

## ● Selected for Review

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**Social Perspectives on Education.**  
*Dorothy Westby-Gibson. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1965.*

—Reviewed by FRED T. WILHELMS,  
Associate Secretary, National Association  
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Washington, D.C.

In the past fifteen years or so, the education of teachers has been profoundly changed by the addition of what tended at first to be called simply "educational sociology" but later to be broadened to "the social foundations of education." It may not be putting it too strongly to say that this new social approach has affected teacher education as fundamentally as the introduction of educational psychology must have done in an earlier day. In the institution which I last served we combined the two into a loosely inter-related block known as "The Learner and Society"—and the title catches nicely the essentially intertwined elements studied in the psychological and sociological modes.

Although the sociological approach had already made great headway, it received a tremendous boost from the rising concern over the lower-class slum child. Even Conant, skeptical as he is of professional theory-spinning, specifies a course in educational sociology for those who are to teach in the slums.

For it is easy to see that we shall not teach children of different backgrounds well until we understand the forces operating on their lives.

Because the discipline is still a new one, there is still wide disagreement about its content. Authors and professors tend to emphasize their own pre-occupations; there is a great deal of playing with new intellectual toys; and few have settled down to figure out what is likely to be most helpful to the practicing teacher.

Into this breach Dr. Westby-Gibson has stepped with commanding force. *Social Perspectives on Education* provides just what its title promises: perspective—a way of looking at "the society, the student, and the school." The author has dug out a tremendous amount of fresh material; she backs her points with the best that is available from scholarly research. But, in the end, what most characterizes her book is *realistic common sense*. The author has genuinely tried to figure out what teachers need to know, and to present it in the most usable form.

The book reads very well. It has a brisk, crisp style. It shows real artistry in the use of excerpts from firsthand materials. It has a clean, compact organization into categories that make sense. The bibliographical aids to further study are well chosen.

*Social Perspectives on Education* was apparently designed as a textbook for the preservice education of teachers—and it looks outstanding for that purpose.

But a great many teachers and school officials now on the job did not have the advantage of such preparation in their preservice days. Not a few of them probably wonder what this social-foundations business is all about. They, too, are likely to find this readable volume an excellent means of clearing up their thinking and organizing it.

**The Social Sciences: Foundations of the Social Studies.** *John U. Michaelis and A. Montgomery Johnston, editors.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1965.

—Reviewed by LESLEE J. BISHOP, Executive Secretary, ASCD.

In order that social studies curriculum revision can move forward and that the teacher of social studies K-12 can be aided in the development of substantive teaching units, John U. Michaelis and A. Montgomery Johnston have compiled, with the significant assistance of eight social scientists, an eminently helpful volume. In this work each of the social sciences is defined, described and discussed in clear, concise language. Importantly, the major generalizations from each of the social sciences are given in 1,2,3, style.

To view in close proximity both the overlap and the diversity of viewpoint expressed by the various social scientists, may give new assistance to classroom teachers and other curriculum workers. Some will find that for the first time they will understand "structure." Others will appreciate the iden-

tification of major and continuing elements in the social studies.

**New Directions in the Kindergarten.** *Helen F. Robison and Bernard Spodek.* New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1965. 214 p.

—Reviewed by SARAH H. LEEPER, Professor of Education, University of Maryland, College Park.

*New Directions in the Kindergarten* is devoted to a proposal for putting content into the kindergarten program. The authors agree that the kindergarten should continue to be a place where children are happy. They insist, however, that kindergarten must also help children to deal with significant ideas about their physical and social world.

As the basis for content selection, the "structure of disciplines" approach to the curriculum is used. According to this plan the key concepts, or big ideas in each major discipline or body of knowledge are identified by specialists as the content for children to learn. Teachers and curriculum workers will then translate these into some understandings or concepts children need to develop in order to grasp the big ideas clearly. Experiences, materials and equipment would be selected and used in ways which seem likely to help children find meanings and relationships.

The authors tested their ideas with a group of kindergarten children in the areas of history, geography and economics. Their studies are described in chapters two and three. Basic concepts in science and mathematics are presented in chapter five.

Teaching practices, related to planning, motivating, organizing and group-

ing are discussed. Planning for the kindergarten teacher includes both long-range goals and the more specific short-range plans. While the normal child usually brings considerable motivation to any appropriate learning situation, the teacher can emphasize and reinforce motives which are desirable and necessary for learning. The teacher can encourage the use of materials and equipment and help children make progress in their skills, abilities, per-

ceptions, use and standards of performance rather than permitting the child to remain at his initial level.

The directions indicated here merit consideration by teachers and supervisors as an approach to emphasizing intellectual content in a program that is based on what is known about how children grow and learn. The findings of scholars in various disciplines are utilized, yet the freedom for teaching remains in the hands of the teacher.

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