

Reviews

Schools on Trial: An Inside Account of the Boston Desegregation Case.

Robert A. Dentler and Marvin B. Scott.
Cambridge, Massachusetts:
Abt Books, 1981.

—Reviewed by William J. Leary,
Rockville Centre Union Free School
District, Rockville Centre, New York.

The Boston desegregation case has achieved an unfortunate negative fame since U.S. District Court Judge W. Arthur Garrity issued his order citing Boston as a segregated school system. Authors Robert Dentler and Marvin Scott, former Dean and Associate Dean respectively at the Boston University School of Education, have presented a detailed, technical analysis to describe the desegregation process in Boston.

Their book describes particulars of planning activities initiated to carry out the court order in spite of defiance by the majority of the Boston School Committee. It is noted that three members of the five-person committee were cited for civil contempt of court for refusing to submit a Phase II segment of the desegregation plan as ordered by the Court.

The authors also detail how students were assigned to various schools; the upgrading of physical plants in many older buildings; the development of transportation routes; the role of parents, teachers, and community members in the desegregation process; and a description of the creation of various educational programs such as magnet schools and college-public school pairings in order to improve the delivery of educational services to Boston's students.

Credit authors Dentler and Scott for immediately acknowledging their biases in the Preface. Because both authors were directly involved in the Boston desegregation controversy as Federal Court advisors, they do have biases.

On June 21, 1974, Judge Garrity found that the Boston School Committee had "violated the constitutional rights of plaintiff class . . . and that the entire school system of Boston was unconstitutionally segregated." This decision ignited one of the most difficult and at times violent desegregation processes that our country has ever seen.



Boston became the byword on how not to desegregate a school district.

Dentler and Scott, appointed Court Advisors in January 1975, began their task by reviewing Boston's historic and political background to determine why it was necessary for Judge Garrity to issue his order. (In this task they had a valuable resource in Alan Lupo's book, *Liberty's Chosen Home*; Boston: Little, Brown, 1977.) Boston's ethnic neighborhoods, transient student group, working-class population, and political structure combined to establish and in some cases defend the concept of the neighborhood school. And yet, Dentler and Scott point out that by 1972 over 30,000 students were transported by various means to schools not in their neighborhoods. The public schools served adequately those who had political access, and these, the authors claim, were predominantly Whites. For others, there was "massive disadvantage."

The authors' description of the need for busing in Boston to assist in the desegregation process, in light of present-day anti-busing bills in Congress, is noteworthy. Whether Boston's defiance of busing was before its time or whether it actually helped to create the present national mood of opposition against busing will be left to the judgment of history.

Numerous plans were devised to improve the delivery of educational services to students in Boston. The authors describe such activities as magnet schools with diverse programs in the arts and sciences, and the college-public school pairing system.

Scott and Dentler have spiced their book with a number of anecdotes concerning Boston political and school personnel. It is not difficult to determine who are, in their minds, the "good guys" and the "bad guys." Having been Boston's Superintendent during part of the analyzed time period (1972-75), I cannot agree with all of their comments about personalities cited in the book; however, their description of the administrator known as "Ace" speaks for itself.

The book contains over 30 tables, number of maps and figures, and a fairly reliable index. Along with a generous number of photographs, these visuals allow the authors to present a volatile topic in an academic, logical, and readable fashion.

For those partially familiar with the Boston desegregation case, this book fills in missing pages. Others may be less than kind to the conclusions drawn by Dentler and Scott.

Available from Abt Books, 55 Wheeler Street, Cambridge, MA 02138 for \$25.

Perspectives on Gifted and Talented Education.

Elizabeth Newman, editor.

New York:

Teachers College Press, 1980.

—Reviewed by Bobbie Kraver, Co-director, Gifted Advocacy Information Network, Washington Elementary School District No. 6, Phoenix, Arizona.

I recommend that parents and educators read and keep these monographs as reference books when starting and revising gifted programs. They are brief, up-to-date, and accurate. Available from Teachers College Press for \$32.50.

School Effectiveness: A Reassessment of the Evidence.

George Madaus, Peter Airasian, and
Thomas Kellaghan.

New York:

McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1980.

—Reviewed by James Phelps, Associate Superintendent, State of Michigan, Department of Education, Lansing.

Primarily a rehash of *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966), the major premise is that the Coleman Report was too pessimistic regarding the amount of influence the school has in affecting student learning. The authors reach this conclusion by critiquing the conceptualization, measurement techniques, and methodology of Coleman rather than offering an alternative.

Even though there may be too much pessimism and it may lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy, the overview of other studies relating "in-puts" to "out-puts" reconfirms what many have known but most find difficult to accept—in-puts and out-puts are ostensibly unrelated. "Process" variables—what schools can do to establish an effective learning climate—are identified as being more optimistic but the coverage is brief.

While being a clear, comprehensive, and cogent summary of what is, a statement of what policies should be adopted is missing. Although a valuable resource for those in research and research methodology, this book is not geared for the practitioner or the policy maker. Available from McGraw-Hill for \$15.95.

Daring to Dream: Law and the Humanities for Elementary Schools.

Lynda Carl Falkenstein and
Charlette C. Anderson.
Chicago, Illinois:
American Bar Association, 1980.

—Reviewed by Ira Schwarz, Professor, SUNY College, Brockport, New York.

Besides being a comprehensive source for supervisors and teachers who are interested in designing a course of study involving law and humanities, this is also an excellent resource for elementary curriculum planners and even secondary schools as well.

The majority of the articles were written by lawyers/educators for a symposium in 1978. Many articles represent one or more perspectives on a particular subject.

The authors' premise is that creative law and humanities programs in elementary schools are one possible means of realizing "a world far more equitable, just, and humane than the one we know." The material is here to implement this dream.

The book is available for \$9.95 from Circulation Department, ABA, 1155 East 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60637; order billing number 740-0023.

The Middle School Curriculum: A Practitioner's Handbook, Second Edition.

Leslie W. Kindred, Rita J. Wolokiewicz,
John M. Mickelson, and
Leonard E. Coplein.
Boston, Massachusetts:
Allyn and Bacon, 1981.

—Reviewed by Harold Markowitz, Jr., Assistant Professor, Indiana University, Bloomington.

This new edition of *The Middle School Curriculum* is wholly updated, adding consideration of a range of professional concerns arising since the first edition was published six years ago. What are the characteristics of an educational institution designed to meet the needs of emerging adolescents? The authors report their practical answers in topical chapters that range from program conception to program evaluation, with ample treatment of the practical concerns of curriculum and instruction. The subtitle "A Practitioner's Handbook" is well chosen: This book will find abundant use in the hands of middle grade educators everywhere. Available from Allyn and Bacon for \$15.95.

Simulations: A Handbook for Teachers.

Ken Jones.
New York:
Nichols Publishing Company, 1980.

—Reviewed by Charlie Coffman, Associate Director, Fayetteville Graduate Center, Fayetteville, North Carolina.

Simulations by Ken Jones will prove to be extremely helpful to those teachers who adopt this form of learning. He offers excellent advice about the content, substance, and assessment of simulated conditions. Jones' observations of the strengths and weaknesses of their use in the learning situation shows he has considerable experience with simulations.

Unlike some writers, he has not placed games, role playing, and simulations in the same bag. Simulations are more complex and have greater learning potential—particularly when placed in proper historical, literary, and socially accurate settings. Because simulations are useful for dealing with student behavior as well as accumulating factual knowledge about the subject, they are appropriate for high school and college level students. Skills and knowledge acquired through courses in specific disciplines are intensified and strengthened through this approach to learning.

The book (\$25) may be ordered through Nichols Publishing Company, W. G. Nichols, Inc., P.O. Box 96, New York, NY 10024.

Educating the Handicapped: Where We've Been, Where We're Going.

Educational USA Special Report.
Arlington, Virginia:
National School Public Relations
Association, 1980.

—Reviewed by William Leary, Rockville Centre Union Free School District, Rockville Centre, New York.

A major goal of those vitally concerned about special education is a free, appropriate education for all handicapped children. *Educating the Handicapped* is a brief, insightful summary, primarily for beginners or readers seeking general information concerning special education.

A brief history of the origins of Public Law 94-142 provides a background analysis of why the federal government has entered the area of educating the handicapped. The book also covers basic terminology in the field, such as related services, mainstreaming, individualized education programs, and least restrictive placements.

The final chapters of the book describe teacher activities and the financial future of programs included in PL 94-142. If you are in need of a brief survey of special education without too much detail, this is the book for you.

The book (\$13.95) may be ordered through National School Public Relations Association, 1801 North Moore Street, Arlington, VA 22209.

Curriculum Books: The First Eighty Years.

William H. Schubert.
Lanham, Maryland:
University Press of America, 1980.

—Reviewed by Edward C. Short, Associate Professor of Education, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

William H. Schubert's survey of *Curriculum Books* between 1900 and 1979 is monumental in scope; by his count it covers 1,138 books. They are surveyed and listed in bibliographies decade by decade. There is a brief treatment of the social, cultural, and educational events that occurred in each decade but little attempt to trace possible relationships

between the themes of these books and events. These "contextual reminders" do, however, provide an opportunity for the reader to place the books and the analysis in historical perspective.

Schubert does more than provide a guide to curriculum thought and literature; he attempts some interpretation of trends and directions. His formal scheme for analysis is rooted in the use of three categories or "schools" of curriculum thought—the *intellectual traditionalists*, the *social behaviorists*, and the *experientialists*. While one familiar with the range of curriculum thought and with many of the particular books and writers might argue with Schubert's choice of categories and occasionally with his placement of particular writers within them, nevertheless, his analysis is largely correct and reveals many new insights.

Assessing Life-Skills Competence.

The New York State External High School Diploma Program.

Ruth S. Nickse.
Belmont, California:

Fearon-Pitman Publishers, 1980.

—Reviewed by Robert Crumpton, Minnesota State Department of Education, St. Paul, Minnesota.

This book is part of a series on competency-based education that creates a forum for discussion among educators. An important contribution, it describes in detail the New York State External High School Diploma Program. The achievement of the goals and objectives and the implementation of all program activities is centered on two assumptions: (1) adults should

be rewarded for any learning regardless of its origin; (2) adults have special characteristics of self-directedness, broad life experiences, and the need for practical application of learning.

These assumptions create a basic design for an educational brokerage/counseling service; that is, an assessment system that includes flexibility in type, time, and location of testing; explicit requirements of high-level adult life-related skills and knowledge; and continuous feedback and unlimited opportunities to demonstrate competencies.

The book (\$8.95) may be ordered through Pitman Learning, Incorporated, 6 Davis Drive, Belmont, CA 94002.

Multiethnic Education: Theory and Practice.

James A. Banks.

Boston, Massachusetts:

Allyn and Bacon, Incorporated, 1981.

—Reviewed by George Henderson, U.S. Air Force Academy, Colorado.

Based on the premise that multiethnic education should be built on more than rhetoric, James Banks and his contributors have written a pedagogically sound preservice and inservice textbook. They skillfully dispel the myth that multiethnic education pertains only to Third World people. Banks achieves his goals: to clarify the philosophical and definitional issues related to pluralistic education, to derive a clarified theoretical position, to design effective teaching strategies that reflect ethnic diversity, and to derive sound guidelines for multiethnic programs and practices.

Available from Allyn and Bacon for \$10.50.

Perfecting Social Skills: A Guide to Interpersonal Behavior Development.

Richard M. Eisler and

Lee W. Frederiksen.

New York:

Plenum Press, 1980.

—Reviewed by William Martin, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia.

In this book the authors view social skills in a conceptual framework and sample case material to illustrate the application of concepts in effective social skills training. The authors contend that "skills training teaches individuals to label situations appropriately and gives them appropriate alternative ways to respond."

It is a scholarly, structured work appropriate for advanced trainers to use as a text in courses that emphasize practical training in social skills development. Special "kudos" to the observation that the principles advanced here—and widely used in a variety of other areas—have important applications in education.

Available from Plenum Press for \$18.95.

The Principal's Role in Improving Reading Instruction.

Floyd Sucher, Maryann Manning,
and Gary Manning.

Springfield, Illinois:

Charles C. Thomas, 1980.

—Reviewed by Arnold Willems, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. This is not a book for elementary school principals knowledgeable about reading instruction and the principal's role in a schoolwide reading program. If you, however, need a primer on approaches to the teaching of reading and ways to improve your school's reading program, this book may have been written for you.

The first two chapters present strengths and weaknesses of various approaches to reading and ways to organize for reading instruction. The remaining five chapters treat such topics as working with parents, evaluating reading programs, and working effectively with teachers for the purpose of improving a school's reading program. The "Ideas for Action" at the end of each chapter are basic and practical.

Available for \$11.75 from Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 301-327 East Lawrence Avenue, Springfield, IL 62717.

Index to Advertisers

American Guidance Service	33
CTB/McGraw-Hill	55, 65
Forrest T. Jones & Company, Inc.	77
Holt, Rinehart & Winston	40, 41
Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc.	25
Mastery Education Corporation	43
Procter & Gamble	71
Scott, Foresman and Company	Cover 4
Thought Technology Ltd.	14
USU Foundation	54

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