculum. One of the most readable and attractive books of recent years in the mental health field has come from the pen of Henry C. Lindgren. It is MENTAL HEALTH IN EDUCATION (Holt, 1954). Strong bibliographic material, film lists, and five appendices add to the book's appeal. Harper and Brothers published an attractive addition to the field of foundations in Emma Reinhardt's AMERICAN EDUCATION: AN INTRODUCTION (1954). The author seems to have made a wise choice by exploring a few topics rather fully in lieu of attempt-

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ing to say a little about many things.

INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY (Harper, 1954) is a promising addition to similar standard works. The authors are H. H. Remmers, Einar R. Ryden, and Clellen L. Morgan. In the curriculum area Rosalind Cassidy has contributed CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION (Harper, 1954). The book demonstrates admirably how physical education has "come of age" as a highly professionalized phase of public school work.

Elementary, secondary and rural education. "How-to-do-it" books, although usually popular, sometimes tend to be pedestrian and full of pattern work. A happy, creatively oriented exception to this indictment is MAKING AND USING CLASSROOM SCI-

ENCE MATERIALS IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (Dryden, 1954) by Glenn O. Blough and Marjorie H. Campbell.

At the secondary level a book which is almost certain to make a strong bid for deserved popularity is Marvin D. Alcorn, Richard A. Houseman, and Jim R. Schunert, BETTER TEACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS (Holt, 1954).

Edgar Dale's AUDIO VISUAL METHODS IN TEACHING (Dryden, 1954) has appeared in a handsome new edition which makes striking use of color.

Educational writings in guidance are enriched by Edith M. Leonard, Dorothy D. Van Deman, and Lillian E. Miles who have written COUNSELING WITH PARENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION (Macmillan, 1954).

—Reviewed by HAROLD G. SHANE, professor of education, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois.

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