Reviews

High School: Undercover with the Class of '80.
David Owen.


I found High School a book worth reading, somewhat to my own surprise. Expecting it to be just another expose of the underbelly of yet another high school, I kept postponing the job of reading and reviewing High School. Once I finally breached the cover, however, I was drawn to David Owen's clear prose, quick pace, occasional humor, and insight on today's adolescent.

How does a 24-year-old journalist, married and with credits in Esquire, Inside Sports, and The New York Times, become admitted as a high school senior in a New York State school of 1,300 students? How does he attend classes, make close friends, join the school's newspaper staff, and even go to parties without being discovered? No problem; it was all easily accomplished even to the point of Owen's mother-of-convenience, actually his agent, being reprimanded by a school counselor for displaying motherly affection in the counseling wing. Evidently, a tender new student should not be embarrassed among his fellow students!

David Owen spends one entire semester in "Bingham High School," a fictional name for a real institution. His surprises range from finding less drugs and more beer today than at his own alma mater in Missouri during the early 1970s to being discouraged at the low level of expectations for students in most classrooms today. Evidently as student "rights and responsibilities" have increased, teacher authority has diminished, and with it the feeling of responsibility that teachers once felt to challenge students toward high standards. Now the student-teacher relationship is more casual and less paternalistic. Teachers willingly assist students but do not push them much anymore. Consequently, less is demanded and expectations have eroded. Students are more independent, but adults feel less obligated to make sure students succeed.

Owen observes that, "High school is a world of its own, with its own codes of conduct and its own rules of survival." At Bingham, the author finds interesting heroes and mindless villains in this world. Some adults—the journalism and history teachers for example—are talented people, genuinely interested in their students' growth and success. But some adults are lazy and inadequate—the English teacher who asks insipid, factual questions about Beowulf day after day, and the coach-turned-teacher whose ignorance of politics is matched by his penchant for wearing color-coordinated shirts and shoes. Some students are friendly to newcomers, hardworking, active, and involved; but far too many students are obnoxious, inarticulate, and generally ignorant of much beyond television, rock stars, and beer labels.

The book carries some interesting social comment about high school attitudes in the post-activist era. Both sexes at Bingham consider coed PE a drag, dating and sexual relationships have become more cautious again, and minority students are less likely than earlier to be elected to office just because they are a minority. In short, the students appear to be assuming a neo-conservative perspective toward the social movements of the 1970s.

The book was disappointing in one respect; a short 3-1/2 page "afterword" does not provide an adequate analysis of the author's experiences during four months as a high school senior. What were his perspectives, in sum, of the teachers, the curriculum, the social mores, the athletic games, the place of youth in the school, the adequacy of today's high school to accomplish its work, the relationship of the students to their community? He seemed genuinely concerned that academic standards had deteriorated over the past ten years, yet little is written beyond the observation. He noted that Black and White students, for the most part, still were not comfortable with one another, yet no suggestions were made for reducing these tensions.

On balance, however, High School provides an accurate and enjoyable way of becoming re-acquainted with the perspective of today's high school student. The insecurities and limitations of adolescence remain with us into the 1980s, despite a veneer of worldliness and an assumption of greater freedoms by students. It still hurts to be so close, but yet so far, from adulthood. Little that schools did during the 1970s appears to have eased this pain.

Flexibility in Teaching:
An Excursion into the Nature of Teaching and Training.
Edited by Bruce R. Joyce, Clark C. Brown, and Lucy Peck.

—Reviewed by Martha Mead, former coordinator of Secondary Teacher Education Center, Columbia, Maryland.

This excursion into teacher education explores ten questions related to the teaching process by Joyce and his colleagues and associates over a span of 15 years.
The Gifted Child, the Family, and the Community.
Edited by Bernard S. Miller and Merle Price.
—Reviewed by Margaret M. Gibson, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Can gifted children be well adjusted and reach their potential as human beings? Not without the understanding and encouragement of parents, teachers, and the community at large, say editors Miller and Price. Insight into the kind of support needed is provided through a sensitively written text that begins with essays on identifying gifted/creative children and concludes with an annotated reference list for parents.

Clear examples illustrate parents’ problems in enhancing the social and intellectual growth of gifted children, and practical solutions are offered. Original poems add beauty to a text that can help counselors and teachers of the gifted assist parents in becoming partners “in the education of precocious youngsters.”

Available for $17.50 from Walker and Company, 720 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10019.

—Reviewed by William Ernest, University of Montevallo, Montevallo, Alabama.

How well have you been keeping up with current legal rights related to teachers' professional and personal lives? These legal rights are tenure protection, reduction in force (RIF) rights, student disciplinary options, negligence protection, and teachers' rights to speak, assemble, and organize. If you don't feel up to par in these areas, don't worry or wring your hands. You can quickly become legally literate on these issues by reading this short volume.

This book has no single target audience. Not only teachers, but also school administrators, board members, and school attorneys will find it informative and useful.

Available for $7.95 from Social Science Education Consortium, 855 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302.

Everybody's Business: A Book About School Discipline.
Edited by Joan First and M. Hayes Mizell.
Columbia, South Carolina: Southeastern Public Education Program, 1980.

According to this book, the school discipline process places an equal responsibility on all members of the school community; and administrators, teachers, parents, and students need help to learn how to assume their responsible role.

Student self-discipline is preferable to imposed discipline that wanes when authority is not present. In order for students to learn responsibility, they must be exposed to responsible use of authority by school people.

Everybody's Business provides insights into understanding the complex problem and offers some successful strategies and nontraditional approaches for improving school discipline. The authors focus on discipline policies of various select schools in several locations, providing readers with the basis for comparative analysis of such schools to their own.

Available for $7.50 from Southeastern Public Education Program, Box 11592, Capitol Station, Columbia, SC 29211.

Walter R. Borg.

—Reviewed by Gerald V. Teague, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland.

Educational practitioners need not become statisticians to properly evaluate and effectively utilize research findings. With this premise, Borg describes the basic skills and minimum tools required of educators to locate, understand, implement, and, to some degree, conduct research applicable to their particular situation. The goal of becoming "an intelligent consumer of research" is within reach of those using this resource.

Borg provides the means to decipher seemingly esoteric data and translate it into meaningful information.

The book is a valuable introduction to the research process and is a reference for practitioners. Available for $15.95 from Longman, Inc., College Division, 19 West 44th Street, New York, NY 10036.

Teacher-Centered In-Service Education: Planning and Products.

—Reviewed by Sarah D. Caldwell, Director, Staff Development, Teacher Center, Ferguson-Florence School District, St. Louis County, Missouri.

The NEA In-Service Education Project, a study of inservice in 57 school districts, resulted in discussion of a particular set of strategies for inservice delivery—teacher centering. The material was developed primarily to assist teachers new to involvement in the tasks of designing and planning teacher centered inservice activities.

The focus is on "how to" establish cooperative planning groups and design informal needs assessment procedures. For inservice program content there is heavy emphasis on the use of products of validated programs and the inservice training packages that accompany such products.
Orders (price $6.95) should be addressed to NEA Order Department, The Academic Building, West Haven, CT 06516.

Educators, Parents, and Exceptional Children: A Handbook for Counselors, Teachers, and Special Educators.
Robert L. Marion.

—Reviewed by K. Don Cutler, John Brown University, Siloam Springs, Arkansas.


Carefully integrating the various roles performed by parents and educators, Marion has written a good resource book. Available for $26.50 from Aspen Systems Corporation, 1600 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850.

Confront and Continuity: A History of Ideas on Social Equality and Human Development.
Edited by John R. Snarey, Terrie Epstein, Carol Sienkiewicz, and Philip Zodhiates.


To mark its 50th anniversary, the Harvard Educational Review has chosen prominent articles from a half-century of its own pages to publish this outstanding educational history of social equality and human development. Ideas from the past 50 years are revisited through essays by Dewey, Skinner, Rogers, Conant, Parsons, Coleman, and others. All exemplify their respective schools of thought as well as their era of greatest influence.

Behaviorism, humanistic psychology, school influence, teaching processes, social integration, and equality of opportunity, are typical themes “post-holed” throughout this volume. One must be well versed in educational history to understand how these “post-holes” are connected with the historical strands of continuity, causation, and relevancy of past to present.


Barbara Coyne Cutler.

—Reviewed by Ralph Erickson, Troy State University, Troy, Alabama.

Highly readable and even exciting, this book contains anecdotes and role-playing vignettes. It outlines children’s rights to an education no matter how handicapped they may be, and gives step-by-step prescriptions for dealing with unwilling teachers and unresponsive administrators.

Cutler demonstrates how parents can help in producing IEP’s and disagree without being overly disagreeable if the school slights them. This book will give parents confidence that they can make the system work for them.

Available for $7.95 from Research Press, 2612 North Mattis Avenue, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

Teaching Mathematics: What is Basic?
Stephen S. Willoughby.

—Reviewed by Dorwin Bowman, Region XVI Education Service Center, Amarillo, Texas.

“Thinking is the ultimate basic skill in mathematics.”

Willoughby cites this as being central to the entire text. He asks questions such as: What is mathematics? Why should people learn it? How do we teach mathematics? He also emphasizes utilizing mathematics in thought processes and applying it to real situations and specific activities and games.

Classroom teachers and curriculum coordinators will find this a thought-provoking publication.


After the Lesson Plan: Realities of High School Teaching.
Amy Puett Emmers.

—Reviewed by Thomas R. McDaniel, Converse College, Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Emmers’ book provides a fresh approach to the question “What is good high school teaching?” Here is a readable personal analysis that is at once witty and wise, anecdotal and analytical, philosophical and practical.

Amy Emmers, a seasoned classroom veteran, knows how students (and adults) see school, how to catch and keep the interest of adolescents, how to handle behavior problems, and how to work with other school personnel. She gives human life and form to educational theory and practice. Teachers and teacher educators will enjoy her penetrating perspectives on effective high school teaching.

Available for $19.95 from Teachers College Press.

The Exemplary Middle School.
William M. Alexander and Paul S. George.

—Reviewed by Ann Moniot, Pittsburgh Public Schools, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Do you practice what you
preach—middle schools? This book is a welcome addition to the middle school bibliography and should be a help to both beginners and practitioners in middle school education. *The Exemplary Middle School* covers basic characteristics of middle school students, educational goals, educational options, program components, and organizational systems and also gives recommendations for staff preparation and implementation. The authors provide solid illustrative strategies and guidelines already developed nationally by exemplary middle schools.

Available for $19.97 from Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

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**A Quest for Common Learning: The Aims of General Education.**

*Ernest L. Boyer and Arthur Levine.*


—Reviewed by Daniel Tanner, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Boyer and Levine examine general education in terms of current problems and issues in higher education, analyze its historical evolution and social context, offer a rationale for general education, evaluate current practices (curricular content, process, and outcomes), and offer a proposal for a general education curriculum.

They make a convincing case for reviving general education in the college after almost three decades of decline and neglect. Yet aspects of the report are disappointing because it attempts to cover too much with too little.

The report calls for a partnership between school and college leaders to work together in reconstructing the curriculum in general education and then proceeds to ignore the schools while it focuses exclusively on higher education. The report also fails to mention its sister report by the Carnegie Council on Policy Studies, *Giving Youth a Better Chance* (1979), which offered virtually no word on general education in the high school. This report should have recognized the necessity of considering general education in school and college as an inseparable endeavor if we are to take democracy seriously.

Available for $6.95 from the Carnegie Foundation.

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**Evaluating with Validity.**

*Ernest R. House.*


—Reviewed by Thomas R. Hopkins, project director of the Hispanic and American Indian Higher Education Research Project, University of New Mexico, College of Education.

Those familiar with House's writings will find very little in this book that is new. Six of the twelve chapters have been published earlier and the rest do not necessarily add new knowledge. He defines validity, "... to mean something like 'worthiness of being recognized.'" I think that he quite properly relates education evaluation to the social-human factors rather than to the hard sciences. He certainly does not exclude quantitative argument but qualifies it with the dictum that it, "should always be used in conjunction with human judgment and that human judgment should be given the superior position."

There are a few theoretical discussions on education evaluation per se, which is why this volume is appropriate for use in courses pertaining to assessment of education activities.

Available for $9.95 from Sage Publications, 275 South Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212.

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**The School/Work Nexus: Transition of Youth From School to Work.**

*Eli Ginzberg.*


—Reviewed by Lowell Horton, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, Illinois.

In the early sixties, James Conant found American society oblivious to the "social dynamite" inherent in the inadequate education and large scale unemployment of ghetto youth. The problem of Black teenage unemployment is still with us. In addition, government statistics show that each year approximately 800,000 young people in the country reach working age inadequately prepared for work and adult responsibilities. Many will remain unemployed or marginal workers throughout their lives unless educators, politicians and a concerned community intervene to assist them in effecting a linkage to the world of work.

Eli Ginzberg examines why the transition from school to work is relatively smooth for some young people and exceeding difficult for others. He assesses realistic options available to an affluent and concerned democracy for smoothing the path of those young people who are encountering the major problems.

Available for $5 from Phi Delta Kappa Educational Foundation, Eighth Street and Union Avenue, Box 789, Bloomington, IN 47402.

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**JUDITH WALKER DE FELIX**

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The need for professionals with linguistic and cultural competence will increase in the years ahead. Business and government agencies are already recruiting bilingual professionals for other occupations. Our programs give the schools a chance to recognize the work of bilingual teachers and keep them in the classroom.

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**References**


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**FRED ROSENAU**

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able to make its views known and to have those ideas judged openly in the marketplace of ideas.

Concerned parents should be encouraged to make their views known, in writing, following formal school district procedures. But there's a vast difference between a concerned, responsible parent and a crackpot, self-appointed censor who doesn't live in the community and is not a tax-paying parent there. School administrators, librarians, and teachers should be able to listen critically to the comments of both and then judge what actions are appropriate to the nature and intent of the challenge.