

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.

Curriculum: A Comprehensive Introduction. John McNeil. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1977. 333 pp. —Reviewed by Norman J. Bauer, Professor, Division of Educational Studies, State University College of Arts and Sciences, Geneseo, New York.

Curriculum: A Comprehensive Introduction consists of five sections: curricular conceptions, development, organization, issues and trends, and theory and research. Four theoretical conceptions of curriculum are examined: humanistic, social reconstructionist, technological, and academic (subject matter). McNeil's analysis of the technological view emphasizes the fact that it does not accord sufficient attention to the implementation of the products of curriculum development, what Bloom calls "local conditions." Simply developing a more effective product, he is correct.

Criteria for selecting learning opportunities are developed from the standpoint of these four conceptions of curriculum. McNeil correctly points up the lack of work that has been done in curriculum in connecting educational aims, curriculum structures, and teaching strategies together. In a very real sense, he is arguing that curriculum is a complex system, which necessitates work at various levels, work which he contends is not being done.

Five theories are examined for determining curricular aims: needs assessment, futurism, rational thought, job analysis, and disjointed incrementalism. Scope and sequence, strategies for fostering change, ways in which the administrator and teacher can arrange the curriculum, and the history



and theory of the curriculum field also are analyzed. Two fresh concepts emerge from the latter segment of his work, the "soft curricularist," a classification that McNeil employs to refer to such reconceptualists as Pinar, McDonald, and Huebner, with their emphasis on consciousness, Curriere, temporality, transcendence, and language; and the "hard curricularist," referring to such systematic thinkers as Beauchamp, Johnston, and Walker, with their emphasis on logic, design, engineering, system, and planning.

McNeil has not developed a prescriptive text, but rather one that is analytical and critical. Each section is designed to enlarge the reader's array of choices, and each culminates with a critical assessment by the author. The critical

reader will enjoy the opportunity to consider the context of his or her own position in relationship to that of the authors.

The work might have been enhanced if McNeil had followed the scheme of his initial section and treated each of his topics from the point of view of the four theoretical conceptions he examined. He moves in this direction on occasion, but not with enough consistency to enable the reader to gain a solid understanding of the implications of each theory for practice. Notwithstanding this defect, however, his work stands as a remarkably clear, concise, and richly documented overview of the field of curriculum.

Classroom Discipline for Effective Teaching and Learning. Laurel N. Tanner. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, 1978.—Reviewed by Fred T. Wilhelms, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Of 12 Principles of Classroom Discipline laid down in this book, the first is:

The aims of education and classroom discipline are the same: to help children and youth become self-directing people.

This basic idea consistently informs every chapter of the book, which is, to tell the truth, about equally a treatment of discipline and of good teaching.

The author digs deep to lay the foundations. Early on, she describes five "models of discipline" and relates each to the conception of teaching that underlies it. She goes back steadily to Dewey and especially to Piaget for validation. She quotes recent research intelligently and carefully.

Then, in an eminently readable style, she proceeds to unfold a systematic, sensible guide to successful discipline that at every step contributes not only to maintaining order, but also to sound instruction and wholesome personal-social pupil growth. The result is a remarkable blend of theoretical and philosophical insight with practical, common-sense operational advice.

Much as I admire the book, I cannot help registering one demurrer. During the very time that I was reading Tanner's work, I picked up the current copy of *Today's Education* and read an NEA Research report that opened:

Fifty-four thousand NEA members were physically attacked in the last school year; 144,000 had their personal property maliciously damaged; and 56,000 were employed in schools where violence was a major problem.

Of the raw, sometimes brutal world of education that that NEA poll report subtends, there is scarcely a hint in Tanner's book. Neither, for all practical purposes, do adolescents exist there. It almost seems to me to be cheating for a book on discipline to ignore the thousands of classrooms from which expert, dedicated, and clever teachers go home daily in bitter frustration. As a secondary educator, I cannot forget what it is to be up against a big, strapping 17-year-old rebel or a sophisticatedly delinquent teenage girl. Over the years, I have become defensively resentful of the implication that these raw problems would go away if only the teachers were "better." At the very least, I seriously believe the title of this book should include the word "elementary."

However, nothing in the above negates my enthusiasm for what

the book does do. I have never before seen so admirable a lifting of disciplinary technique to the high ground of growth-oriented teaching. I can think of no other guide nearly so helpful to teachers working with young children in reasonably "normal" school situations. Those schools, too, let us remember, occasionally contain problems calculated to drive even good teachers to distraction—and to tempt them toward repressive actions that get quick gains at long cost. Tanner's book ought to be in every professional library, and it deserves generous use with student teachers—those fragile idealists who, of all teachers, are likeliest to learn to sacrifice human growth to desperation.

On Becoming a Counselor: A Basic Guide for Non-Professional Counselors. Eugene Kennedy. New York: The Seabury Press, 1977. 337 pp. —Reviewed by B. David Delahanty, Associate Professor, Education Department, Manhattan College, Bronx, New York.

In the course of their work, school leaders deal from time to time with troubled teachers, pupils, and parents. Without extensive training, they attend to human woe, anxiety, and immaturity. Professional therapists such as psychologists and psychiatrists see only a small fraction of distressed people, usually on referral. Most counseling that goes on is done by educators, clergy, nurses, and managers.

This book is intended for those persons who, in the course of their working day, find themselves occasionally in counseling or helping situations. The bad news first: This is not a how-to-do-it manual that will transform amateurs into expert mechanics of the mind. The good news is this: The busy person can do much to assist others to marshal their own strengths in order to confront and deal with their lives effectively.

The author gives attention to the problems of healthy people, especially in times of grief, anxiety, and depression. Severe emotional stress saps confidence and impedes competence. He also discusses obsessive and hysterical personalities. Specific chapters concern people whose lives have been touched by drugs, alcohol, suicide, and death.

A number of themes recur throughout the book. To be a helper to another in a counseling situation requires knowledge and understanding of one's self. Listening attentively is perhaps more important than giving advice. Getting caught up in the details of a problem often obscures the person needing help. The drives to do "good" (to others) and to do "well" (the techniques) may satisfy the helper's needs more than aid the other person. The things about people that drive others crazy are the very things that are keeping those people sane. Some people are beyond our ability to help.

The book fills a gap in the training of many educational leaders. Its 44 chapters draw on the experiences and strategies of professional therapists. School counselors will find the book valuable because of its many insights, as well as its success in using language that lay persons can understand. *4*

Reviewers



Norman J. Bauer



Fred T. Wilhelms

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