

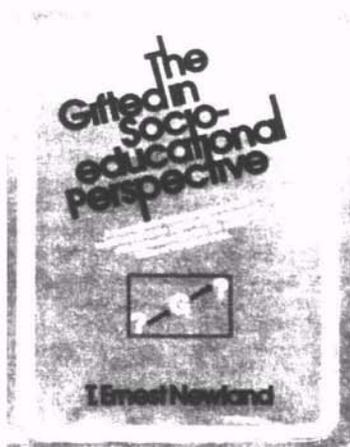
Book Reviews

Review Coordinators: Charles W. Beegle, Associate Professor of Education, University of Virginia, Charlottesville; James B. Boyer, Professor and Institute Director, Urban Education Institute, Kansas State University, Manhattan; Wilma S. Longstreet, Professor of Education, University of Michigan, Flint; and Edna Mitchell, Head, Department of Teacher Education, Mills College, Oakland, California.

The Gifted in Socioeducational Perspective. T. Ernest Newland. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1976. 406 pp. **Education of the Spanish-Speaking Urban Child.** Earl J. Ogletree and David Garcia, editors. Springfield, Illinois: Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1975. 474 pp. —Reviewed by Carlos Ovando, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Consistently, the American educational system has maintained that social justice is the birthright of all persons. Yet, prejudice and socioeconomic discrimination continue to be glaring along racial, class, and ethnic boundaries. Recognizing these twin evils that prevent members of certain subpopulations from participating fully in the mainstream culture, the authors of *The Gifted in Socioeducational Perspective* and *Education of the Spanish-Speaking Urban Child* explore ways by which to ameliorate these social ills.

In *The Gifted in Socioeducational Perspective*, Newland cogently argues that the American educational system has failed to address itself to the needs, wants, and desires of the gifted. He contends that instead of creatively and systematically orchestrating a stimulating and relevant curriculum for the gifted, the educational system has operated under the tacit assumption that the strongest and brightest individual will naturally emerge and become self-fulfilled (social Darwinism). Newland challenges this *modus operandi* with relevant research findings and over 40 years of experience in working with the gifted. He claims that unless the school system and the society attend to the sociocultural and cognitive needs of gifted students, society will continue producing alienated and frightened



individuals. And, of course, when this occurs, society and the individual suffer immensely.

Essentially, the book is concerned with three issues: (a) the needs of the gifted for self-actualization; (b) society's needs for the contributions of the gifted; and (c) the educational provisions that should be made for them. Specifically, the thrust of the book emerges in eight key areas:

1. Major concern with the social milieu;
2. The role of philosophy;
3. Definition of the gifted;
4. Emphasis on the individual;

5. Educational orientation;
6. Underachievement in the gifted;
7. Divergence and creativity;
8. Tactics and strategy.

Coercing language and culture change among the culturally unique in order to help them become a part of the larger social system is not only futile but also unethical. Aware of this, Ogletree and Garcia in *Education of the Spanish-Speaking Urban Child* have gathered a series of articles that examine critical issues, personal values, and pedagogical strategies related to these children.

More specifically, the book provides insights into the social, economic, academic, and psychological factors affecting the learning of the urban Spanish-speaking child. Several articles touch on the real and potential contributions of individuals, groups, institutions, and the larger society to the learning environment of these persons. The authors suggest the implementation of bilingual-bicultural programs as a means to capitalize on the knowledge and resources of the myriad of sociocultural models brought into the learning milieu by these learners.

While both of these books boldly articulate unique ideologies and programmatic suggestions for their respective subpopulations, they do have one thing in com-

mon—namely, that the American educational system has neglected certain groups of children, in one case, the gifted and in the other, the Spanish-speaking urban child. But just what are the pedagogical implications of the authors' suggested curricula for their respective subpopulations?

Admitting that the educational system has systematically neglected both of these populations, this reviewer, nonetheless, feels that the learning community needs to pay attention to the whole educational spectrum, not just to some of the subpopulations. Rather than creating learning environments for certain groups, the curriculum should mirror a *philosophy* that all classes, races, and ethnic groups should collaborate in solving social, intellectual, and affective problems.

Who is the person who will save our culture? The gifted? The culturally unique? The creative? The slow learner? The athlete? The vocational-oriented? The answer: potentially all of them. Therefore, the curriculum should be a process through which learners are able to maximize their potential at their own rate, in the presence and with the cooperation of their co-learners. Present evidence suggests that scientific and technological breakthroughs (areas in which the gifted have contributed the most) are galloping ahead of appropriate personal and institutional values. If this is so, society needs persons with high *social IQ's* to meaningfully interact with the rest of the population.

Despite the paucity of the children's own perceptions, especially in Ogletree and Garcia's book, both publications address themselves—at different conceptual, theoretical, and pragmatic levels—to such implicit questions as: What should be done for these children, why, and how? And because these are questions that need urgent sociopolitical answers if the American educational system is to ameliorate its condition, educators, researchers, and social analysts would find both of these books insightful.

Teaching the Child Under Six. *Second Edition.* James L. Hymes, Jr. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1974, 167 pp. —Reviewed by Carl D. Glickman, Assistant Professor of Education, Ohio State University, Marion.

Dr. Hymes has written an easy to read treatment of the "state of the scene" in early childhood education. At times, he is the platform orator urging us to follow him in his quest for public education beginning at the age of three for all children. At other times, he is the statistician revealing the facts of what is happening now and where the deficiencies remain. At all times, he is the education professor lecturing to us on the what and how of teaching.

For a reader knowledgeable in the field, the book contains little that is startlingly new. The perspective, however, that the author takes re-energizes the practitioner to continue the struggle for both quality and quantity of early childhood education programs. Dr. Hymes' position is simply that the struggle is for the principles for which this country stands. He writes:

(America's) basic position was stated at the time of our founding—an unusual statement in public affairs: all men have the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. (p. 68)

He raises a searing question: Why must schools for our children be based on a different position from the beliefs of our founding fathers? He explains that for us to realize our country's hope of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, we must practice it in the classroom:

It all depends on teachers who will dream and then translate their dream into reality within the classrooms. They don't wait. They build the good society now . . . immediately . . . right within the four walls of their rooms. (p. 99)

He reasons that the only consistent educational approach in a democratic society has to be child-

centered. As institutions are set up to serve people in a democratic society, then so should the institution called "school" be set up to serve the child. If only this were to be true.

Unfortunately, Dr. Hymes' solutions are not always as well thought out as his questions. For example, he proposes preschool as an extension of public school with three-year-olds being labelled as students in grade one. I am frankly puzzled how the author can plead for a child-centered approach for young children and yet propose tacking it on to public schools. They have traditionally pressed students into a mode of conformity, competition, and somberness. By making early childhood education a part of this "press," Dr. Hymes appears to be straight-jacketing young children into a mold divorced from his American dream. Perhaps Dr. Hymes has in mind a third edition of *Teaching the Child Under Six* that might eliminate this apparent inconsistency.

Decisions About the Teaching of English. John S. Simmons, Robert E. Shafer, and Gail B. West. Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1976. 313 pp. —Reviewed by Joseph Mersand, Associate Professor of Education, York College, City University of New York.

Decisions About the Teaching of English has been written for three groups of English teachers in secondary schools: (a) beginning teachers, (b) inexperienced teachers in need of suggestions to improve their teaching, and (c) experienced teachers seeking innovative approaches to their teaching procedures. Rather than include every aspect of English teaching, the authors have set themselves more limited goals. They have chosen to emphasize six major aspects:

1. The meaning of English,
2. Teaching imaginative literature,

3. Teaching written composition,
4. Using non-print media,
5. Teaching language and about language,
6. Strategy and organization in teaching.

Some critics might complain that limiting the book principally to these major decisions would necessarily lead to a lack of emphasis on other aspects (such as a discussion of how to teach spelling, how to teach library and study skills, and many other aspects of the vast field encompassed by the term "English"). All this is true; but the authors did not intend to be all-inclusive or to be entirely prescriptive. The book, hence, must be judged with the realization of the limited objectives of its authors.

A future teacher or a new teacher would find this book rather easy to read and digest. It is written in a friendly style, and does not pontificate. It is certainly stimulating.

The authors have all been successful teachers at the secondary level and know what it is to be confronted daily by the great mass of content and skills they are asked to teach, and by the many possible avenues of approach. By indicating several possible approaches in detail (I happened to enjoy the detailed lesson plans best

of all) and hinting at others, they have provided both stimulating challenges and specific methodologies.

Within its own parameters, the book is readable and useful, and it should contribute to more exciting and more effective teaching. There are, of course, many roads to Rome; and there are many decisions to be made in English teaching. This book can help the new and inexperienced teacher make more good decisions than unfortunate ones.

Teaching in a New Era. Allan C. Ornstein. Champaign, Illinois: Stipes Publishing Company, 1976. 189 pp. —Reviewed by Richard A. Diem, Assistant Professor of Education, University of Texas, San Antonio.

Allan Ornstein has prepared a series of chapters about contemporary education problems and policies relating to them. His organizational scheme does not provide, at least for this reader, any type of central theme, or central approach to these topics. While he does mention, in the introduction, his goal of discussing educational change, he does not discuss his motivation or the ends toward which he will take the reader.

There are several noteworthy chapters in this book. The chapter

on teacher supply/demand trends, for example, is an excellent overview of recent educational history. Another key section is on defining what makes a good teacher.

Each chapter is carefully documented and most are presented in a fairly unbiased manner. A section at the end of each chapter draws together various divergent points into a concise summary statement.

Ornstein makes clear that he has little use for "radical critics of education." He gives the reader the distinct impression that any type of criticism by "radicals" will lead to a conservative take-over of the schools; most reformers are said to be "expound[ing] on their educational hucksterism."

Reformers, such as Robert Coles, Nat Hentoff, Neil Postman, and Peter Schrag, among others, are classified as "anti's" and are said to be "inflating the virtues of poor and minority groups while deflating whatever negative traits they may possess." Surely, Ornstein does not wish to silence these critics, but it sounds as if he wants to place the schools on a pedestal, allowing only those who are "qualified" to question them.

If it is Ornstein's purpose to detail aspects of contemporary educational problems, he has succeeded. If his purpose is to provide a guide for the future of education, he has not met this goal.

Reviewers



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