

# Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: George W. Denemark

Contributor: Harold G. Shane

*THE FUNCTION of this column continues to be that of reviewing books and materials of particular interest and significance to curriculum workers. Some of the materials reviewed will be obviously and directly in the fields of curriculum development and instructional improvement. Others will be in related educational areas such as school administration, measurement, plant planning and in the social and psychological foundations. Still others will be drawn from the various disciplines of the social and biological sciences. All will share in common, however, the judgment of their reviewers that they are of significance to curriculum workers.*

*The number and variety of materials reviewed in this column will necessitate the participation of a number of reviewers. Depending upon the purposes to be served by a particular review these reviewers will be drawn on some occasions from the special area which the volume represents while on other occasions they will come from the general fields of curriculum and supervision.*

*As has been true in the past, the columns will this year be composed principally of rather lengthy reviews of several books, supplemented at times with brief identifying commentaries on a number of additional materials. It is hoped that a smaller number of somewhat lengthier reviews will provide an opportunity for identification of the major issues raised in each book considered. Only in this way can we avoid making the column simply a cataloging device for the many new materials and instead make of it a constructive force in the initiation and extension of reflective thought among its readers. This month's column and the one which follows, however, give considerably more space to brief identifications than our regular plans call for as a result of the large accumulation of new materials received during the summer months when Educational Leadership is not issued. Many of these materials really merit a featured place but could not be examined in detail because of space limitations.*

*Your cooperation in forwarding new materials for possible review and your suggestions as to books meriting careful analysis as well as to particularly qualified reviewers will be much appreciated.*

—GEORGE W. DENEMARK, assistant dean, College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park.

**Children's Thinking.** By *David H. Russell.* Boston: Ginn and Company, 1956.

This extensive review and analysis of research on children's thinking provides a valuable resource for all who work with boys and girls. Based upon nearly one thousand bibliographic references, including many from European publications, the book covers nearly fifty years of research and reflection on the materials, processes, backgrounds and means of improvement of children's thinking.

The major purposes of the book are identified by the author as these:

"1. to combine some of the findings of child development and of educational psychology and apply them to schoolwork;

2. to explore into the intellectual development of childhood and adolescence more deeply than a general book on these topics can do;

3. to present a possible structure, especially from the developmental point of view, for the psychology of thinking, a topic relatively neglected in psychological literature."

Although most ambitious in his goals for the volume, the author remains carefully objective in his reporting of research findings and in his ready acknowledgment of the sometimes fragmentary and contradictory nature of the results. This careful scholarship, combined with his happy faculty for clear and readable writing, make the book an exceptionally useful one.

Of special interest to the curriculum worker are the chapters devoted to concept formation, problem solving, critical thinking, creativity and improving thinking ability, since these relate so closely to important objectives of school programs for all age levels. Such generalizations as the absence of any fixed "age of reason" which children must attain before they can do problem solving; the advisability of attention to critical think-

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ing in all schoolwork rather than attempting to teach it through "a separate group of tricks or devices," the greater effectiveness of concrete, immediate situations rather than abstract, verbal ones for encouraging problem solving behavior in young children, the importance to creative thinking of a permissive atmosphere, democratic planning and evaluating, a sense of security and absence of fear and frustration, flexible ways of working together—these and numerous others contain important implications for the planning of learning experiences of boys and girls. While in many cases teachers, supervisors and other curriculum workers are already aware of these generalizations, they are all too often unaware of the research background which undergirds them. Without such an awareness challenges to modern educational practices may result in unfor-

tunate retreats to programs which rest largely on the rigid control and channelization of children's thinking.

An important point made at the outset of this fine book is that extreme emphasis on precision and objectivity in research on human behavior has sometimes resulted in our failure to ask the truly important questions. The author concludes that many of these key questions relate to problems needing to be studied in regular "everyday" classroom and home environments and that the practitioners must assume an active role in such research.

—Reviewed by GEORGE W. DENEMARK, assistant dean, College of Education, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland.

**Theory and Practice of the Social Studies.** By Earl S. Johnson. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1956.

Within the past year two fresh and unique contributions to the literature of instruction in social education at the secondary school level have been published. The first of these was Hunt and Metcalf's *Teaching High School Social Studies*. The second is this volume written by Earl Johnson. Both belong on the shelf of every educator concerned with social studies instruction, for each contributes dimensions of insight essential to development of the democratic character. Both books will also have much of interest to persons outside the secondary social studies field for they deal at many points with general and all-pervasive elements of teaching and learning.

*Theory and Practice of the Social Studies* is in one sense a misnomer for this fine book, since it fails to make clear that the author is primarily concerned with the whole process of education and its relation to the cultural context within

which it operates. As much an analysis of the social foundations of education as of secondary social studies instruction, this book includes stimulating chapters on: The Rhythm of Continuity and Discontinuity in Culture and Character; The Crisis in Valuation; The Perspectives of Cultural Change; Culture and Human Nature—History and Cultural Anthropology; The Perspective of Associations and the Problem of Consensus—Civics; The Perspective of Unlimited Wants and Scarce Means—Economics.

The author's background as a sociologist and as a professor of the social sciences gives him unusual competence to approach his task within a broad, general framework that facilitates the interdisciplinary thinking so necessary to an adequate understanding of contemporary problems. In the author's own words, "the political, economic, and cultural problems of our time fit into no watertight compartments. No bulkheads separate man's social experience."

Secondary social studies instruction, so frequently concentrated almost entirely upon history rather than utilizing all of the disciplines of the social sciences, can benefit much from this attempt to show the role of each in the general education of secondary school youth.

One of the greatest shortcomings of this book lies in its use of illustrative materials which are considerably dated. In the chapter dealing with spatial distribution of social phenomena, for example, the data on economic, educational and marital status presented in chart form were drawn from the Chicago census tracts of 1934 while other data on population groupings within that city were drawn from 1920 surveys. With the nature of our social problems changing as rapidly as it is today, this becomes a serious obstacle to the effectiveness of

the book unless its users are clear that its major concern is with process as it relates to content rather than with a specific content alone.

No "cookbook" of already catalogued devices for insuring success in teaching the social studies, Dr. Johnson's volume is an invaluable supplement to the more typical books in the field which give systematic attention to such day-by-day problems of instruction as lesson planning, developing resource units, test construction, the use of maps and globes, etc. It is a sophisticated approach suitable for mature and experienced readers and yet it also deals with such fundamental matters as to make it an important resource for use in courses with undergraduates. The scope of the book as well as the author's point of view call to mind at many points some of the most challenging writings of John Dewey.

—Reviewed by GEORGE W. DENEMARK.

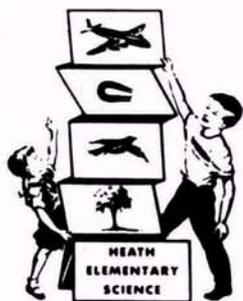
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#### Also of Current Interest

**EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPERVISION.** There have been several excellent contributions to the literature in this realm of special interest to curriculum workers. Harlan L. Hagman's *Administration of Elementary Schools* (McGraw-Hill, 1956) is a basic and comprehensive treatment written with clarity and common sense. Equally effective at a different level is *Supervising Instruction in Secondary Schools* (McGraw-Hill, 1956), by R. C. Hammock and R. S. Owings, a title which succeeds in capturing the spirit of many of the values for which the ASCD stands.

**SECONDARY EDUCATION.** The literature of secondary education is further vitalized by L. R. Kilzberg, H. H. Stephenson, and H. O. Nordberg in *Allied Activities in the Secondary School* (Harper, 1956). Beginning with a well-developed, mature

point of view, the writers show how significant a part the homeroom, assemblies, clubs, athletics, etc., can play in the lives of young adolescents.

Outstanding in all respects is *Effective Teaching in Secondary Schools* (Rinehart, 1956), by W. M. Alexander and Paul M. Halverson. Theory, practice, human development, group work, and teacher leadership are so skillfully blended as to insure the book's enduring popularity.

**RESEARCH AND EVALUATION.** J. Wayne Wrightstone has for over two decades enjoyed the earned privilege of being one of the founding fathers of modern evaluative practices. His recent book, written in collaboration with Joseph Justman and Irving Robbins, is a highly important summary of 25 years of improvements in appraisal. The title: *Evaluation* (American Book, 1956).

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**ESSAYS IN EDUCOLOGY**, Edited by Lowry W. Harding. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., \$2.50, 186 pp xxvi. Fresh ideas on problems of administrators, professors, teachers, humorously and sensitively written by Harold Benjamin, Edgar Dale, Wilfred Eberhart, Harold Fawcett, Arthur W. Foshay, Alan Griffin, H. Gordon Hullfish, Everett J. Kircher, James Thurber, William Van Til, and 37 others.

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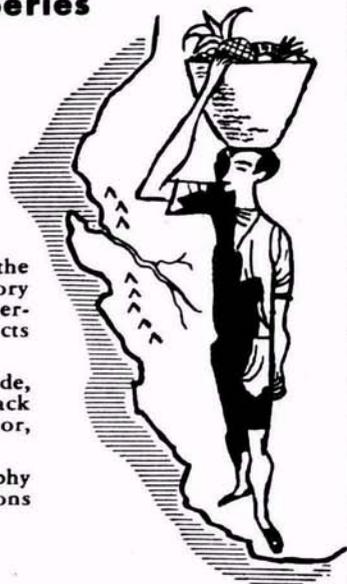
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research for the mature undergraduate or the tyro in graduate school were practically nonexistent until Tyrus Hillway published his *Introduction to Research* (Houghton Mifflin, 1956) earlier this year. It is an excellent companion piece for Campbell's *Form and Style in Thesis Writing* (Houghton Mifflin), which was revised a year or two ago. The newly revised *Statistics for Teachers*, by M. J. Nelson, E. C. Denny and A. P. Coladarci (Dryden, 1956) is a handy paperback workbook for those courses in statistics that include concepts, processes and computation.

FOUNDATIONS: PHILOSOPHY, PSYCHOLOGY, AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT. The philosophically oriented reader will want to examine Theodore Brameld's latest presentation of his social reconstructionist views in *Toward a Reconstructed Philosophy of Education* (Dryden, 1956), a volume which was given a three-

column midsummer review in the "Education" section of *TIME* Magazine. Although partly adapted from Brameld's 1950 book, *Patterns of Education Philosophy*, this rates a reading even if you know his earlier work.

John L. Childs, who holds himself to his usual highly exacting standards, has produced a definitive statement in *American Pragmatism and Education* (Holt, 1956). It is a further development of the views in his educationally significant book, *Education and the Philosophy of Experimentalism*, published in 1931.

Somewhat difficult to classify, but certainly a "foundations" book, is *Change and Process in Education* (Dryden, 1956), by M. S. MacLean and E. A. Lee. If you have sought a thoughtful review of the dynamism of the twentieth century and its impact on education, you will wish to read this one.

In the fields of psychology and human

development, a number of good revisions and new titles appeared during the spring and the summer, among them Elizabeth Hurlock's *Child Development* (McGraw-Hill, Rev. 1956), A. M. Jordan's *Educational Psychology* (Holt, 1956 edition), and J. M. Stephen's *Educational Psychology* (Holt, Rev. 1956). First printings include a most human and charming treatment of good classroom living: *The Teacher and the Child* (McGraw-Hill, 1956), by C. E. Moustakas, and R. S. Stewart's meticulously written *Children and Other People* (Dryden, 1956), which summarizes what is currently known about personality development and emotional growth.

Lester and Alice Crow have produced a new text, *Human Development and Learning* (American Book, 1956), which introduces students to concepts clarified

in recent years through research and study. Another suitable text, this one for a first course in clinical psychology is Richard W. Wallen's *Clinical Psychology: The Study of Persons* (McGraw-Hill, 1956).

**GUIDANCE.** A broad overview of the field is given by H. B. McDaniel, in collaboration with G. A. Shaftel, in *Guidance in the Modern School* (Dryden, 1956). A second edition of Jane Warters' *High School Personnel Work Today* (McGraw-Hill, 1956) also is now available.

Stanley S. Marzolf has gone into detail with respect to *Psychological Diagnosis and Counseling in the Schools* (Holt, 1956). A substantial and valuable part of this text treats case studies.

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

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