

Reviews

Science Education in Global Perspective: Lessons from Five Countries

Edited by Margrete Siebert Klein and F.
James Rutherford
Boulder, Colo.
Westview Press, Inc., 1985

—Reviewed by Richard McQueen, Science
Specialist, Multnomah Education Service
District, Portland, Oregon.

A country-by-country analysis of science and mathematics education in Japan, The People's Republic of China, East and West Germany, and the USSR, with additional material on implications and recommendations by scholars with special experience and insight into the educational systems of these countries leads to the conclusion about which we all have a sneaking suspicion. It is one consistent with the series of current reports about U.S. education: we are far behind and fading, and need to take urgent remedial action.

But how do we avoid the many potential diversionary tactics: things will all work out for the best, we are so far behind and things are so dismal that we had just as well not try to do anything about it, our country is, after all, different, and we shouldn't expect to compare with other major technological nations; let's appropriate a few billion dollars to retrain our teachers, develop new programs, and administer tests to be sure we make it, and the list goes on.

Although no one suggests we should simply copy any or all of these or any other educational systems, the authors suggest we should at least emulate their national commitments by replacing our current hand-wringing phase with a rationally developed national purpose and plan to fit our ideals and our superior resources.

The authors properly recognize the difficulty in obtaining objective information in closed societies, and the possible disparity between some of the information they have obtained and the actual circumstances they may have been unable to observe. However, this problem is not limited to closed societies, as we recognize in our own relatively open society the difference between official documents

and statements, slogans, and actual school practice. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see the same processes going on in these technologically advanced (or advancing) countries as in our own, including curriculum revision, a sloshing back and forth between emphasis on content and methodology, and a never-ending process of change with some steps forward, and some back.

To be sure, each country promotes science and math education for its national interests. Many believe our most important national interest is in promoting as full participation as possible by all citizens in the responsibility of maintaining a healthy democracy. How does this fit with the more directly practical aims of science and math education by some in our country, and probably by those countries we see as totalitarian?

This volume joins the many recent (and soon to come) reports in examining such questions in light of the relative condition of our nation's science and mathematics education, and deserves to have a stake in forging solutions. It has already (in early draft) caught the attention of the President's Science Advisory, and has exerted influence in obtaining administrative support for restoring NSF funding for science education. It is worth careful reading to see how issues about which we are anxious surface in any society concerned about comprehensive education for all its people. For example, rigor of subjects, intensity of instruction, time in school, time spent studying science and math, emphases at different grades, student attitudes, practical vs theoretical studies, tracking of students, and learning theory are recurring issues for our competitors (even our allies are our competitors) as they are for us.

So we have ongoing practical experiments (that we couldn't contrive ourselves) in these five (and other) countries from which to draw information, part of which we can use to begin moving in a direction consistent with our ideals and purposes. To do so, we must be willing to pay the price of the disciplined planning and action required for us to continue to enjoy the benefits of citizenship in a modern, open, and progressive society.

Available from Westview Press, Inc.,
5500 Central Ave., Boulder, CO 80301,
for \$22.

Developmental Teacher Evaluation

Ben M. Harris
Newton, Mass.
Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1986

—Reviewed by Jerrold D. Hopfengardner,
University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio.

Concerned about an equitable means for evaluating teachers? Troubled over developing a thorough evaluation model that is both research-based and manageable? Interested in a complete program with which to compare your present evaluation process? Perplexed over how to provide discrete formative and summative processes? If so, read *Developmental Teacher Evaluation* and retain it as a vital resource. School administrators having either line or staff relationships with teachers will find descriptions of many evaluation procedures and research findings useful.

Harris' thesis, "Evaluation is presented as a set of processes rather than as an event" (p. xi), challenges the traditional practice of not distinguishing developmental (formative) from summative evaluation. He presents a compelling rationale for separating these two dimensions and for assigning the highest priority to developmental teacher evaluation. Harris advocates that developmental efforts should be linked to summative decision making, characterizing the total process as "developmental."

Harris precisely and logically addresses contemporary topics central to evaluation, referring to DeTEK (the Developmental Teacher Evaluation Kit developed by Harris and Jane Hill), as well as current entries in professional literature. He presents numerous sophisticated teaching analysis procedures in a systems approach to facilitate adoption by the practitioner.

This book is a must for administrators who desire to provide more equitable and objective means for both professional development and summative evaluation of teachers.

Available from Allyn and Bacon,
Inc., 7 Wells Ave., Newton, MA 02159,
for \$34.95.

Micro-Myths: Exploring the Limits of Learning with Computers

Joe Nathan
Minneapolis
Winston Press, 1985

—Reviewed by Marcia Knoll, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, District 28, Queens, New York City

At a time when most of us have questions about computers, Joe Nathan supplies some answers. He makes us understand that the computer is a learning partner limited only by our flexibility, creativity, and imagination.

Nathan demonstrates that seven popularly held myths about computers are the result of asking the wrong questions. Asking the right questions will lead to making the best possible use of this powerful, complicated technology. To illustrate, Nathan describes successful projects in which schools and school districts collaborate with industry, the community, departments of education, and individuals.

Some of the fascinating possibilities presented for using computers include helping young people work with individuals and the community, encouraging individual creativity, developing staffing patterns to attract and keep outstanding teachers, helping youngsters to benefit from applications developed for home and business use, ensuring equal access for students from low-income families, and making more efficient use of existing resources.

This practical text also presents guidelines and criteria for computer-related areas: workshops for teachers, developing school-community partnerships, writing a school district computer plan, selecting educational software, and helping parents purchase an appropriate computer for their children. These guidelines may help the user avoid costly mistakes, stress, and aggravation.

This straightforward book helps clarify and provide guidance for a confusing and complicated issue.

Available from Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., Mail Order Department, 2350 Virginia Ave., Hagerstown, MD 21740, for \$8.40.

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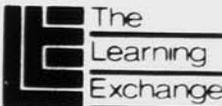
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Reviews

The Principalship: A Reflective Practice Perspective

Thomas J. Sergiovanni
Newton, Mass.

Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1987

—Reviewed by Frank L. Tout, Thomas Carr
Howe High School, Indianapolis, Indiana

Opting for more than a prescriptive view of the effective principalship, Thomas Sergiovanni makes a case for the "reflective practice perspective" in a persuasive meld of education and business management theories and practices. He gives particular attention to workable strategies of educational leadership, to what principals can do to make their job more productive and satisfying. But he does not stunt the critical areas of supervision and school climate.

Those instructing others in the business of the principalship—as well as those who seek answers to "What is this job anyway?" and "How might I be more effective?"—will likely find this book a welcome, valuable addition to a somewhat barren educational literary area: understanding the dynamics of the school principalship.

Available from Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 7 Wells Ave., Newton, MA 02159, for \$34.95.

The Incompetent Teacher

Edwin M. Bridges
Philadelphia

The Falmer Press, 1986

—Reviewed by Jerrold D. Hopfengardner,
University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio

Administrators and board members will find this sobering research-based account of teacher incompetence a valuable resource. Bridges bases his findings and recommendations on three studies and on an extensively documented survey of the literature. Using a case study approach, he cites examples of three interrelated aspects of inadequate teaching: (1) what is occurring, (2) how administrators are coping with this condition, and (3) what stringent approaches can effectively deal with it.

Bridges contends that the evaluation of probationary teachers is vital to the qualitative future of our profession. We should grant tenure only to those

probationary teachers who, by thorough, objective, and humane criteria, clearly demonstrate the ability and desire to be competent career teachers. He proposes that this process should be "hard on the standards but soft on the people."

The Incompetent Teacher is a timely frame of reference by which administrators and board members can systematically analyze their policies and procedures for selecting and continuing employment of competent teachers.

Available from The Falmer Press, Taylor & Francis, Inc., 242 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19106-1906, for \$24 hardcover and \$12 paperback.

New Directions in Educational Evaluation

Edited by Ernest R. House
Philadelphia
The Falmer Press, 1986

—Reviewed by Lois B. Hodik, Research/Evaluation Consultant, San Diego, California

Evaluation didn't turn out to be just a fad. House, Weiss, Stake, and Scriven are still at it, figuring out new and different ways to do it and think about it. They and other well-pedigreed evaluation theorists have written a collection of papers about this evolving field.

The good news is that evaluation studies are becoming more "client-centered." Feminist, naturalistic, case study, and stakeholder approaches are offered as examples. The bad news is that most of the new approaches, while promising, have been less than completely successful because of both faulty assumptions about clients and poorly developed methodology.

Of the many new conceptual frameworks for evaluation, the most practical summarize the research on teacher evaluation in the context of school policy, organizational structure, and conceptions about teaching (as labor, craft, profession, or art). Where you start determines where you end. School administrators and evaluators, take heed.

Available from The Falmer Press, Taylor & Francis, Inc., 242 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19106-1906, for \$29 hardcover and \$15 paperback.

Supervision in Early Childhood Education: A Developmental Perspective

Joseph J. Caruso and M. Temple Fawcett
New York
Teachers College Press, 1986

—Reviewed by Doris Brown, University of Missouri, St. Louis

Caruso and Fawcett have written a practical text for supervisors in training and practice, especially those working with preschool and early elementary programs. Several succinct models of adult learning provide a foundation for selecting activities and setting expectations for teacher professional development. Their suggestions for building an ongoing staff development program range from professional reading to the practice of

supervisory modeling. Also of note, they candidly discuss persistent myths surrounding supervision and supervisors.

Probably the book's strongest sections, however, are those dealing with clinical supervision. The authors present guidelines for observing, analyzing, and conferencing teachers. The goal is in order to give teachers performance-based feedback they can use in improvement efforts they initiate—the kind that's most likely to succeed for any of us. This thorough publication on supervision in early education should be a welcome addition to the school management collection of both the professor and the practitioner.

Available from Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027, for \$16.95.

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Information from Zulf Ahmad, Conference Director, Cincinnati Public Schools, 230 E. 9th St., Cincinnati, OH 45202. Telephone (513) 369-4090.

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