

Significant Books

Reviewers:

Gertrude M. Lewis

Merrill Harmin

Curriculum for Today's Boys and Girls. Robert S. Fleming. 1963. 662 p.

The Emerging Elementary Curriculum. Albert H. Shuster and Milton E. Ploghoft. 1963. 577 p.

Both published by Charles E. Merrill, Columbus, Ohio.

Two impressive and highly professional books dealing with elementary education appeared during 1963. Each may be said to be excellent in its unique way; each adds significantly to the "must" for the library in the school and in teacher education institutions. While these books are written for professional people in education, parents interested in what leading educators take into account in planning school opportunities for their children will find in them reassurance in this unrestful and controversial period.

What do these books hold in common? Both present overviews of the goals, curriculum content, and processes of the elementary school; both deal with evaluation of the work of the school and with the problem of securing continuous improvement. Both use documentation from research and studied opinion to support viewpoints and facts presented.

Let us look at these volumes separately.

Fleming's book, *Curriculum for Today's Boys and Girls*, should resemble a camel, since it was put together by a committee of 15. Yet it does not. The

theme is expressed at the very beginning in the child's "Bill of Rights," and this theme permeates and unifies the entire book. In addition, each of the 15 writers is highly knowledgeable and competent in elementary education and its related fields, and this contributes to the unity of the book.

The purpose is clarified in the first chapter as pointing toward the fulfillment of the school's goals: to help children to grow in a wide range of independent skills, in the world's knowledge, in health, in thinking power, in values, in aesthetic understanding, and in ability to use self as a creative person (p. 10).

The structure of the curriculum content, while not analyzed in detail, is indicated as a vital background panorama of experiences through which each child learns not only about himself and his relation to the world, but learns as well how to utilize his powers in interaction with others. The individual nature of learning and self-discovery is emphasized. Portions of the book are devoted to the individual's functional acquisition of needed academic skills; to his increasing ability to think critically and to solve problems as aspects of intellect; and to his clarification of personal values as factors which become touchstones for personal decisions.

The authors show how the child, entering school at 5 or 6, moves from one intelligent, sensitive and stalwart teacher to another, each of whom helps him as

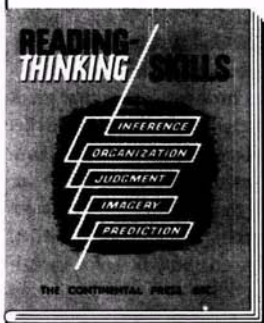
he progresses in skill development, acquisition of knowledge and understanding, formation of values, and ability to think and to assume responsibility. He emerges from the elementary school an individual in his own right, self-confident, eager, skilled, and interacting to his full potential.

The authors not only indicate curriculum content, they succeed in conveying to the reader the dynamics of action in a live and lively school. Supporting research and insightful writings and films are cited to enable readers to probe in greater depth the areas of their interest.

Phrases such as "A classroom is only a headquarters for learning" (p. 137), "Go through the classroom walls" (p. 137), "It is the teacher who must guard them (freedom of thought and action) for the child" (p. 131), "Interest is a function of the inner being . . ." (p. 127), radiate the inspirational quality and focus of the treatment. When the reader emerges from this book, he feels somehow that he himself has been involved, that he has been "submerged all over" in education.

The Emerging Elementary Curriculum involves the reader less in the ongoing dynamics of the school; rather, it engages the intellect of the reader in a broad observational view of the development, status and direction of the schools. The authors look at and account for the emergence of the present curriculum; they show the responsibilities and operation of the various subject fields; and they point to evaluation of teaching, organized guidance of students, and leadership as bases for continuing improvement of curriculum. The present curriculum design, say they, owes much to the knowledge which has accumulated from the study of child development and of learning; and to the steady evolution over the years of instructional method-

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ology and resources. The authors take care to present step by step and point by point many aspects of historical development and of present day work in the classroom.

Research is rounded up and presented regarding controversial issues, such as the value of the kindergarten, of the effects of success and failure on progress, and of purposeful versus conditioned learning (p. 72-93); regarding modern terminology related to methods of organizing for instruction, such as discussion, child-teacher-society centered teaching, pupil-teacher planning, activity curriculum, units, team-teaching, and the like (p. 97-135); and regarding resources for teaching, such as realia, films and filmstrips, radio, television, teaching machines, programmed learning, the library, and community resources (p. 137-57).

The authors emphasize that the teacher is the prime factor in in-

structional effectiveness and curriculum improvement. They also show that leadership responsibility is vested in administrators to initiate improvement in curriculum and in teaching.

Thoughtful readers will find each of these books interesting and of unique value; they will also find them overlapping and supplemental, both essential parts of a total view of present-day elementary education.

—Reviewed by GERTRUDE M. LEWIS,
member ASCD Executive Committee.

Work-Study Programs for Alienated Youth. *George W. Burchill.* Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1962. 256 p.

Adolescent Behavior in Urban Areas. *David Gottlieb and Jon Reeves.* New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1963. 244 p.

The Psychology of Adolescence. *Marvin Powell.* Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1963. 552 p.

Work-Study Programs for Alienated Youth considers how school-directed work experience might help adolescents, and presents nine case studies of ongoing work-study programs to illustrate how they look in practice. Although the book clearly shows how work-study programs can help youth with developmental problems, such as juvenile delinquents, potential dropouts, and the slow learner, the usefulness of such programs for all American youth is also indicated.

This volume grew out of the concern of a commission of Phi Delta Kappa for the prevention of juvenile delinquency. The first chapter summarizes the problem of delinquency, some of the proposed solutions, and the relevance to the problem of work-study programs. The balance of

the book is composed of case studies of such programs, supporting documents, a concluding set of hints for schools which would consider beginning a work-study program, and a bibliography. All in all, a most useful document for the community which would explore this issue.

This book is timely. As work experiences continue to become less available for young people, one finds increasing reason for the school to help youth obtain that taste of reality. The trend for schools to adopt this function is already evident.

The logic for this is clear. Academic experiences are simply not enough for many youngsters, and especially for those youngsters who do not find adequate success and feelings of worth in school. This book recommends organized work and observation opportunities in the adult world, and shows how these might be introduced beginning as early as age 13 or 14. Such experiences might help young people obtain sufficient self-respect to prevent all sorts of alienation problems, from crime to narcotics to mental illness, and might provide a reality context with which to relate academic learnings and developing vocational interests. The importance of providing youngsters with such a reality context seems most urgent in times when many persons do not leave the schoolroom until they abruptly enter the adult world at age 18 or, sometimes, age 22.

It would seem to this reviewer that Burchill has made a significant contribution to the problem of educating young people in a society that walls off children from responsible experiences in the real world.

The main function of the second work reviewed here, *Adolescent Behavior in Urban Areas*, is to bring together a good

deal of the empirical research that has been done in recent years on sociological and social-psychological problems of American adolescents. The *urban* in the title does not mean that all the studies reported deal with urban affairs, but rather that studies that deal with *rural* affairs have been omitted. Essentially, the book is an annotated bibliography of several hundred journal articles, most of which were published in the past decade. The notes on each article average some 200 words and summarize the problem, the method and the conclusions of the study reported.

The book also contains a chapter that discusses and summarizes the studies annotated. This is done in six sections: (a) adolescents and mass media, clothing, and recreation; (b) adolescents and the family and the school; (c) adolescents and peer relationships; (d) occupational and educational expectations and de-

velopment of self-image; (e) values, attitudes, and sentiments; and (f) deviant behavior. A full report of work on delinquency, however, has not been included.

This volume includes a bibliography of many of the studies that were not annotated and a brief discussion of the nature of the adolescent subculture.

This work is not meant to be exhaustive, but aims instead to provide an overview of the major lines of research on what might be called the sociology of American adolescence. The book does this, and thus it is a useful source book for the student of adolescence and especially for one who would develop research in this area.

Powell's *The Psychology of Adolescence* appears to be written for those college courses of the same name and does what such texts usually do: introduces the reader to many topics without

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getting very deeply into any. This book probably spreads itself thinner over more topics than most other texts. Like most other similar volumes, this work does not have a particular orientation to hold it together. The reader, therefore, is likely to be left with a disarray of information and the impression that we really know very little about adolescence. Since this impression is approximately true and since many students desire such a general introduction to adolescence, Powell's book will probably serve many persons usefully.

The book has chapters on the definition and study of adolescents, their physical development, intelligence and achievement, personality and culture, emotionality and adjustment, socialization, sexual development, the family, religion and values, attitudes and interests, vocational planning and guidance, the school curriculum, teaching adolescents, and juvenile delinquency. Throughout, the author attempts to bring current research to bear on the topics and to present the viewpoint of adolescents themselves. There is also a rather successful attempt to incorporate data from other countries into many of the sections.

Omitted from *The Psychology of Adolescence* are some authors noted for their insights into this age group, such as Erikson, Friedenberg, and Jersild. Also missing from the volume are detailed case studies of adolescents, which this reviewer finds most valuable for helping teachers understand these young people and the professional behavior appropriate for them.

One would guess that Powell's book, and many books like it, will help students of adolescence pass final examinations on the topic. Yet one wonders what such collections of ideas and details contribute to professional behavior. Taking

a hint from Bruner's *Process of Education*, one might ask why such college texts could not more effectively get at the big ideas, the processes of the discipline, and the skills necessary to put learnings to actual professional use.

—Reviewed by MERRILL HARMIN, Assistant Professor of Education, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers—The State University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Purpose—Ammons

(Continued from page 17)

Educational Objectives—Cognitive Domain. New York: David McKay Co., 1956; and *The Taxonomy of Educational Objectives—Affective Domain*. New York: David McKay Co., 1964.

12. Virgil E. Herrick. "Teaching as Curriculum Decision Making." *The Nature of Teaching*. Milwaukee: School of Education, University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 1963. p. 66-80.

13. John I. Goodlad. *Planning and Organizing for Teaching*. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association, 1963.

14. James B. Macdonald. Paper presented at the meeting of professors of curriculum at ASCD, Miami Beach, Florida, April 1964.

15. Thomas L. Faix. "Toward a Science of Curriculum: Structural-Functional Analysis as a Conceptual System for Theory and Research." Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1964.

"Committed" Teacher—Fox

(Continued from page 20)

nificantly to the educational growth and well being of his students.

In other words, his greatest reward is the realization that his role in life is an important one and that he is fulfilling his purposes. Shakespeare said it another way: "This above all: to thine own self be true, and it must follow, as night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

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