

Significant Books

Reviewers:

Stanley E. Jackson

Joyce Cooper and Marjorie Snyder

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Social Problems in America. Harry C.

Bredemeier and Jackson Toby. New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960. 510 p.

Education in Social and Cultural Perspectives. Harold L. Hodgkinson.

Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1962. 243 p.

Social Studies for Understanding.

Helen Fisher Darrow. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964. 91 p.

Integration vs. Segregation. Hubert H. Humphrey, Editor. New York:

Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1964. 314 p.

Educators are daily confronted with the responsibility of comprehending and struggling with many of the challenges and changes occurring in modern society. Persons who want to meet that responsibility wisely and effectively realize they need to understand current social problems. In addition, they are aware of the competency required to transmit to others pertinent social knowledge and skills in order to elicit responses of growth, self-development, and intelligent, productive action.

The demanding task of increasing one's ability to cope with social problems and to guide others in meeting the same responsibility requires the seeking of

many resources for assistance. Among the resources available are four highly readable books that have a common thread of providing concepts and facts leading to better understanding of current social problems and studies. These books, with their full, scholarly presentations, assist in deepening knowledge, widening perspectives, and increasing one's power to improve his quality of social action now. They also are very helpful to one for setting goals and facing future demands of schools and society.

To gain background information in the functioning of social arrangements, one should read *Social Problems in America*, which analyzes American social problems in depth. This book makes the reader renew his thinking and reject his complacency about matters he has probably taken for granted. The authors discuss such subjects as juvenile delinquency, alcoholism, and family disorganization. They present these conventional topics, not in neat, chapter form, but rather in new ways within a framework of sociological theory. Contemporary illustrative readings add to the interest of the book as the nature and sources of social problems are explored.

The reader is helped to become more knowledgeable about group standards of adequacy, worthiness, gratification, and

security. He learns how failure to meet these standards satisfactorily can develop into frustrations which generate social problems. In coping with these frustrations, the individual's attempts are channeled by the governing principles of American society: materialism-secularism, self-reliance, competition and negotiated exchange. Some members of society accept defeat by withdrawal and rejection, while others pursue success and satisfactions aggressively and relentlessly. The authors explore thoroughly the costs and casualties in our acquisitive society while acknowledging that the thick volume necessarily had to "ignore aspects of American society which . . . are achievements of human spirit."

This book is a very helpful resource tool because it probes the genesis of social problems and develops an understanding of the nature and institutional sources of them. It gives an intelligent analysis of the forces generating social problems and thus helps to assure discerning behavior by those who would try to reduce these problems and their casualties. A summary and a full, well-annotated bibliography complete each chapter of this interesting and informative text.

As an educator gains a clearer and more dynamic view of the human struggle in American society, he is likely to make application of the social concepts involved to his particular area of interest. A book that assists in widening the perspective of the social sciences and presents a clear synthesis of the essential contributions of the social sciences to the field of education is *Education in Social and Cultural Perspectives*. The author illuminates the social problems of the schools within a framework of interaction and provides new ways of looking at the school, teachers, admin-

istrators and children. The reader gains deepened understanding of and insight into the problems of public education as he is shown how many values and goals of society conflict with those of our schools.

Five areas of human behavior important to education are analyzed through theories and research studies: social stratification, social mobility, cultural lag and social change, motivation, and learning. Exciting questions are raised for the future: Should students learn in school that *prestige*—status for the position—is more important than *esteem*—the quality of performance in the position? Should the school accept responsibility to develop in its students the ability to evaluate and act upon status criteria? Can the school serve as an instrument of social reform? How do we best motivate students in terms of producing initiative and self-direction in a subject area? What practices and theories regarding learning are of greatest value to the students?

The following important social science concepts and statements are summarized in the final chapter to challenge anew the thinking of both student and teacher. *Multidimensionality*—Human behavior is not single-minded or single-sided. *Determinism and spontaneity*—We can view man as being both a machine and a free agent simultaneously. *Education versus society*—There is a conflict of the values and desired behaviors promoted by the school and those promoted by the outside world. Finally, the author concludes, the strategy of *general education* programs should be reversed, i.e., instead of being oriented primarily in the past, the programs should center around the present.

This book is particularly helpful to both preservice and in-service teachers.

It makes clear that as teachers obtain knowledge of research in the social studies, better understanding of many educational problems can be gained; also, valid educational goals can be established. The reader receives a valuable synthesis of the contribution of the social sciences to the field of education in a well-organized, clearly written, and broadly documented manner.

Educators who seek further for practical applications of social science theory to classroom practice will find much help in the booklet of Helen Darrow, *Social Studies for Understanding*. In this small, but potent volume there is a wealth of practical information and guidance about the social studies program in the classroom.

The author is firm in her stand that teaching will be improved as teachers develop more confidence in their ability to deal with fresh and important information about people, to make decisions, and to help children understand the life of people around the globe. She explains how social learnings can become the means for helping children gain insight into the powers of a democratic education. This insight, she points out, will enable them throughout their lives to get education for personal and group fulfilment.

The author states that there are certain areas of interaction and challenge with which teachers should become familiar: (a) identifying with people of the world and their problems, (b) governing ourselves in a democratic society, (c) communicating with others in a free world, (d) participating in the world of work, (e) making use of time, (f) choosing and using goods and services, and (g) getting an education. The author convincingly takes the position that a life-related approach to social studies can

and must make a difference in children's lives. A unit study approach is highlighted as an effective way of teaching. When the unit study originates and unfolds as a genuine concern of the group in the area of human interaction, social studies teaching will be more effective and students will become wiser and better participants in society as a result.

The usefulness of the book is increased by the many examples of actual classroom work which illustrate the points made. Thorough digestion by teachers of this eminently readable book will help them conduct useful, meaningful, life-related unit studies, drawing content from various disciplines. This progressive, important and sensible approach to the teaching of social studies is needed today when the world has so many people who have not learned to accept all men as brothers and to practice unselfish, cooperative action with their fellow men. Helen Darrow is to be highly commended for giving a new direction for social studies.

A final book continues to add to one's understanding of vital social issues and problems of our time. *Integration vs. Segregation*, edited by Senator Hubert Humphrey, gives us documentaries and commentaries on the issue of school desegregation. It is a fair and impartial presentation of the facts, presenting all major sides of the question. The Supreme Court's school decision document of May 17, 1954 is first, followed by the Southern Manifesto in opposition. Included then are several legal and sociological analyses giving a well-rounded discussion of the matter. Through the papers presented, we can see the segregation issue as it has developed during the past decade. The book provides insight and helps the reader understand more fully one of the great issues and

challenges of our time. Now that the Civil Rights Bill has become law and there is a rapid spread of desegregation into almost every phase of American life, this book is most valuable as it gives readers a basic knowledge of and a feeling for the patterns and conflicts of this social process.

Today's exciting period of history is filled with difficult and complex social problems. The news media headline civil rights, school desegregation, wars, poverty, crime and other facets of society's struggles, tensions and conflicting relationships. All persons are involved directly or indirectly as members of the interacting community. When we reach out to seek resources in our search for solutions, we can find in the four books reviewed here much that can contribute to better understanding and wiser, more effective social action.

*—Reviewed by STANLEY E. JACKSON,
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The Teaching of Reading. *John J. De-Boer and Martha Dallmann.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, Inc., 1960.

Teaching Every Child To Read. *Kathleen B. Hester.* New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1964.

Diagnostic Teaching of Reading. *Ruth Strang.* New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1964.

Teaching Young Children To Read. *Warren G. Cutts, editor.* Washington, D. C.: Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1964.

These four recent publications offer a variety of help on the teaching of reading. The first two are revisions of popular

textbooks. *Diagnostic Teaching of Reading* also can be used as a textbook on teaching developmental as well as remedial reading. In contrast, the fourth, *Teaching Young Children To Read*, a conference report from the U.S. Office of Education, is a broad treatment of the problem of beginning reading.

DeBoer and Dallmann have given thorough coverage of each developmental stage, specific aids to develop specific abilities, excellent suggested references and treatment of research. One may have hoped, however, for more dynamic and original practices than those described in the section, "The Reading Program in Action."

Kathleen Hester has a strong theoretical orientation and consistent, conscientious treatment of stages of growth in reading and examples of practice. The organization of the book, which seems to hinder the development of relationships, and the absences of references may be considered weaknesses in its usefulness.

Diagnostic Teaching of Reading by Ruth Strang is well suited to the graduate student or the in-service teacher. This well known author makes diagnosis an intrinsic part of teaching, contributing to the reading development of all children. The positive point of view, respect for the pupil, consideration of the total school environment and the importance of teacher-pupil relationships are beliefs of one who has been for many years close to research and developments in the teaching of reading. Tests, surveys and other diagnostic materials will be found useful to the clinician as well as the classroom teacher.

Many of the outstanding leaders in reading and related fields contributed to *Teaching Young Children To Read*. The scholarship and the breadth of viewpoint

are indicated by the list of contributors.

No doubt is left in the reader's mind that the young child very early in life is set on the path of success or hardship in learning to read. Yet many practices still current in the earliest school years are based on incomplete knowledge or even disproved theory. The waxing and waning of practices through a cycle of years is dramatically presented by one speaker.

Current innovations, some of which seem to have conflicting theoretical bases, are described. Everything being done points to the need of additional research. Throughout the presentations there is criticism of the research we have and clear suggestions for improvement in both topics and design.

In the section, "A Look Ahead," great emphasis is placed on the autonomy of the teacher. With so much of prescription inherent in current materials in all fields of teaching, it is reassuring to see the plea for broad methods, a sense of exploration, and insights by which the individual teacher can make decisions right for the child and the occasion.

This well-edited little volume should be in the professional library of every elementary school.

—Reviewed by JOYCE COOPER, Professor of Education, and MARJORIE SNYDER, Assistant Professor of Education, University of Florida, Gainesville.

Supervisory Behavior in Education.

Ben M. Harris. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1963. 557 p.

In the introduction to this book the author states, "Chapter I sets forth basic ideas about supervision which are more fully treated elsewhere. Special terms are employed where needed to avoid confusion and certain basic assumptions are made about supervision." The "special

terms" that are employed to avoid confusion perform the opposite function and, in the reviewer's opinion, may be classified as educational jargon.

One of the basic assumptions, ". . . that human behavior is amenable to scientific study," might better have been stated, "human behavior may be defined, classified, diagrammed, and charted *ad infinitum*." The truism that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts seems to have been forgotten in Dr. Harris' concept of supervisory behavior. Not only do the lapses into educational jargon and the numerous graphic representations interrupt the reader's thoughts; they also frequently involve the reader in an analysis which is trivial and unnecessary to an understanding of the text.

In addition, while Dr. Harris has selected a number of bibliographic references and case studies which highlight the importance of human relations in effecting change, he seems to regard the human need for an atmosphere of acceptance and emotional support as a factor which may be assigned numerical value and placed in position on a graph. Of the 13 propositions about supervision, none is directly concerned with children or teachers other than as "things" to be acted upon or manipulated for the altruistic purpose of bringing about "the attainment of the major instructional goals of the school." It is almost as if Dr. Harris views the understanding and guidance of human behavior as a formula which, when followed precisely, will result in the change in behavior which is necessary for the realization of preconceived goals.

The time which Dr. Harris has spent in educational fields, however, seems to have been profitably utilized in a variety of positions. This breadth of experience is discerned in his ability to describe and

analyze the many facets of the supervisory role and to alert the reader to the problems and frustrations which arise as the supervisor works for the improvement of instruction and for curriculum change. While much of the content of Part I is given to a discussion of the influences of institutional, situational, and personal factors upon the ability of the supervisor to release and utilize his leadership potential, Dr. Harris seems unusually aware of, and challenged by, the many ways in which resistance to change may manifest itself.

The approach to problem solving in supervision presented by Dr. Harris is refreshing in that it seems more like the outline for a drama than the standard scientific approach to problem solving: "Phase I, Planning and Initiation; Phase II, Momentum; Phase III, Problems; Phase IV, The Turning Point; and Phase V, The Termination." The vitality of supervisory behavior, and the dynamic quality of change sought through educational leadership are so exciting that thinking and writing of supervision in terms of a dramatic experience stimulates the reader and arouses him to the challenge of unsolved problems, the solutions to which may result in the perfectibility of educational institutions.

Supervisory Behavior in Education presents a thorough picture of the function of supervision, the dynamics of leadership in bringing about change, and the activities and programs which the supervisor plans for maintaining the on-going program while working for curriculum change. The reliability of the content of the text is reinforced not only by frequent citations from research in the behavioral sciences but also by the excellent bibliography at the close of each chapter. Case studies are included to expand and clarify techniques of supervision presented

and discussed in the early chapters of the text.

The section entitled, "Readings on Issues and Ideas," presents material aptly selected from fields other than education: medicine, psychology, sociology, etc. Recognized authorities are quoted: David E. Lilienthal, Carl Rogers, Max Lerner. There is no accompanying commentary by Dr. Harris; rather, the reader is left to relate the content of the readings to the preceding discussion and/or to extend his own thinking on issues in supervision presented earlier.

In "Studies Related to Supervision," on the other hand, the materials are selected from research in the behavioral sciences but they have been digested and edited by Dr. Harris in terms of their pertinence to education and their practical applicability. In "Reports on Supervision in Action," the author has presented several case histories for the purpose of providing a broader view of the nature of supervision and of the competencies required of the supervisor. These last three sections of the book not only increase the reader's understanding of supervisory behavior but also lend variety and interest to a subject which the author has at times managed to make cold and technical.

Supervisory Behavior in Education provides excellent background reading for the person preparing for an initial assignment as a supervisor. It might also afford those who work with the supervisor an opportunity to increase their understanding of the functions and dynamics of supervision. For the experienced supervisor, perhaps the book's greatest value lies in the selected reading and the analysis of research related to human behavior.

—Reviewed by REGINA I. FITZGERALD,
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