

SELECTED FOR REVIEW

Reviewers: Michael L. Mazzaresse
Emilie G. Larson
Basil S. Deming
James J. Buckley, Jr.

The Educational Establishment.
Elizabeth L. and Michael Useem, editors.
Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall,
Inc., 1974. 180 pp.

**Roots of Crisis: American Education in
the Twentieth Century.** Clarence J. Karier,
Paul Violas, and Joel Spring. Chicago: Rand
McNally & Company, 1973. 243 pp.

—Reviewed by MICHAEL L. MAZZARESE,
Assistant Professor, Staten Island Commu-
nity College of the City University of New
York.

If the upheaval of the 1960's did nothing to nudge you from the safety of your academic seat, start looking over your shoulder.

In a well-documented and balanced approach, the Useems present essays examining what they call *The Educational Establishment* in which they treat "the political context of schooling in American life" (p. 2).

The name *public* school system may be a misnomer. Lurking beneath the surface organization is a "hidden establishment" between the economic-social class structure and the schools which "help(s) transmit capitalist demands to the educational system" (p. 3). Standardized achievement tests used for stratification are known to discriminate against students from poor and working-class backgrounds. Two contributors, Miliband and Zeigler, point out the conservative bias

of public school curricula, stressing such traits as punctuality and submissiveness to authority—wonderful attributes for robot-like employees. Fantini, Gittel, and Magat observed that three-fifths of school board members are professionals and businessmen as opposed to only one-tenth who are blue-collar workers.

In the areas of curriculum and personnel, school superintendents and administrators exert another strong influence. These same pressures can be transferred to the college level where, contrary to opinion, the faculty does not often have the final say. With the added demands of federal funding (local situations notwithstanding), it appears that the everyday control of *public* education rests in the hands of an elite dominated by professional educators and bureaucrats.

Although changes are not expected in the near future, the editors maintain that "while schools reflect the needs of society's dominant institutions, they may at the same time serve to undermine the established capitalist order" (p. 13). Think about it.

In the *Roots of Crisis: American Education in the Twentieth Century*, however, the authors sound the call to arms. They see the problem stemming from the *Weltanschauung* of the liberal establishment who, when the chips are down, sides with fascist forces in an attempt at self-preservation (p. 85).

Review Coordinators: HEATHER L. CARTER, Associate Professor, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, The University of Texas at Austin; HILDA P. LEWIS, Professor of Elementary Education, California State University, San Francisco; CAROL A. MILLSOM, Associate Professor of Education, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; BETTY PSALTIS, Professor of Elementary Education, California State University, San Francisco; and ESTHER ZARET, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

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The articles make no claim to objectivity and are steeped in a plethora of footnotes and bombastic, adjectival strings such as "racist, economic, and socially elitist," capitalist [society] (p. 128). The many excellent points, quite similar to those in the Useem book, are singed with rhetoric and arguments are presented with the logic of Pangloss.

In any event, after reading these two works, it may be time to get up and walk around. □

Handbook of Creative Learning Exercises. Herbert M. Engel. Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1973. 286 pp.

—Reviewed by EMILIE G. LARSON, Counselor, Weeks Junior High School, Newton Centre, Massachusetts.

This book is for trainers who have responsibility for developing appropriate learning activities and presenting these to

employees who, for reasons specific to a situation, need to acquire new skills and new insights or, in some way, to modify their behavior. Three learning approaches—the case study, role playing, the in-basket—are the methodologies explicated at length.

Although this text was written for trainers, the methodologies are important to all teachers. The detailed, step-by-step procedure for developing each of the teaching approaches progresses, from goal-setting to the wrap-up, with guides for evaluation. The author comments usefully on written materials, film, sound cassettes, and videotape. A special value of the book is the emphasis on interrelating the methodologies with examples. The author is concrete and specific. The constant referral to principles and the encouragement to create materials specific to the situation give additional dimensions to the content.

Whether one is an adult learning to be a more empathic, aware supervisor or a student learning to identify the feelings that direct

the behavior of the characters in *Death of a Salesman*, the learner has need of a supportive adult. Whether called teacher or trainer, this person—to help effectively—needs a command of methodologies that will enable selection of the vehicle, the option, the strategy most appropriate to the objective. This book offers practical, applicable help in meeting this challenge. □

Learning System Design. Robert H. Davis, Lawrence T. Alexander, and Stephen L. Yelon. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1974. 342 pp.

Principles of Instructional Design. Robert M. Gagné and Leslie J. Briggs. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974. 270 pp.

How To Meet Accountability with Behavioral Objectives and Learning Hierarchies. J. Marvin Cook and Henry H. Walbesser. College Park: University of Maryland, 1973.

—Reviewed by BASIL S. DEMING, Assistant Professor of Education and Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Maryland, Baltimore County.

These three texts, each in its own way, represent the most successful attempts to date at organizing the principles and skills which underpin the prescriptive, performance-based, systematic approach to instruction. *Learning System Design* is perhaps the most useful of the three texts for most preservice and in-service instruction. Its authors have succeeded in touching all the bases—Gagné's varieties of learning, Bloom's taxonomy, operant conditioning, step-by-step instruction in how to formulate performance or behavioral objectives and how to teach perceptual-motor skills, principles of learning and motivation, and methods of evaluating a learning system.

The text's major weakness is one which has characterized most of its predecessors—lack of clear and adequate instruction on sequencing objectives and instructional strategies. It must also be said that in their effort to include so many essential principles of instruction, the authors of *Learning Sys-*

tem Design have created a text which will only serve as a base for mastery. It is geared toward building mastery in a graduated sequence, but there is too little programmed opportunity for skill development and reinforcement. The success of a course in which this text is utilized will depend heavily upon the ability of the instructor to provide ample opportunities for skill development with each succeeding chapter in the text. The text does lend itself to such a format.

Gagné and Briggs have produced a masterpiece in *Principles of Instructional Design*. A great deal of scholarship is evident in both the explication of principles and in documentation cited to support those principles. Their five categories of learning outcomes are well substantiated, although their explanation of the category "cognitive strategy" is rather limited and unilluminating.

Gagné's varieties of learning have been sharpened over the period of six or seven years following the original edition of *Conditions of Learning*. That sharpness is evidenced in *Principles*, particularly in the authors' descriptions of the higher intellectual skills: discrimination, concrete concept, defined concept, rule, and higher-order rule-using (problem-solving).

The entire text is well-conceived and well-written. Its instruction on the formulation of performance objectives is more complex and sophisticated than that found in *Learning System Design*. It is thereby potentially more confusing and harder to employ for preservice teacher candidates or for many in-service teachers. This reviewer would recommend the Gagné and Briggs text most highly for graduate-level work. It should be used on the undergraduate level only by an instructor who has a clear grasp of Gagné's conditions of learning and varieties of learning and who is prepared to provide a good deal of his or her own instruction in formulating and sequencing objectives and strategies.

Cook and Walbesser's text lacks the scholarship of Gagné and Briggs' work, and it lacks the comprehensiveness of *Learning System Design*. However, it possesses one significant feature which is missing in both

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the others. It provides clear, ingenious step-by-step instruction in how to sequence intellectual skills through the derivation of learning hierarchies. It is Gagné, of course, who has produced the most significant scholarship on the derivation and utilization of learning hierarchies, but Cook and Walbesser have described the process most effectively.

The major shortcoming of this text is that it fails to make a clear and adequate distinction between intellectual skills and verbal information. Some examples given in the text include the hierarchical sequencing of what is obviously meant as verbal information, and as such these examples are invalid. Nevertheless, the Cook and Walbesser text represents a positive effort toward popularizing the use of learning hierarchies. □

Open Education Re-examined. Donald A. and Lilian Myers, editors. Lexington, Massachusetts: D. C. Heath and Company, 1973. 158 pp.

The ABC's of the Open Classroom. Lesley P. Gingell. Homewood, Illinois: ETC Publications, 1973. 286 pp.

A Practical Guide to the Open Classroom. David N. Campbell. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1973. 111 pp.

Informal Teaching in the Open Classroom. Virgil M. Howes. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1974. 220 pp.

—Reviewed by JAMES J. BUCKLEY, JR.,
Superintendent of Schools, Milford, Massachusetts.

American education is once more enmeshed in that perplexing phenomenon that may be called, "the bandwagon syndrome." This is manifested by the perennial eagerness of some educators to adopt any innovation without fully comprehending it, and in spite of the absence or the paucity of research on the subject. Just as the search for the new or different led too many into "dif-

ferentiated staffing" or "team teaching" without adequate understanding or preparation, so we now find teachers in school districts throughout this nation involved in the process of developing and/or operating so-called "open classrooms" without fully comprehending what an open classroom may be.

One result of this is that some educators incorrectly assume "open classroom" is a synonym for "open education." In an effort to eradicate this and other errors, Donald and Lilian Myers have edited a book entitled, *Open Education Re-examined*. It provides us with the historic perspective necessary to understand where open education belongs in the evolution of formal schooling in America and in Britain, and what it means to knowledgeable educators of both nations. One of the authors, Joseph Leese, points out that open education is a generic term which embraces all child-centered schooling, whereas open classroom is but a sub-set of child-centeredness. Jenny Andreae provides us with an analysis of the methods by which some U.S. educators have introduced open education in their schools, while the remaining essayists concentrate their efforts on, for example, explaining how and why the development of a curriculum for an open education school is a rational process requiring more than abundant vigor or altruistic intentions.

The other three books are appreciably different. They speak of the open classroom, and belong to the "how to do it" genre. Lesley Gingell's book contains some autobiographical references, including her adventures in a fourth grade in Iowa. Because she was a fourth grade teacher in England before becoming involved in the Exchange Teachers' Program, she is able to compare the American open classroom concepts and practices with those of the British. Both she and David Campbell devote individual chapters to explorations of a variety of activities which may be successfully undertaken in each discipline, including Language Arts, Physical Education, Art, and Social Studies. In addition Campbell provides us with some much needed guidelines for the development of a genuine open classroom. Although he does not organize his material in quite the same way, Virgil Howes also offers many helpful hints and reproductions of projects, programs, and activities that he used in his classroom in Britain.

Whether a reader chooses to read all or just one of these last three books depends upon how much he or she knows about the open classroom and where he or she is on the continuum toward its development. But *Open Education Re-examined* should be read by those who are, or may become, associated with open education. □

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