

Significant Books in Review

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The Child and His Elementary School World. By Ruby Warner. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, 1957.

Many books have been written about the nature and needs of children, more about the psychology of learning, and countless numbers about classroom techniques and procedures. Some authors have attempted to relate these questions in an orderly fashion but few have succeeded as has Dr. Ruby Warner in *The Child and His Elementary School World*. She has achieved this fusion by the paradoxically simple yet profound concept that the aim of education is the development of an individual of dignity and worth who at the same time recognizes and accepts his place in a harmoniously functioning social group. Only with the acceptance of this holistic concept of the child as the integrating factor do the many diverse elements of educational theory and practice fall into place in an orderly organization and program.

The author stresses four major areas of child needs—psychological, biological, sociological, and educational. Some critics may contend that the term “educational needs” is not consistent with other expressed needs but is rather the developmental process by which psychological, biological, and sociological needs are attained. However, as used here it does not seem to offend organizational unity since it serves as a vital connecting link between principle and practice.

When these recognized needs are met to the satisfaction of the child self-esteem is generated, self-realization is promoted, and a sense of individual worth is nourished. When these needs are not met a feeling of inadequacy results which will be expressed either through aggressive anti-social behavior or passive frustrated withdrawal. Either reaction is “right” for the child at the time and within his experiential field of reference.

Dr. Warner helps to resolve one pedagogical problem when she points out with convincing clarity that the categorical separation of “needs” is feasible only on paper. In any genuine learning situation they overlap and at the same time reinforce and supplement each other. The alert teacher recognizes and capitalizes on this inter-relationship, at the same time insuring the “whole” by her awareness that all “needs” exist and must be met fully and sequentially but not compartmentally.

Similarly, the reader is led to an understanding of the interaction of the individual and his social group. The duality of aims, the development of the individual and of social competency, does not imply separateness in development. The individual develops a feeling of worth and security, not in a vacuum but in association with his fellows where participation affords a scale for the measurement of growth and achievement. Con-

versely, the author says, "The welfare of the group cannot be realized without the well-being of the individuals in it."

The author is not content to rest with a mere statement of theory and principles even though she has succeeded in creating a convincing pattern of unity in areas where much confusion has existed, particularly at the practical grassroots operating level. Instead she has boldly invaded that province and in succeeding chapters has described evaluative, sociometric, and projective techniques as well as curriculum organization and content, teaching techniques and procedures in all the major learning areas. Actual learning units are described, pupil activities are suggested, and teaching techniques are outlined. All are illuminated by a wealth of illustrations. The volume is replete with teachers' reports, pupils' sketches, responses, activities and creativity. The result is a highly readable, graphic and practical account of learning as it goes on in classrooms dedicated to the development of the individual in terms of previously enumerated needs.

The reader must not mistake the plan or purpose of this book. When first confronted with the scope of the theme—nature and needs of the child, psychology of learning, school organization, curriculum and practices—his first reaction may be one of consternation. However, as he reads he soon finds a clear picture emerging. The central and unifying theme of individual development within a social setting brings the details and illustrations of the educational program into sharp focus. He soon realizes that the book, comprehensive as it may seem, is not intended as an exhaustive treatment of the field of elementary education, but rather as an introductory orientation where principles and prac-

tices are happily wedded into an orderly and practical program of action. It should serve both the student of education and the beginning teacher with guide lines of understanding and practices. In the case of administrators, supervisors and experienced teachers who are still open minded, it might also conceivably help to polarize their thinking in areas where theory and practice, principle and implementation have sometimes seemed irreconcilable.

—Reviewed by GENNETTE NYGARD,
elementary supervisor, Arlington County Public Schools, Arlington, Virginia.

Educating Gifted Children. By **Robert F. DeHaan and Robert J. Havighurst.** Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957.

At a time when the gifted child is finally coming into his own realistically, when we are beginning to recognize the loss to all of us because of our ridicule of "egg-heads" and others who can help pave the way toward longer life and world peace, any new book or article on the subject of gifted children is greeted with open arms. When, according to recent figures, we are still chalking up an academic loss of half of the top 25 percent of our high school graduates and suffer a lag behind all other exceptional child areas in the preparation of teachers of gifted children, we welcome eagerly each bit of enlightenment for teachers, administrators, parents, and others about the gifted.

The authors state that *Educating Gifted Children* was "written to serve as a guide and stimulant to persons and groups in the educational profession and community agencies, and to interested laymen who are concerned with improving the scope and adequacy of the education of gifted children and who are

making plans to inaugurate special provisions for them in their school and community."

A perusal of the table of contents reveals how conscientious the efforts were to cover the subject, beginning with definitions and going through other vital topics, such as screening techniques, administrative problems, special approaches like enrichment, grouping, and acceleration, motivation, community factors, and the family setting. However, as sometimes happens, a broad coverage combined with brevity results in limited treatment of some topics—from the point of view of the reader. While the writer and editor obviously have to have the last word on what to include, emphasize, and omit, the ones for whom a book is prepared may raise questions based on their own need.

Despite the book's conciseness, one might ask why references were omitted

or limited on the following: The recent articles and speeches of Rear Admiral H. G. Rickover, USN; the Goddard book on *School Training of Gifted Children* and some of the older research classics; the position and activities of various states and the federal government; the National Merit Scholarship Corporation; the national survey of Helen Erskine Roberts. We cannot help but recognize and respect the difficulties of the authors in selecting materials for inclusion, but materials like these and some others related to important work in communities referred to only in passing or skipped altogether may be missed. While included, the current studies by Passow, Brandwein, and others seem to receive less attention than they deserve.

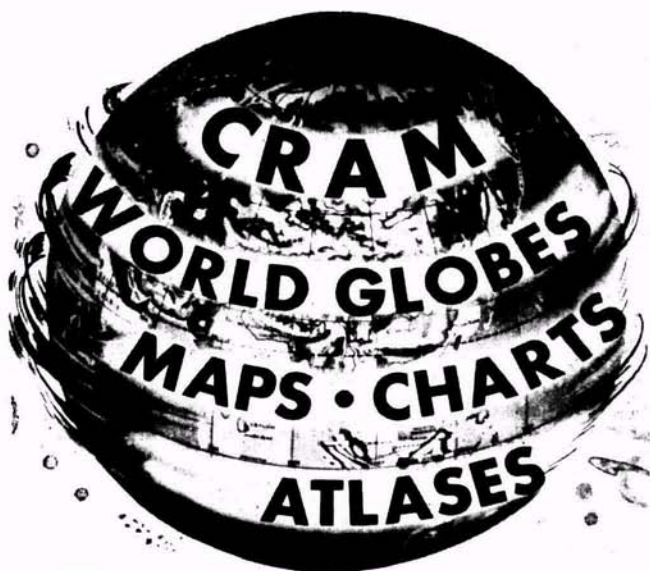
It's nobody's fault that limitations also exist because a book comes out just before publication of some releases which are an important part of the subject—

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such as *Manpower and Education*, the 1956 publication of the Educational Policies Commission (the 1950 *Education of the Gifted* is mentioned), the new Cutts and Moseley book which is a revision of their earlier one referred to, and recent statements on gifted children by Arthur Bestor, whether or not we agree with his views.

Among the book's many worthwhile segments for both administrators and teachers are the two excellent chapters on screening practices and programs and the one by Jack Kough which is a case study of a class for gifted children. A useful list of tests and an annotated bibliography are also included.

—Reviewed by WILLARD ABRAHAM, professor of education, and head, Division of Special Education, Arizona State College, Tempe, Arizona.

More Than Social Studies. By Alice Miel and Peggy Brogan. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1957.

Definitely, this new book deals with "more than social studies"! The authors offer their book "to all educators of children to help them think through the kind of learning that is needed by young members of our society." Educators will certainly want to "think through" the ideas expressed in this book, to study and discuss them, and then, perhaps, read the volume again.

Those educators who firmly believe that the American elementary school is a laboratory for learning the behaviors requisite to living in a democracy, and plan programs accordingly, will find both precept and example to substantiate their belief. Those who are still entrenched in the traditional subject matter sequence of the social studies (perhaps most of us are) will find this book disturbing.

In the first section, entitled "Education

and the Democratic Discipline," the authors spell out the concepts of living in our democratic society, emphasizing the ways of behaving on the part of children as well as adults. These authors see four strands of social learning as basic in democracy's discipline—"feeling good about one's self and others; selectively extending one's life space; using democratic methods of problem solving; and building socially useful meanings." The authors, however, do not remain in the realm of philosophy, theory or vision. Using the three habits of "thinking, feeling, acting" as a basis, they move into the practical—accounts of actual classroom situations that describe how teachers guided children to grow in those behaviors so "essential to a participating member of a democratic society." An excellent analysis, "reading between the lines," follows each account. Social learning implications are pointed out in these analyses, and pro and con questions are raised concerning a teacher's guidance of the situation and the pupils' activities. New terminology, such as "life space," takes on practical meaning here.

A section on "Special Helps for Teachers" is given over to classroom practices of teachers who have courageously tried to do for children what the traditional social studies program fails to do.

This sincere, insightful book takes a penetrating look at teaching in our elementary schools—"more than the social studies." For curriculum makers—teachers, supervisors, administrators—it charts a direction for thinking and planning for the future. Its impact on social studies programs and teaching should be great.

—Reviewed by LILLIAN C. PAUKNER, director, Division of Curriculum and Instruction, Upper Grade Department, Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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