

## SELECTED FOR REVIEW

Reviewers: Vernon E. Anderson  
Gerald R. Firth  
John McGill  
Kathleen Amershek

**Confronting Curriculum Reform.** Elliot W. Eisner, editor. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971. 206 pp.

**Secondary School Curriculum.** Rudyard K. Bent and Adolph Unruh. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1969. 468 pp.

—Reviewed by VERNON E. ANDERSON, Professor of Education, University of Maryland, College Park.

These two books at first glance appear to have in common only the fact that they deal with the school curriculum. Closer examination reveals, however, that both are concerned not only with curriculum content but also with the process of curriculum development.

A review ought to take into consideration the authors' stated purposes for the book. Even there, one finds some commonalities. For example, the Eisner volume purports to analyze important theoretical problems in the curriculum field and states in the flyleaf, "It was in the hope of providing the bases for improved curriculum theory that this book was prepared." Bent and Unruh state in the Preface, "The most unique feature of this text is the development of a curriculum theory and the selection of an approach to curriculum development" (p. vii). While the

latter stated that "the problems approach is stressed throughout the entire text" (p. viii), the former "wanted to identify the problems and tasks confronting the curriculum maker in any field" (p. 3).

However, the books are quite different. *Confronting Curriculum Reform*, presenting as it does seven major papers given at the Cubberly Curriculum Conference held at Stanford University, ought to make rather dull reading. In fact, it is just the opposite: stimulating and provocative. The seven educators chosen to give the papers are of different disciplinary backgrounds, and draw in most instances upon their experience in national curriculum projects to analyze what these projects mean for approaches to curriculum making and curriculum theory. The fact that they wrote in an informal manner for an oral presentation avoids the stilted textbook writing style. The dialectical approach of having another educator critically analyze each paper makes the reader feel as though he were sitting in on a dialogue. As could be expected in a book written by several authors, there is unevenness in quality among the chapters, but I found a remarkable consistency in the thread of ideas running throughout the book.

One criterion for choosing a book to rec-

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commend to graduate students and practitioners in education ought to be: Does it present any new, thought-provoking ideas? In several chapters, this volume admirably satisfies that criterion. Outstanding examples are Bloom's and Macdonald's chapters. Bloom's chapter on "Mastery Learning and Its Implications for Curriculum Development" questions the normal curve concept of marking and holds that if students are normally distributed *with respect to aptitudes*, and if the kind and quality of instruction and the time available are made appropriate to characteristics and needs of each student, the majority of students may be expected to achieve mastery of the subject, and the relation between aptitude and achievement should approach zero (p. 21).

Macdonald's chapter on "Responsible Curriculum Development" questions the use of taxonomies and behavioral objectives for curriculum goals: "It is because the taxonomies are so widely used in curriculum development, because they academically segment people's behavior like frogs on a tray, and because the cognitive domain is obviously given preference that they are dangerous to good education and are irresponsible . . ." (p. 24). Eisner's, Haney's, and Kaufman's chapters also ask penetrating questions regarding established practices and ideas.

Throughout most of the major chapters, which deal with the science, mathematics, art, and social studies curriculum projects and with dilemmas in curriculum decision making, the concepts in evaluation, learning styles related to instructional materials, alternative learning opportunities, and student involvement in curriculum development are examined.

The most incisive critiques are given by Cronback, Bridgham, and Tucker. Some of the reactors to major chapters go off on a tangent of their own prejudices rather than critically reacting to the ideas in the presentation.

*Secondary School Curriculum* is a typical textbook for a college course. It deals with such topics as curriculum foundations, the co-curriculum, administration of the curriculum, innovations, curriculum planning

and organization, instructional media, and practices in subject fields. In its organization it suffers from having been coauthored. One gets the feeling at times that "I've read this before." For example, Chapters 4, 5, and 16 all discuss the subject fields in the curriculum, and the influences and restrictions on the curriculum are discussed in three different sections (pp. 47-50, 204-14, 216-22).

Those who are looking for a text that is written from a descriptive, normative approach will find this book suits the purposes of their course. Although the authors state that the problems approach is the method stressed, they seldom utilize it in presenting the material. The statement that "the approach is based on the structure of knowledge of each subject area" applies to the sections of the book dealing with the subject fields, especially Chapters 16 and 17 (Promising Practices), which are the outstanding chapters in the book.

From the perspective of the year 1971, one wonders if the bibliographical references (largely dated between 1951 and 1967) are up-to-date for such topics as innovations, current trends, and issues. More to the point, the data on enrollments, requirements for graduation, and other public school data are largely for the years 1959-61. Little or no consideration is given to the live current issues affecting the curriculum, such as accountability, negotiations, racism, student unrest, women's liberation movement, performance contracting, the drug problem, problems of the environment. In the section on student participation in the government of the school and the administration of activities, none of the student demands for greater control of their affairs nor the issues of censorship in school publications are touched upon.

The first three chapters on curriculum theory, psychological and social foundations, and types of subject organization try to cover far too much in order to do an adequate job. Some will question why the authors omitted consideration of the practical and fine arts in dealing with the subject fields. Art and music are mentioned under "Special Interests" only, and neither industrial arts, home economics,

nor business education is discussed under the "General Education" or "Special Interests" chapters.

Although Bent and Unruh state that their book is written especially for the graduate level, it is more like the typical text in secondary education for undergraduate courses. *Confronting Curriculum Reform* is a far more challenging book for graduate students if one looks for ideas, questioning of practices, and examination of theory of curriculum rather than a descriptive account of practices and a broad coverage of many facets of the secondary school curriculum. □

**Strategies for Planned Curricular Innovation.** *Marcella R. Lawler, editor.* New York: Teachers College Press, 1970. 164 pp.

**Innovation in Mass Education.** *David Street, editor.* New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1969. 342 pp.

**The Schools and the Challenge of Innovation.** *Introduction by Sterling M. McMurrin.* New York: Committee for Economic Development, 1969. 341 pp.

—Reviewed by GERALD R. FIRTH, Professor and Chairman, Secondary Education, University of Alabama, University.

The phenomena of innovation in American schools are treated with interesting, diverse, and candid commentary in these three publications. Their agreement regarding current difficulties and their recommendations for future improvements, without concern for common definition of terms, perhaps offer the most significant witness to the accepted inevitability and importance of change.

If the three books are placed on a continuum, a perspective of their similarities and differences may be appreciated. Lawler operates on the assumption that curriculum change will be planned by the educational establishment as conceived and operating within the public schools; McMurrin broadens this range to "involve many facets of the educational enterprise," including professional preparation programs and certification requirements; while Street calls for substan-

tial reform in the total school structure as it presently exists, particularly in its "presumption of a monopoly of responsibility."

Such differences in a proposed resolution of the challenge of change arise from the characteristics of the authors and the nature of their mission. Lawler has edited nine papers which she and her colleagues presented during a 1966 conference for students and alumni, sponsored by the Department of Curriculum and Teaching at Teachers College. Their purpose is accurately expressed in the title of the report as exploring appropriate means to bring about change in public schools.

McMurrin introduces a dozen of the papers utilized by the Committee for Economic Development in an attempt to present a picture of the complexities of education in the United States today as viewed by a distinguished array of leading scholars and experts in various fields of education. Although placed in a broad context, the essays "are carefully specialized and are concerned primarily with the processes of instruction—often with new instructional technology."

It remains for Street to operate from a research base in dealing with "the macrosociology of educational change." He offers a series of project reports to document his concern for realism, self-respect, and humanistic concerns. His contributors, with the exception of free-lancer Martin Mayer, are interested primarily in sociology and the social sciences.

Such scope in perception, purpose, and participation makes the areas of commonality the more startling.

In a comparison of major emphases on proposed innovations, the reader can identify similarities and differences. The Lawler report does not promote any particular instructional or curricular innovations, concentrating rather upon the procedures for institutionalizing change. These can be considered, as Miel suggests, under the foci of (a) the larger social setting, (b) the receiving organization, (c) the development-introduction-diffusion process, (d) the nature of the innovation per se, and (e) the people involved.

The content of the McMurrin volume centers attention upon the potential, cost, improved utilization, and effectiveness of innovative measures. These are clustered under the topics of (a) school resources, (b) evaluation and research, (c) teacher personnel, and (d) instructional systems.

Street's collection of articles, while giving the impression of random choice, is very much concerned with the incorporation of the urban Negro into the dominant white culture. Dealing with such school factors as nongrading, it encompasses not only individual behavior but also reform in the school itself, improved teacher education, community influences, and the use of nonprofessionals. His selection of articles lends support to his key areas of (a) an organizational format revision, (b) a teaching profession syndrome, (c) a political support base, (d) the rise of meritocracy, and (e) the social functions of education.

All three publications concur that among the most serious impediments to the success of innovative activities is any piecemeal implementation without comprehensive evaluation. Street goes beyond this common view to claim that too much emphasis has been placed on educational research at the expense of inner city changes. His recommendations for furthering progress in innovation include incorporating evaluation within the design of any new program and devoting attention to the community with its power structures. As pointed out in the Lawler report, the school is not insulated from the political environment but is in dynamic interaction with it.

Both Street and McMurrin stress teacher preparation, but the former adds to this a concern for organizational structure, while the latter stresses the processes of instruction. It is assumed that each would seek to create a balance between the academic and the humanistic. Lawler's emphasis adds to these volumes the important dimension of an instructional leadership which is open-minded and capable of winning teacher support for innovation.

There appears to be little disagreement in these books with the McMurrin position that the appropriate use of financial aid is

essential to bridge the gap between the demands placed upon education and the quality or quantity of services it provides. Efficiency in initiating change is essential if educational innovation is to be effective. All concur in the belief that education is a function of the culture and must reflect that culture in its totality. Defining "mass education" as that intended to reach those living at the bottom or on the periphery of society, Street sees far more than tinkering with the status quo as necessary if the "system is to function as a meaningful, incorporative institution."

Perhaps the fundamental issue is posed by McMurrin in predicting that decisions of the future are dependent upon the attitude of educators: passive resignation or willingness to change. □

**Classroom Teaching and Learning: A Mental Health Approach.** *Laurel N. Tanner and Henry Clay Lindgren.* New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1971. 429 pp.

—Reviewed by JOHN MCGILL, Professor of Elementary Education, University of Illinois, Urbana.

There are at least two ways to review this new text, *Classroom Teaching and Learning: A Mental Health Approach* by Laurel N. Tanner and Henry Clay Lindgren. The first way is an easy way and consists primarily of echoing or reiterating the insightful analysis written by Philip Jackson in the Foreword to the text. And while I will not take this easy way, I cannot resist pointing out that everything Dr. Jackson has written about this book—its comprehensive treatment, its scholarly yet down-to-earth manner of presentation, its critical, penetrating analysis of weaknesses in present school practice, its vision and clear-cut assertions on the directions of improved practices, its optimism for better schools in the future, and its thread-like view of mental health which binds the book together—was true and came through to this reader and reviewer.

A second way of reviewing this new text is much harder because it presses one to

**THE WORLD: CONTEXT FOR TEACHING IN THE  
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offer up some additional analyses not included in Dr. Jackson's Foreword to the volume. This I will attempt to secure in the knowledge that an excellent review is already available to educators.

In very recent years, professional literature and educational conferences have contained many words featuring and focusing on the need to humanize the schools—to humanize education. Such attention and emphasis have come in response to charges, allegations, and criticism from all sectors of society, including learners, deploring the impersonal and dehumanizing characteristics of programs, practices, and procedures in public education.

*Classroom Teaching and Learning* as a text does more than just develop the theme that good school programs are mentally healthful programs. Certainly the authors are convincing in taking the position that mental health in education can no longer be regarded as something separate from good schooling. And what makes them convincing is not just that they have succeeded in revising and restoring the school's proper concern for personal and social development, but they have also revealed the inextricable relationship of mentally healthful practice and teacher behavior to the teaching-learning process.

Moreover, their sensitive application of new knowledge from child development and the behavioral sciences to the social system of the school has taken them beyond the implications of mental health for the teaching-learning situation to the broader environment of the school, to the roles, relationships, attitudes, values, and other more subtle factors which operate as educational forces within the school.

Any reader or student of education who wants to discover both the meaning and means for humanizing education will find both in this text—for it is, in essence, a text on the humane treatment of learners.

Probably the most powerful and humane concept which this text sets forth is that of the mental health approach. This approach is shown as a preventive measure intervening in the lives and learning of students

to promote and assure fullest possible development of individual potential. The feelings of futility which the young experience, the feelings of uselessness and lack of identity in their search for self, their real and imagined incompetencies revealed by ugly comparisons, the numerous crisis situations which impair relationships with parents, peers, friends, and teachers—all these bring estrangement and tend to alienate the young from their parents, their peers, their school, and society. That they might even be beside themselves is not unreal.

Certainly the counteracting forces to these harmful conditions are to be found in and even prevented by education, and by educational programs which are mentally healthful programs. The authors through their text and the many suggested guidelines and practices contained therein provide for effective use of preventive measures.

There are two additional things to be written of this text. Somehow or other, in going back to the earlier expressions of those concerned with mental health in education, one recalls or thinks he remembers a suspicion or taint of anti-intellectualism which was, in most probability, mistakenly assigned to the mental health movement. Forget it! In no way does this text subvert—or water down—the school's unique responsibility for developing cognitive abilities in learners. In fact, the development of such skills and competencies is stressed for their vital contribution to the development of any and all individuals.

Chapter 10 on Evaluation and Mental Health is particularly timely, appropriate, and constructive. Today there is much ado about the commonly used ABC marking system. (To some this is much ado about a nothing system.) Yet seriously many educators (as do Tanner and Lindgren) are calling for the elimination of ABC grades or present similar marking systems. Some mistakenly see this as the end of all evaluation in the teaching-learning situation—and could profit considerably from the constructive and comprehensive treatment of the many facets of the evaluation process and evaluative practices considered in this chapter.

Almost 20 years have come and gone since Dr. Lindgren's early text on *Mental Health in Education*, and during these years the pendulum of education has been cutting its arc. The passing of these years has witnessed an explosion of knowledge, especially from the behavioral sciences and pedagogy. The availability of this knowledge, and the critical and anxiety-ridden conditions of these times, create the need for this text. And this text needs to be taken seriously! □

**The Good Teacher: How Teachers Judge Teachers.** *Richard Stone.* New York: Philosophical Library, 1970. 114 pp.

—Reviewed by KATHLEEN AMERSHEK, Associate Professor of Education, University of Maryland, College Park.

Richard Stone has used an interesting scheme for data collecting in this subjective report on rating teachers. He simply recorded the comments of the teachers, in the teachers' lounge, which contained value statements about their colleagues and others in the profession. His style consists of weaving these quotes together with a great deal of interpolation. Conclusions are drawn freely from the words of his colleagues in an elementary school.

This approach results in bringing out the humaneness of the most human of professions. It is mostly a story of peer relations, community hang-ups, and administrative maneuvering. The functioning of the teacher, the teaching act, is not extensively treated. There is little evidence of the children's involvement throughout.

The style is "folksy" without being saccharine and is likely to offend no one. The conclusion that anyone at all is likely to be a good teacher will be similarly acceptable. Stone concludes that there is no way to predict who should teach—but it is the teacher who makes the difference despite any other circumstance, preparation, certification, or political sentiment. And in the end, the peer group will make or break a potential candidate.

The picture is drawn from a very re-

stricted sample, but on the whole does agree with some of the research on teacher characteristics. There could be serious reservations to the use of this book as a contribution to the search for criteria in the selection of teachers. These reservations would relate both to the book's obvious bias toward peer acceptance as a standard of value and to the limitations of its scope of application. Self-perception and interpersonal dynamics studies have made important contributions to the understanding of the teacher, and this volume seems almost an affront to findings in those fields.

This report has limited utility for people who are actively involved in preparation of teachers; it may be most useful as a mirror for those who are too far removed from the classroom. The caricatures of roles might lead to helpful discussion. The general public may be pleased to have its stereotypes reinforced. Unfortunately, the book has missed an opportunity to make a thoughtful contribution and instead has become popular writing. □

**Creative Thinking and Learning.** *E. Paul Torrance and R. E. Myers.* New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, Inc., 1970. 330 pp.

—Reviewed by KATHLEEN AMERSHEK.

This volume has the teaching of children sharply in focus throughout. The process is considered from an interaction base: What do the components of the teaching situation—teacher, pupil, and peer group—give to and get from each other?

The organization of the book is logical and useful. Style and zest are apparent in

the presentation of the plausibility of teaching creative development. The outcome of the question is never in doubt to those familiar with the authors' names. Creative teaching is capable of being taught! And so, the plot moves on to presenting strategies for achieving results satisfying to the teachers and the learners.

Examples, ideas, and alternatives are offered in abundance for developing skills to implement the ideas. If the reader is not sympathetic to the extensive use of questioning technique, however, he might feel otherwise. Fully half of the book is given to the art of asking useful questions. Each chapter offers its own practice session in the form of a summary exercise.

The supporting research is recent and relevant. The lack of diversity is understandable in view of the overwhelming contributions which these two authors have made in the field of creativity. There is little preaching or lecturing. The style is fully intended as an exercise in learning a new strategy of teaching and does not presume otherwise.

This volume is clearly aimed at beginners—be they 21 or 41—in the field of creative teaching, and as such is written in explicit step-by-step terms. For those attuned to the style of research journals, the abundance of words may be bothersome and even unwelcome. Those seeking help will probably use the book in the way the authors intended, as a help to learning a new competence.

Professors faced with classes of beginners or in-service teachers could use this low-key, highly suggestive book as a departure point for seminars or as the backbone of a methods course. □

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Much of the content of this journal consists of unsolicited materials. If you have a manuscript which you think is suitable for publication in *Educational Leadership*, why not mail it to us for consideration and possible use? Usually we can make a decision fairly promptly as to whether or not such materials can be included in the journal.

"Letters to the Editor" are also welcomed and will be used if possible. Materials suitable for use in the Features sections "Viewpoint" and "Innovations in Education" will also be welcomed for possible use. Contributors are asked to supply photographs or other illustrative materials with their manuscripts.

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