

Reviews

Why Johnny Still Can't Read.

Rudolf Flesch.

New York:

Harper and Row, Publishers, 1981.

—Reviewed by Hawthorne Faison, Principal, Sussex Elementary School, Shaker Heights City Schools, Shaker Heights, Ohio.

Rudolph Flesch, who originally wrote *Why Johnny Can't Read*: . . . (Harper and Row, 1955), says the main reason for a decline in Scholastic Aptitude Test scores is the "look-and-say method" of teaching reading (p. 65).

His major thesis in *Why Johnny Still Can't Read*, a sequel, is that the "phonics-first" method should be used in all schools. Flesch says he has found at least 124 studies that point to the unscientific nature of the look-and-say method and he thinks the method should be discarded.

Flesch also believes all children can be taught to read and discounts economic circumstances, ethnic group membership, and learning disabilities as barriers to learning how to read. He suggests that "Learning disabilities may be the poisoned fruit of look-and-say teaching" (p. 123), and in addition cites 12 outstanding scholars in reading who are convinced that dyslexia is the result of look-and-say teaching.

This book was written for parents and others who are not professional educators. Its advice is direct and specific: Teach Johnny (or Jane) phonics at home by using the methods suggested in the book. Remove your children from the look-and-say schools and put them in the phonics-first schools. Go to the school board and start "hollering."

Although the book speaks directly to parents, educators can benefit from it. Because of Flesch, classroom teachers, reading specialists, principals, and superintendents may have to explain reading programs to parents. Be prepared because Flesch examines traditional arguments from educators and takes them apart. To support his thesis, he uses extensive background research (statistical data is kept to a minimum to ensure readability). Whether you agree



or disagree with Flesch, you should be prepared for the effects of his book.

Available from Harper and Row for \$10.95.

Managing Schools in Hard Times.

Stanton Leggett, editor.

Chicago, Illinois:

Teach'em, Incorporated, 1981.

—Reviewed by Frank Arone, Clarkstown Public Schools, West Nyack, New York.

If you're facing the current challenge of shrinking educational resources, you'll find this an interesting collection of essays. Since strategies of plenty offer little guidance, many contributors to the book have responded to the need for change while realizing contemporary realities.

Some of the topics are: long range planning, special education, vocational education, and gifted education. The forward-looking administrator should read the chapter titled "Decision Packages: They Answer 'What If . . . Questions,'" in which the microcomputer is used as an analytic tool in decision making.

Another point—all recommendations and case histories in the book have been selected with the goal of achieving humane environments and organized approaches that will meet the needs of children and youth in hard times.

Available from Teach'em, Incorporated, 160 East Illinois Street, Chicago, IL 60611 for \$15.95.

STET: Systematic Training For Effective Teaching.

Don Dinkmeyer, Gary D. McKay, and

Don Dinkmeyer, Jr.

Circle Pines, Minn.:

American Guidance Service, Inc., 1980.

—Reviewed by Michael L. Mazzaresse, AT & T Long Lines, Bedminster, New Jersey.

Charts, tapes, manuals, and posters are just some of the materials you'll find in the American Guidance Service's *Systematic Training For Effective Teaching* (STET). This is not just another systems approach to teaching, nor is it another pie-in-the-sky collection of nebulous fluff. Rather, it is a flexible and practical training tool grounded in the behavior principles of Adler, Dreikurs, and Combs.

Designed primarily for staff development groups in a K-9 setting, the STET program introduces theory but favors concrete, practical exercises, built around themes of communication, discipline, group dynamics, special needs, and parent involvement. The complete STET program runs 2-2½ hours for each of the 14 sessions, (or you can follow an abbreviated version of 1½ hours per session).

With STET, teachers and parents can use a consistent, bottom line approach in their relationships with children and teenagers. I recommend the STET program at twice the price.

Available from American Guidance Service for \$89.50.

Religion and Morality in American Schooling.

Thomas C. Hunt and Marilyn M. Maxson,
editors.

Washington, D.C.:

University Press of America,
Incorporated, 1981.

—Reviewed by Richard Diem, The University of Texas, San Antonio, Texas.

Current battles over interpretations of the First Amendment and the public schools make the topic of religion and morality in public education foremost in the minds of many educators. The out-

standing group of writers in this book have provided a series of interpretative essays on this subject. Designed for graduate classes on the history of education, the book covers a broad variety of topics ranging from the Christian and Jewish Day School movements to the debate over education versus creationism.

Available from University Press of America, Incorporated, P.O. Box 19101, Washington, D.C. 20036 for \$10.50.

The Classroom Society: The Construction of Educational Experience.

Herbert A. Thelen.
New York:

John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1981.

—Reviewed by Timothy Young, Central Washington University, Ellensburg, Washington.

In Thelen's ambitious and demanding analysis of America's public school classrooms, he argues that schools should replace the archetype of the classroom that emphasizes content and knowledge with an educative community that stresses inquiry and comprehension.

Writing from the perspective of a social reconstructionist and progressive, Thelen envisions schools as instruments of social reform. The model he describes for secondary classrooms encourages adaptation, participation, and transcendence among teachers and students.

Available from John Wiley & Sons, Inc., One Wiley Dr., Somerset, NJ 08873 for \$24.95.

Educating an Urban People: The New York City Experience.

Diane Ravitch and Ronald K. Goodenow,
editors.

New York:
Teachers College Press, 1981.

—Reviewed by Roy R. Pellicano, Brooklyn College, CUNY, Brooklyn, New York.

Frequently, contemporary public policy issues are perceived or presented as aberrations, events having little or no history. This perception is magnified by individual feelings of isolation and rootlessness stemming from lack of tangible contact with the past. Nevertheless, we are oftentimes reminded by historians and social scientists that the popular lyric "everything old is new again" is

both reliable and valid.

Such is the thesis of *Educating An Urban People*. The articles demonstrate historical continuity of such issues as schooling and social mobility, schooling and socialization of immigrants, centralization vs. decentralization, professional vs. lay control, and the role of teacher organizations as a vehicle for both teacher social mobility and for rationalizing the organizational structure of schools.

The fine historical focus presented by this collection of articles fulfills a need—the awareness that contemporary educational leaders are not treading upon an untraveled road. This is valuable reading.

Available from Teachers College Press for \$19.95.

Ideology Culture & The Process of Schooling.

Henry A. Giroux.
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania:
Temple University Press, 1981.

—Reviewed by Malcolm Evans, Montgomery Township Schools, Skillman, New Jersey.

In his writings Giroux develops a basis for radical theories of change and pedagogy using Marxian concepts and constructs, and educators may find thinking about schools in terms such as class struggle, dominant culture, liberation, and ideological conflict initially unsettling. However, once you have adjusted to the vocabulary and concepts, you will find that Giroux offers perceptions that may well influence your approach to establishing change in schools.

Available from Temple University Press, Broad & Oxford Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19122 for \$17.95.

Educator's Discipline Handbook.

Robert D. Ramsey.
West Nyack, New York:
Parker Publishing Company,
Incorporated, 1981.

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

Because this book deals simply and directly with all dimensions of discipline from littering to litigation, it is an important work for teachers and administrators. Workable procedures are spelled out for handling a school's most common "behavior bugaboos": smok-

ing, drugs, truancy, stealing; and for controlling volatile areas: cafeteria, school buses, parking lots, playgrounds, and athletic fields.

In too many schools, discipline is like Mark Twain's weather—everybody just talks about it. Those who read this book will be equipped to do more than just talk.

Available from Parker Publishing Company, Incorporated, West Nyack, NY 10994 for \$16.95.

Handbook for Evaluating and Selecting Curriculum Materials.

Meredith Damien Gall.
Boston, Massachusetts:
Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1981.

—Reviewed by Frances Klein, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, California.

If you have to evaluate and select curriculum materials, consider this handbook by Gall. The contents include a definition and clarification of curriculum materials and their role in curriculum development, resources for gaining access to materials, dimensions for analyzing them, and criteria for appraising them (I do feel, however, that an unnecessary distinction is made between analyzing and appraising curriculum materials).

Gall's major contributions in the book are: (1) nine suggested steps to follow in adopting curriculum materials, (2) 39 possible dimensions to use in analyzing and evaluating them, (3) comprehensive documentation at the end of each chapter, and (4) up-to-date resources. The book is clearly, though simplistically written, in a convenient format.

One criticism I do have for this book, and many other publications in the field, is the lack of documentation regarding validity and reliability of the proposed criteria. There is no evidence to ensure that when materials are evaluated using the author's criteria, there will be consistency in ratings and judgment. Criteria are based on the author's opinion and judgment alone.

Available from Allyn and Bacon, Inc. for \$15.95.

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