

# Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Paul M. Halverson  
Contributors: Vernon E. Anderson  
Ida Klein Sternberg  
Laura Zirbes  
H. A. Curtis  
Richard C. Lonsdale

**A Look at Cooperative Action Research in Michigan.** *By the Michigan Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.* Lansing, Michigan: Michigan Education Association, 1954.

**Action, "Action Research in Improving the School Program."** *60 Farnsworth Street, Detroit, Michigan: Metropolitan Detroit Bureau of Cooperative School Studies. Vol. VIII, No. 2, January 1955.*

Both of these bulletins, which report on action research in the State of Michigan, are a welcome addition to the few published accounts of action research in progress. The latter is the briefer pamphlet with five studies described in some detail. The Michigan ASCD bulletin includes description of action research grouped under five categories: brief statements of projects of individual teachers and teacher teams, projects of local schools and school systems, cooperative action research of the Metropolitan Bureau of Cooperative School Studies, accounts of colleges and universities cooperating with school systems, and state level research projects.

The great variety of studies, such as individualizing a reading program, a study of pupil self-direction in the classroom, reporting to parents, a city-

wide curriculum study, and a dental survey program, indicate the many facets of the school program that are lending themselves to action research.

Both pamphlets stress action research as "professional and lay commitment to the discipline of verifiable data." Rightfully, they ask the questions: Are we better off than before? Did the facts discovered lead to action? Does the new way of doing things really work?

Understandably, these studies are in different stages of development. Some are just at the beginning stages of action research. The action or the evaluation procedures are not always evident. Very few state the hypothesis being tested. The important question is not how nearly each of these studies approximates a strictly interpreted definition of action research but that they represent sincere attempts to test out ideas cooperatively in the school situation. Some are concerned with the gathering of data, an important step in the initial phases of action research. It is encouraging to note that schools are increasingly testing out ideas and practices on a more scientific basis.

The several means of evaluation used will be of interest to the person doing action research, for one of the perplexing questions is how to evaluate

change in a total situation. The types of evaluation employed in these studies include parents, questionnaires, self-evaluation techniques, samples of written work, standardized tests, records of group discussions, reactions of parents, pupils' evaluation, the observation of pupil behavior, teacher opinions, follow-up studies, individual conferences, teacher-parent-pupil interviews, logs, sociograms, and measures of physical development.

The teamwork of teachers, administrators, supervisors, lay people, state department and university and college consultants is clearly evident:

—Reviewed by VERNON E. ANDERSON, director, The Curriculum Center, School of Education, University of Connecticut, Storrs.

**The Only Child. A Guide for Parents and Only Children of All Ages.** By Norma E. Cutts and Nicholas Moseley. New York: Putnam Sons, 1954, p. 238, \$3.50.

"Onlies" and their parents will take heart from this latest research study by Norma Cutts and Nicholas Moseley. The statistics gathered here will strike a blow to the common assumption that an only child is necessarily a "spoiled" child. And those psychiatrists who, from their clinical experience, have doomed "onlies" as poor marriage risks and vocational failures, will have their grim theories rudely shaken.

Gleaning their facts from the study of 258 case histories of only children of all ages, the authors have found that onlies are on the average very much like non-onlies. Case histories indicate that the great majority of only

children grow up to be well-adjusted adults.

As we pass interestedly from chapter to chapter, we find that this book, like its predecessor, *Bright Children*, is essentially a book on child training. In the main, the prescription for healthy personality development, as that for healthy body development, is much the same for the child with siblings as for the one without. A chapter, for example, such as "Discipline versus Spoiling" holds urgently needed advice for all parents. Even the special pitfalls mentioned for the onlies, such as overdependence on the part of the child or overprotection on the part of the parent, can well be considered by all mothers and fathers. But even if we take into account only those parents (one in every six of the general population) who will not, either through choice or necessity, have a second chance at parenthood, this book assumes real importance.

— Reviewed by IDA KLEIN STERNBERG, Public School 103, Bronx, New York City.

**A Foundation For Art Education.** By Manuel Barkan. New York: Ronald Press, 1955, p. xi and 235.

Something very significant and promising is beginning to happen in art education. Instead of building on elements of art knowledge and art skill, and following hoary precedents and dubious assumptions in its methods, art education is laying foundations in basic findings of the sciences that deal with human nature, human experience and human development. There is also evidence of new and challenging conceptions of

the role of art in general education, and the function of the arts in cultural advance. The new orientation clearly calls for new foundations, and this is the basic problem with which Dr. Barkan's book concerns itself. Drawing freely on anthropological, sociological and psychological sources he integrates them and uses them as premises for an approach and program of art education worthy of wide and serious consideration in curriculum reconstruction all along the line, from earliest childhood on. The implications for teaching and teacher-education are particularly relevant to the work of any educational leader concerned with his own in-service growth and the in-service growth of teachers.

Most persons now in leadership roles in education came up without experiencing the impact of frontier thinking in the social sciences on old assumptions about human nature, human development and creative potential. These are matters upon which the validity of educational practices and programs must be based. It is here that Dr. Barkan has done a very real service in bringing the implications together integratively in their educational bearings. This calls for an unusual breadth of scholarly inquiry and educational insight which orients the author's presentation.

This book offers no simple "devi-cive" proposals concerning projects or procedures; no one-sided "pros" or "cons" of emphasis on process or product; no isolation of appreciation from productive creative endeavor. It is practical in that it clarifies ideas by using concretely meaningful situational examples which open up a new way

of thinking about art education, its values, its relationships to the whole of education, and its potentially significant role in the further development of American culture.

The book is timely, for there are many who will welcome this impetus to their own concern for educational advance and cultural renewal.

—Reviewed by LAURA ZIRBES, professor emeritus, College of Education, Ohio State University, Columbus.

**An Analysis of Some Factors which Prevent Equal Educational Opportunities in the White Public Secondary Schools of Leon County.**  
*By Thord M. Marshall.* Tallahassee, Florida: Florida State University Library, January 1955, p. viii and 220.

The study, as reported by Marshall, may be accurately classified as an analytical survey of the factors contributing to unequal educational opportunities in one school system. But the discerning reader will note that it is a composite report of data obtained in a series of studies carried on over a three-year period and that these studies involved the faculty and the administrative officers of the school concerned. The discerning reader will also note that certain changes in school practices were made during the progress of the study.

This reviewer feels that the author could have given us a very interesting account of the process by which he, as principal, and the faculty cooperatively set themselves the task of making these studies and of cooperatively utilizing the data as they were gathered. However, the author elected to present

# 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 throughout 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 including 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**

an analysis of the data gathered during the progress of the long range study. In so doing, he has made a contribution to the techniques of applied educational research and to the accumulating body of knowledge about the complex of factors that handicap many children in the pursuit of their "free public school" education.

The reader who is interested in cooperative action research will obtain from this study some very valuable insights into techniques for the gathering and the analyzing of data relevant to the problem treated and, by implication, to many other applied educational problems. He will also see clearly the necessity for carefully collected and systematically analyzed data in an action program that is really committed to making major changes in typical school practices.

This reviewer hopes that in the near future Marshall will supplement this study with an account of the processes by which he and the faculty utilized the information in modifying their school program.

—Reviewed by H. A. CURTIS, professor of education, Florida State University, Tallahassee.

**Methods of Research: Educational, Psychological, Sociological. By Carter V. Good and Douglas E. Scates.**  
New York: Appleton - Century-Crofts, Inc., 1954.

Most readers will regard this 920-page volume as a sequel to the earlier text by Good, Barr and Scates, *The Methodology of Educational Research*,<sup>1</sup> a standard work in the field

<sup>1</sup> Carter V. Good, A. S. Barr and Douglas E. Scates, *The Methodology of Educational Research*. New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc., 1936.

for nearly two decades, even though the original three-man author-team now fails to include A. S. Barr. Indeed, a little strangely, the preface to the present volume omits any mention of the earlier book and co-author. Could this omission be because Prof. Barr has become senior author of the somewhat competing *Educational Research and Appraisal*?<sup>2</sup>

That the 1954 Good and Scates and not the 1953 Barr, Davis and Johnson is the true successor to the 1936 Good, Barr and Scates is clearly revealed by an examination of the three books.

The organization and sequence of Good and Scates and of the earlier Good, Barr and Scates are somewhat similar. There are related descriptions of the formulation and development of research problems and of ways of surveying the literature. An excellent chapter in each is devoted to the historical method of research. Several chapters in each relate to the descriptive method, called in 1956 the "normative-survey method." The experimental method, case and clinical studies, and other research methods are also treated in both books. There are also in these volumes partially parallel chapters on the preparation of the research report.

In no sense, however, is the 1954 Good and Scates a minor revision of the 1936 Good, Barr and Scates. The verbatim reproduction on Good and Scates (pages 184-185) of several paragraphs from Good, Barr and Scates (pages 253-254) is an extreme rarity. As the publishers like to claim, Good and

<sup>2</sup> Arvil S. Barr, Robert A. Davis and Palmer O. Johnson, *Educational Research and Appraisal*. Chicago: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1953.

Scates does in fact represent a complete rewriting.

Emphases differ, too. In Good and Scates, for instance, 434 pages are devoted to the descriptive method of research, a section which occupies only 196 pages of the original volume.

A third current text in educational research, by Whitney,<sup>3</sup> may be chosen by some instructors for their classes in methods of educational research because it is simpler and shorter (539 pages) than that by Good and Scates. Students will also find useful its "agenda of procedures" in research and its score cards for evaluating research. Because its treatment more closely parallels that by Good and Scates, the volume by Whitney is more of a competing text than is that by Barr, Davis and Johnson.

Among the three, however, the vote of this instructor goes to Good and Scates for its comprehensiveness and thoroughness. It seems safe to predict that with Good and Scates, Appleton-Century-Crofts will keep the goodly portion of the market for texts in educational research which Lamke<sup>4</sup> reported they enjoyed in recent years with that old stand-by, the original volume by Good, Barr and Scates.

—Reviewed by RICHARD C. LONSDALE, associate professor of education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, N. Y.

<sup>3</sup> Frederick L. Whitney, *The Elements of Research*. Third Edition. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1950. (This one is a revision of an earlier work.)

<sup>4</sup> T. A. Lamke, "Prevalence and Content of Graduate Courses in the Methodology of Educational Research." Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Atlantic City, February 17, 1953, and accepted for publication in *The Journal of Educational Research*.

Copyright © 1955 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.