Significant Books in Review

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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.


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."

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.**

**How We Fought For Our Schools.**

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.

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP
over the schools. One's reaction to
the realism of the situations and char
acters of the novel may depend on the
recency of his own firsthand experi
ence in public school affairs. Although
some of the characters may appear to
be too bombastic and many of the sit
uations to be overdrawn, one recog
nizes 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 in
volved. As the book draws to its
close, victory is won, temporarily at
least, for the forces supporting the pub
lic 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 an
swer. At least, it does not solve the
problem of creating a unified com
munity 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 stimu
late 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, Syra
cuse 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 ex
ceedingly useful, say, in seminars en
rolling students who have completed
some of their introductory graduate
classes. Similarly attractive but bet
ter suited to less advanced students is
William A. Yeager’s treatment of the
administration of staff personnel: Ad
ministration and the Teacher (Har
per, 1954).

Yet another current and choice
treatment of staff personnel is Wil
lard S. Elsbree and E. Edmund Reut
ter, Staff Personnel in the Public
Schools (Prentice-Hall, 1954). It is
comprehensive, scholarly, and success
fully avoids a pedantic pattern. Also
in the general realm of educational
leadership is Fred C. Ayer’s Funda
mentals of Instructional Super
vision (Harper, 1954). Dr. Ayer has
packed a tremendous amount of in
formation into 523 pages including an
exceptionally fine application of a con
sistent philosophical viewpoint to the
various phases of supervision.

Educational foundations, psychol
ogy and curriculum. One of the most
readable and attractive books of re
cent years in the mental health field
has come from the pen of Henry C.
Lindgren. It is Mental Health in
Education (Holt, 1954). Strong bib
liographic material, film lists, and five
appendices add to the book’s appeal.
Harper and Brothers published an at
tractive addition to the field of foun
dations in Emma Reinhardt’s Amer
ican Education: An Introduction
(1954). The author seems to have
made a wise choice by exploring a few
topics rather fully in lieu of attempt-
All Pupils Write
So Much Better!

when taught this new easy way
You will be complimented and delighted to see how the
average quality of your pupils' handwriting is raised through-
out all grades when you use—

CORRELATION in
HANDWRITING

by Frank N. Freeman, Ph.D.

Holds the child's interest from the first
grade, starting with simple printing up
to finished cursive writing in the eighth
grade. Helps develop good students—
good citizens—as well as good writers.
Provides for individual differences in pupils—including
the left handed child.
The entire program is surprisingly economical includ-
ing two teaching aids that are truly professional.

Write for Free Folder on "Correlation in Handwriting"
THE ZANER-BLOSER CO., 612 N. Park St., Dept. EL, Columbus 8, Ohio
Publishers of Handwriting Books Exclusively Since 1895

ing to say a little about many things.
INTRODUCTION TO EDUCATIONAL PSY-
CHOLOGY (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 CURRIC-
ULUM DEVELOPMENT IN PHYSICAL
demonstrates admirably how physical
education has “come of age” as a
highly professionalized phase of public
school work.

Elementary, secondary and rural ed-
ucation. “How-to-do-it” books, al-
though usually popular, sometimes
tend to be pedestrian and full of pat-
tern work. A happy, creatively ori-
cented 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 METH-
ODS IN TEACHING (Dryden, 1954)
has appeared in a handsome new edi-
tion 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 COUNSEL-
ING WITH PARENTS IN EARLY CHILD-
HOOD EDUCATION (Macmillan, 1954).

—Reviewed by Harold G. Shane,
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