

SELECTED FOR REVIEW

Reviewers: *Richard V. Brown*
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New Priorities in the Curriculum. *Louise M. Berman.* Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1968. 241 pp.

—Reviewed by RICHARD V. BROWN,
Associate Secretary, ASCD.

In commenting on the process of creating, the author notes, "Few have been bold enough to pronounce as a way of life the creation of freshness and newness within themselves as persons and within the persons, ideas, and objects with whom they have contact." Fortunately for those interested in breaking out of traditional approaches to curriculum development, with emphasis on the development of cognitive skills in subject matter areas, the author has been bold enough to propose refreshing new priorities for consideration.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I presents a rationale for new priorities, Part II identifies and explicates these priorities, and Part III suggests schemes for incorporating the new priorities in curricular designs.

The new priorities proposed for the curriculum and the alternative organizing schemes created to develop the process skills inherent in these priorities are logical extensions of the author's philosophical view of man as a process-oriented being.

Process orientation . . . means that a person has within his personality elements of dynamism, motion, and responsibility which enable him to live as an adequate and a con-

tributing member of the world of which he is part.

With such a view of man, Berman suggests a move away from curricula designed to emphasize subject matter with process skills developed as concomitant outcomes. She proposes instead a consideration of curricula designed to provide direct experiences in eight process skills: perceiving, communicating, loving, decision making, knowing, patterning, creating, and valuing.

The logic which permeates the organization of this book is evident in the treatment of the key processes. First, a rationale for including the process is offered. Drawing from a broad range of key references, the author next defines and explicates the process in terms of its basic components. Of particular interest to those responsible for interpreting curricular designs into classroom practices are those passages in which the author translates the broad concepts of the process under consideration into alternative ways of working with students to enable them to internalize the process. Finally, hypotheses for testing are proposed.

"Perceiving" is viewed as the basis and stimulus of all man's peculiarly human functions, and, therefore, is the foundation of a superstructure composed of all other processes considered in the book. Knowledge about and responses to man's world and the human condition are based upon man's internalized perceptions of his environment and of those persons in that environment.

"Communicating," considered as an interpersonal process of sharing personal meaning, goes well beyond the traditional elements of programs of communication. New challenges are posed for schools to focus on "... those aspects of communication which enable the psychological freedom to deal with one's inner life—ideas, feelings, constructs."

Should the school provide experiences which enable children and youth to understand the dynamics of love? Can schools plan such experiences? According to Berman, the answer to both questions is "yes." "Loving," as a process, is described as "co-responding," which denotes a relating to others in mutually satisfying ways. Schools which accept responsibility for developing the process skills of love will provide ample opportunities for human interaction and will assist students in analyzing their co-responses to different persons and groups.

One of the most interesting features, from the reviewer's standpoint, of the section on "knowing" is the author's two-dimensional framework of knowing about knowing in which knowledge, on one dimension, can be viewed as additive (accruing information), systematized (categorizing information to form generalizations), and metamorphosed (developing a framework which enables new insights). Along the second dimension, knowledge can be viewed as public or established and private or personal.

All through life man is faced with alternatives. "Decision making" as a central theme in schools is the process whereby one alternative is selected over another. As discussed in the book, decision making involves both the logical elements of problem solving and the intuitive elements of creating.

"Patterning" is viewed as a key process which enables students to understand existing orderings of phenomena as well as to categorize and order his own impressions as a way of providing meaning to experience.

Imaginative solutions to existing and future problems will be dependent upon man's ability to go beyond accumulated knowledge and traditional procedures. In discussing the process, "creating," the author points up the roles that open-ended percep-

tion and self-evaluation play in enabling students to develop their creative potential.

The section on "valuing" is well documented with key references in this area and includes thought-provoking guidelines for dealing with this process.

In Part III, Berman presents six organizing schemes that would accommodate the eight process skills. Each scheme is explained briefly and is accompanied by a schematic representation. The reader is encouraged to extrapolate beyond these descriptions and to fill in the specific details of organization and design for implementation.

In summary, if you are seeking new curriculum priorities, and are open to alternative frameworks for casting these new priorities and willing to explore the possibilities inherent in the two, then you will be intrigued with this refreshing new approach to overall curriculum design. □

Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View. David P. Ausubel. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1968. 685 pp.

—Reviewed by THEODORE R. STORLIE, Director, Institute for Educational Research, Downers Grove, Illinois.

Educational Psychology: A Cognitive View is a stimulating, frustrating, vexing, and useful book. Ausubel's consistent, theoretical presentation of the theory of meaningful verbal behavior is provocative. He omits animal and rote learning, conditioning, and much of the other usual content of educational psychology. He regards these topics as being generally irrelevant to school learning of potentially meaningful material.

His purpose is to provide the prospective teacher with basic psychological sophistication he will need in the classroom. The prospective teacher may find the first five chapters a difficult introduction, although more appealing, perhaps, than a typical educational psychology text.

The book is frustrating in its occasionally ponderous style, especially in the first five chapters, which give the theoretical and research basis for Ausubel's cognitive posi-

tion. It is also frustrating to read sweeping judgments about educational practices, such as Ausubel's criticism of audio-lingual methods and "whole-word" reading techniques, without clear indication that these criticisms are based on theoretical considerations. He may be right, but his criticisms appear to be hypotheses that need to be tested. Ausubel seems to think that the reader should realize these qualifications on his own.

The sometimes polemic tone, as in his frequent condemnations of Progressive Education, will be vexing to some, especially when he does not give specific instances as bases for his condemnation. He challenges "the widely-accepted tenet of Progressive Education that verbal learning is necessarily rote in character . . ." (p. 169). He also blames the Progressive Education movement for the failure of secondary schools to place more emphasis on abstract and verbal techniques of learning. Some Progressive educators would probably be surprised that an educator would attribute so much influence to them.

Similarly, curriculum writers will be surprised to find that leading educators are returning to the point of view that the content of the curriculum is the school's, not the student's, responsibility.

Curriculum planners probably will not be satisfied with Ausubel's view that the purpose of schooling is to develop the ability to learn more subject matter in the various disciplines. He dismisses the learning of values as not a primary responsibility of the school. He does not deal with the problem of how the learner can be helped to integrate knowledge of various disciplines.

Nevertheless, Ausubel's explication of the cognitive position is useful for analyzing school programs and teaching practices. For example, the use of advance organizers to aid learning is well developed. Most textbooks, he says, are organized topically, not in a way to facilitate learning. He states that texts should provide "subsumers" (related and more inclusive propositions) at the beginning to aid meaningful learning. When texts do not provide adequate subsumers, he claims, they tend to result in rote, not meaningful, learning. However, it is not always

readily apparent whether Ausubel is theorizing based on empirical evidence or, as he indicates is necessary, extending theoretically to fill gaps in the data.

Chapter 5 is particularly useful in that it includes an excellent exposition of Piaget's thought and its relevance for education. The theory of developmental stages has much potential significance for teaching by adjusting to the students' developmental stages.

Many provocative treatments of some more typical educational psychology content also are included. For example, he states that punishment has been unjustifiably condemned (by Progressive Education, of course) as an educational technique.

With the current interest in discovery learning, Ausubel's careful analysis of its place in education should be helpful in curriculum development. □

Prospective Changes in Society by 1980. *Edgar L. Morphet and Charles O. Ryan, editors. Designing Education for the Future, No. 1. New York: Citation Press, 1967. 268 pp.*

Implications for Education of Prospective Changes in Society. *Edgar L. Morphet and Charles O. Ryan, editors. Designing Education for the Future, No. 2. New York: Citation Press, 1967. 323 pp.*

The Unprepared Society: Planning For A Precarious Future. *Donald N. Michael. 10th John Dewey Society Lecture. New York: Basic Books, 1968. 132 pp.*

—Reviewed by WILLIAM VAN TIL, *Coffman Distinguished Professor in Education, Indiana State University, Terre Haute.*

A new and promising development is occurring in contemporary education. Professional educators are joining other scholars in various disciplines in speculating upon the alternative futures before us in the remainder of the 20th century.

Scholars venturesome enough to contemplate possible futures must face residual skepticism of their colleagues which is derivative from earlier efforts by intellectuals to predict the future. We are all too familiar

with Utopias from Plato to Bellamy (perhaps the last Utopian optimist) and with negative or anti-Utopias from H. G. Wells to Orwell and Huxley (perhaps we should coin the usage *Infernos* rather than Utopias for such prophecies).

In 1969, we are all too well aware that neither Utopia nor Inferno has arrived, that neither Heaven nor Hell has yet prevailed, and that, instead, we on earth experience a peculiar blend of both realms. Consequently, some students of society regard study of the future as no more reputable than astrology. (And, indeed, some of it is akin to the sooth-saying of farmers' almanacs.)

Yet contemporary speculation on the future differs from older prophecies of Utopia or Inferno in significant ways and, as a result, is frequently more useful. For one thing, today's better speculations deal with *alternative* futures rather than with one static prediction. Contemporary futurism not only extrapolates trends but also recognizes the reality of "system breaks," to quote Kenneth E. Boulding's perceptive phrase for discontinuities and surprises which he illustrates lucidly in *Prospective Changes in Society* by 1980, Volume I of the Eight-State Project called "Designing Education for the Future."

In addition, today's scholars have better tools for use in speculating on alternative futures than had their predecessors. Finally, rather than being escapist (an accusation sometimes leveled against reflection on possible futures), many students of the future perceive speculation on the future as an instrument for clarifying alternative courses and value possibilities in the present. They see study of alternative futures as a way of helping modern men to confront their present problems and to consider the consequences of their options, outcomes which John Dewey would have warmly endorsed.

Consequently, one of the more exciting potential contributions to the development of dialogue on today's human perplexities is futurism or future-planning, as Harold Shane of Indiana University terms it in his insightful article in *Phi Delta Kappan* for March 1968, "Future-Planning and the Curriculum," an article which all thoughtful educators

should read along with his October 1967, "Future Shock and the Curriculum."

Among the better of the future-oriented speculations on alternative futures of American society as a whole is the Summer 1967 issue of *Daedalus*, the journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. In this issue the Academy's Commission on the Year 2000 presented papers and discussions by outstanding scholars, primarily physical and behavioral scientists plus an occasional humanist. *The Year 2000* by Herman Kahn and Anthony J. Wiener, published by Macmillan in 1967, is also an essential source, particularly for a comprehensive fact base. Both publications, however, give minimal space to education.

Consequently, educators should greet with pleasure and appreciation the two volumes prepared by the project of the eight Western states (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming), *Prospective Changes in Society by 1980* and *Implications for Education of Prospective Changes in Society*. It is particularly helpful to have these available from Citation Press, a division of Scholastic Magazines in New York City, after a period in which the books seemed to be an educational version of an underground press classic heard of largely by word-of-mouth at conferences and described as available through the editors at a Denver address which the speaker usually could not recall!

The two books, skillfully prepared by editors Edgar L. Morphet and Charles O. Ryan, are invaluable resources useful to a variety of specialists in education. This reviewer, for instance, found them useful along with broad sources in developing his own *The Year 2000: Teacher Education*, published by Indiana State University. The volumes should also be helpful to the contributors to the forthcoming Kimball Wiles Memorial volume, to be published by Charles E. Merrill, which is tentatively titled *The High School of the Future*, after the title of Wiles' final chapter in *The Changing Curriculum of the American High School*, in which he speculated on the curriculum in 1985.

If one were forced to choose between

the two volumes, *Prospective Changes in Society by 1980* should be the first choice. This volume contains massive yet readable contributions on alternative futures assembled by scientists and humanists, including Joseph L. Fisher, Philip M. Hauser, Gerhard Colm, William L. C. Wheaton, Kenneth E. Boulding, and Richard L. Shetler.

Implications for Education of Prospective Changes in Society, containing speculation on possible educational directions by educators, is lively and provocative and is usually based on the extrapolated trends and system breaks described in the first volume except when, very rarely, a contributor confuses his task of speculating on the future with support of a particular educational innovation with which he is associated. Administration as a field may be over-represented in Volume 2, since the contributors are more frequently administration specialists than curriculum leaders. Contributors include Paul A. Miller, Ralph W. Tyler, John I. Goodlad, B. Othanel Smith, A. Harry Passow, Theodore L. Reller, David L. Clark, Luvern L. Cunningham, Claude W. Fawcett, Henry M. Brickell, Keith Goldhammer, R. L. Johns, Roald F. Campbell, Henry Toy, Jr., and Harold Taylor.

After reading the two volumes of basic introduction produced by the Designing Education for the Future project, the reader will be readier to wrestle with the difficult problems of planning for the future described in *The Unprepared Society: Planning for a Precarious Future* by Donald M. Michael.

This potent book is an expansion of the Tenth John Dewey Society Lecture.

Dr. Michael, who is program director of the Center for Research on the Utilization of Scientific Knowledge at the University of Michigan, pulls no punches in specifying the difficulties which are ahead for his "unprepared society." He believes:

We are almost certain to face disaster if we don't plan; we are almost certain to increase the likelihood of having a better world if we plan well. But we are also almost certain to be in deep trouble even with planning because our best plans will be developed and fostered by limited human beings picking and choosing among limited knowledge, very often ignorant of the extent of their own ignorance.

Dr. Michael is particularly compelling in examining complexity, turmoil, and scarcity as aspects of tomorrow, in discussing the three prepotent technologies of cybernation, social engineering, and biological engineering, and in setting forth "the natural resistances to organizational change." His debatable call for selective education for a new kind of leadership and for stress on the teacher's preoccupations in educating students should lead to the type of fruitful and clarifying controversies which has long been characteristic of John Dewey Society publications and meetings.

The reader of these three books should have a rare opportunity to sharpen his thinking and improve his action in the present through sharing an exciting and essential dialogue on the inescapable future. □

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