

## ● Selected for Review

Reviewers: Kenneth O. Hovet  
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**The Junior High School.** Nelson L. Bossing and Roscoe V. Cramer. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1965. 447 p. \$6.95.

**The American Secondary School Curriculum.** L. H. Clark, Raymond L. Klein and John B. Burks. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965. 453 p. \$6.95.

Reviewed by KENNETH O. HOVET, Professor of Education, University of Maryland, College Park.

*The Junior High School* is the most recent of the few comprehensive publications entirely concerned with the junior high school from its early beginnings to its present status and future possibilities. As an organizational unit, the junior high school receives full treatment and little, if any, relevant information is omitted. The 17 chapters go from purposes and functions through the school program, staffing, housing, articulation, and so on, then close with evaluation. This is a solid, comprehensive book.

Like most changes in education, the junior high school came into being with its own share of controversy. Consequently wherever a topic in this book is associated with controversy or has some historical origins—learning theo-

ries, block-time classes, core, guidance-counseling and others—the authors have presented it together with a wealth of references. This makes even the bibliographies at the end of each chapter interesting to read. (Anyone wishing to learn more of the educational controversies from 1880 to 1920 might enjoy Krug's *The Shaping of the American High School*.)

The authors escape the morass of the present controversy over the "middle school"—5-3-4, 4-4-4-, and what-not—by presenting a total school program designed for early adolescents in grades 7-8-9. Early adolescents are described as pupils aged 12-15; as a result, the book would lose little of its relevance if the junior high school consisted, for example, of grades 6-7-8. While a 7-8-9- organization is assumed, the discussion is directed to a program for early adolescents as a distinctive group.

The most completely developed section is "Part Two, Curriculum and Instruction." Much attention is given to block-time and core classes, and the vast background of Bossing and Cramer in core is evident on page after page. Their emphasis is clearly upon "experience learning" which they see as uniquely required in a curriculum for early adolescents.

Since experience learning means that behavior is modified by its consequences to the pupil, Bossing and Cramer believe the curriculum to be in need of radical change so that early adolescents may have abundant opportunity for experience learning that will stand them in good stead as pupils and eventually as adults. This raises difficult questions in curriculum development: What must a pupil do first so as to behave effectively with whatever he must do next, and how much of what kind of experience must he have to make the widest possible transfer to new situations?

In the preface the authors state that they have written their book "for all who are immediately concerned with the education of early adolescents"—citizens, teachers, administrators. With its wealth of references, this volume would serve well in graduate courses on the junior high school.

In the preface to *The American Secondary School Curriculum*, Clark, Klein and Burks frankly state that the position they take on various questions or issues comes "from an eclectic, middle-of-the-road, somewhat conservative philosophy." Such candor makes for an honest book in a field as knotty with perplexities as curriculum is. The following paragraph is illustrative, and it contains more truth than we, as well as the authors, like to see so baldly stated:

In general the curriculum in American secondary schools is subject-centered. Pupils have little voice in determining what their curricula will be. Rather it is chosen by the faculty members and administrative officers on the basis of subject matter and presumed adult needs. The nature of the subject, rather than the nature of the

pupil, determines the content of the curriculum in most American secondary schools.

While reading the book, one gets the feeling that the authors perhaps winced a little as they described various curriculum practices which they obviously could not support. For example, if there is to be subject matter, they want it to have potential value to the pupil, to be usable, to be functional for all-around living. They find much content that fails to meet this criterion of "contingent value." As they say, "The first responsibility of the school is to teach boys and girls how to think and give them the tools to think with." They believe that much subject matter should be eliminated so that specific areas could be studied in depth.

As for curriculum change, the authors, like the rest of us, are hopeful about many prospects—ungraded schools, team teaching, technological developments, and so on. In the final analysis, however, they believe that "it is the teachers who experiment in their classes who make the changes that really count."

The 19 chapters begin with history and philosophy and conclude with curriculum improvement and evaluation. Ten chapters are devoted to the subjects and special fields. The bibliography is adequate, annotated, and inclusive of a wide range of viewpoints.

If, as the authors say, this book is conservatively written, it is primarily in their attempt at a judicious presentation of facts. The thrust of the book is certainly forward.

A reviewer feels almost necessarily sympathetic to those who write about the curriculum. Available curriculum



language is vague or indefinite or unclear, and the authors of these two books have had their problems. However, there are hopeful signs.

The psychologists working in curriculum areas are insisting on behavioral language—"what does a pupil *do* when he thinks critically?" Scientists are learning that knowledge is our *behavior* toward the world, and, if not that, probably an ornamental, verbal museum piece. Even mathematics is becoming what mathematicians *do*. Whatever crudities appear in this approach are perhaps a preliminary to the eventual clarification of curriculum language.

**Supervision for Modern Elementary Schools. Luther E. Bradfield.**

*Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1964. 180 p.*

*Reviewed by* WAYNE L. HERMAN,  
*Assistant Professor of Education, University of Maryland, College Park.*

One of the strengths of this book is the generous reporting of research findings to support topics throughout its eight chapters. School leaders and graduate students in educational administration will be interested in this book whose tenor is the cooperative relationship of teachers with administrators in improving schools. Notwithstanding the concept of the team approach, it appears that in any writing on this subject it should also be stated unequivocally that direct and adequate supervisory leadership is not always contingent on the cooperative assent of teachers, but is derived from the function of the supervisory position itself: to improve the quality of the teaching-learning process and program.

The author states that teachers should be reassured that the principal's visits to their classrooms are made for the purpose of assisting with classroom problems and improving instructional techniques.

The author presupposes that principals are more knowledgeable about the ingredients of good teaching than the classroom teachers are. This assumption is polemic since as supervisors and teachers normally take advanced degrees in school administration and teaching methodology respectively.

Effective change is more likely to occur when a teacher has a "felt need" and invites the principal to visit the classroom to provide assistance, as the author suggests. However, two facts are germane: the "felt need" as indicated by teachers is often in their area of strength; and supervisors cannot afford to wait for this pronouncement before offering assistance, but must observe production regularly and determine where help is needed.

Bradfield suggests rightly that teachers should never be in doubt as to the purpose of a principal's visit to the classroom. Since every classroom visit is evaluative, whether supervisors admit to it or not, it seems reasonable that definitive criteria on acceptable teaching should be established by the school staff cooperatively and a copy disseminated to each teacher.

Special attention is given in chapters to Helping the Beginning Teacher, Improving Teacher Conditions, Improving Learning Conditions and Improving Learning Experiences. Nearly the entire book is directly descriptive and mildly prescriptive. The descriptions of the findings of research will help

supervisors to seek solutions to problems in their own school milieu.

It may well be that this book will eradicate tacitly the notion of some school leaders that research is esoteric and is solely the province of higher education. The volume may also further the idea that educational research is the active and necessary tool to assist supervisors in improving their roles.

**Readings in the Psychology of Cognition.** R. C. Anderson and D. P. Ausubel, editors. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965.

**Learning and the Educational Process.** J. D. Krumboltz, editor. Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1965.

Reviewed by ROBERT B. INGLE, Associate Professor, Educational Psychology, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee.

Classically the study of learning has been largely confined to investigations of infrahuman species performing relatively simple tasks. On the whole, educators have not been able to derive much guidance from this particular type of experimentation because the transition from infrahuman to human is somewhat less than direct and because the tasks typically dealt with by the educator are generally of a higher order than those dealt with in classical learning experiments. The two books reviewed here represent a heartening recent trend away from infrahuman learning research toward human learning research.

*Learning and the Educational Process*, edited by J. D. Krumboltz, is an outgrowth of the Research Conference on Learning and the Educational Proc-

ess held at Stanford University in 1964. The book's stated aim is to "stimulate the thought of any person seriously interested in research approaches to the problems in education." It accomplishes this purpose admirably. The papers included in the book deal with such diverse topics as stating educational objectives, motivation, language related to learning in lower class children, specific learning tasks, models for instruction and suggestions for more appropriate ways to study learning outcomes.

As is evident, the papers are not totally concerned with the learning process per se, but those that do not deal with techniques of learning deal with variables which vitally affect the learning process and are of great interest to the educator. The papers are not definitive in their areas, nor are they intended to be. A careful reading of each will raise more questions than will be answered and, in keeping with the stated purpose of the volume, this is as it should be.

*Readings in the Psychology of Cognition*, edited by Richard C. Anderson and David P. Ausubel, deals with a specific area of learning in a more integrated fashion than does the previous volume. This volume treats what are frequently called the "higher mental processes." It is divided into four major sections, the first dealing with Theories of Cognitive Organization and Functioning, the second with Meaningful Verbal Learning and Language, the third with Concept Formation, and the fourth with Thinking and Problem Solving.

All too frequently books of readings,



even though organized into some logical order, remain simply a collection of articles that do not seem to have any real organization. Perhaps the outstanding feature of this volume, aside from the obvious excellence of the articles, is the fact that the authors have not merely collected articles, but have done so with a particular criterion in mind. The criterion used is whether or not the article generally fits into one of two theoretic positions.

One of the theoretic positions is that of the cognitive theorists, the other is that of the neobehavioristic theorists. Although all of the articles do not fit perfectly, and the authors recognize this, they tend to lean toward one theory or the other. A further excellent

integrative aspect of this volume is the introduction written for each section in which each theoretic position is generally outlined and the relationship of each article to its theoretic position briefly considered.

Each volume is intended to serve a different function, although both deal with learning and the learning process. For the practicing educator perhaps the Krumboltz volume would be more appealing, but no serious student of learning can afford to overlook the Anderson and Ausubel book. Both have the advantage of dealing with human learning, which makes them directly applicable to education and the educational process. 45

## LANGUAGE AND MEANING

**Edited by James B. Macdonald and Robert R. Leeper**  
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Price: \$2.75

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