

Reviews

Skills and Vocationalism: The Easy Answer

Maurice Holt

Philadelphia: Open University Press, 1987

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

It is the essence of liberal education that in every age it must be reinterpreted in light of changing political and economic conditions. This aphorism is especially pertinent in our present uncertain economic climate. Momentum is increasing to reduce education to an instrumental activity in the service of industry and job placement. Schools are thought to have worth only as they relate directly to the marketplace. The idea of education as an enterprise with inherent worth is dismissed as elitist and idealistic.

Although this collection of contributions from a seminar conducted by the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain is presented from the British viewpoint, it will appeal to any educator troubled with attempts by politicians and business leaders to blame the schools as an easy solution to complex economic problems. The endeavor to use the easy answers of increased vocational skills, improved technological ability, and job-specific training has the insidious effect of diverting attention from the real problems with schools. Improving education is not a matter of responding to economic concerns by providing a collection of job-specific competencies. It is a matter of supporting schools, teachers, pupils, and their constituencies to arrive at solutions that will permit pupils to become fully functioning members of a community, capable of critical participation in an evolving democracy.

The selections in this book are provocative, meaty, well researched, and certain to be useful to concerned curriculum workers.

Available from Open University Educational Enterprises, Ltd., 242 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19106.

Teaching Mathematics 5 to 11

David Lumb

East Rutherford, N.J.:

Nichols Publishing Co., 1987

—Reviewed by C. J. Daane, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa.

Educators who have an affinity for the British Primary School concept will appreciate this concise overview of the aims and objectives of teaching mathematics at the primary level. The computational illustrations are brief but clear.

The author draws from the reports that are currently influencing the teaching of mathematics in England. Most often cited is the "Cockcroft Report of 1982," which Lumb believes is the most "authoritative ever to be provided on the teaching of mathematics." He also cites several U.S. reports and monographs.

Educators will enjoy discovering the similarities that exist between U.S. and English approaches to the teaching of mathematics at the primary level, including the use of calculators in the classroom, an emphasis on problem-solving activities, use of computers for instruction, use of manipulatives, and appropriate use of assessment.

Available from Nichols Publishing Co., c/o Publishers Distribution Center, 25 Branca Rd., East Rutherford, NJ 07073, for \$16.95.

Curriculum: Foundations, Principles, and Issues

Allan C. Ornstein and

Francis P. Hunkins

Englewood Cliffs,

N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1987

—Reviewed by John McIntyre, Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois.

Ornstein and Hunkins provide an excellent overview of the curriculum development process. Blending both curriculum theory and practice, they present varying philosophies for readers to synthesize.

Perhaps the book's greatest strength lies in the curricular issues it raises and the questions it poses. Readers are required to contemplate these issues and to formulate their own approaches to thinking about the curriculum.

The final chapters on "Curriculum Issues" and "Future Directions for Curriculum" stress the need for future-focused curriculum planners and should be required reading for students of curriculum. *Curriculum: Foundations, Principles, and Issues* is an ideal text for introductory curriculum students.

Available from Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

Supporting Literacy: Developing Effective Learning Environments

Catherine E. Loughlin and

Mavis D. Martin

New York: Teachers College Press, 1987

—Reviewed by Rosemary Barton Tobin, Emmanuel College, Boston, Massachusetts.

Full of practical strategies designed to help create a learning atmosphere most conducive to fostering literacy, this volume will revolutionize classroom organizational design. Having spent a great deal of time observing classroom environment, the promotion of literacy, and the inextricable link between the two, the authors contend that teachers pay all too little attention to the relationship between environment and learning behaviors specifically with regard to the acquisition of literacy. I believe that they are correct, at least partly because the impact of classroom surroundings upon children's learning response is not studied enough in preservice teacher preparation. This combination of the pragmatic and the theoretical is what every classroom decision maker seeks.

Available from Teachers College Press, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027, for \$15.95.

Common Sense About Dyslexia

Anne Marshall Huston

Lanham, Md: Madison Books, 1987

—Reviewed by Phil Vik, University of South Dakota, Vermillion.

The first of two volumes on dyslexia written for teachers, principals, and parents of dyslexics gives a clear understanding of dyslexia as a language communication disability affecting reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The second volume will deal with diagnosis and remediation.

Using case studies and research, the author discusses the problems dyslexics have in coping with the classroom, the home, and the world in which they live. Several chapters focus on symptoms of dyslexia, its causes, characteristics of dyslexics as children and adults, and specific ways teachers and parents can help. Regular classroom teachers will also find the information useful with nondyslexics.

Available from Madison Books, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD 20706, for \$24.95 cloth and \$14.95 paper.

The First R: Fundamentals of Initial Reading Instruction

R. Baird Shuman

Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1987

—Reviewed by Rosemary Barton Tobin, Emmanuel College, Boston, Massachusetts.

This volume's table of contents lists all the topics anyone just learning about the teaching of reading would wish to have addressed. After a general look at reading instruction and a chapter discussing such compelling issues as "Are Good Readers Born or Made?" and "Identifying Early Readers," the author provides an illuminating discourse entitled "How Children Learn." He then proceeds to elucidate various methods of reading instruction and their strengths and pitfalls, including the role of computers. The emphasis upon the importance of visual analysis for a vehi-

cle of learning about how children develop reading skills is valid, as is his discussion of the influence of dialects on the child's developing competence.

The First R, part of the Developments in Classroom Instruction Series published by NEA, chronicles developments in the field in a style that is "user friendly" and a format that would provide preservice students an overview of the field from one source.

Available from National Education Association, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, for \$10.95.

Effective School Leadership

Edited by John Lane and Herbert Walberg
Berkeley, Calif.:

McCutchan Publishing Corp., 1987

—Reviewed by Arthur W. Steller, Oklahoma City Public Schools, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

John Lane and Herbert Walberg are two names familiar to serious professionals who keep up with the principalship, supervision, and educational productivity. They have produced one of the best research works on the principalship available.

In chapter two, "Educational Aims and the Management of Schools," author Van Cleve Morris writes, "... the measure of a school principal is his or her ability to 'produce results,' namely, reading and mathematics scores and general achievement scores at or above grade level" (p. 16). Such an administrator has job security, according to the author: "Complaints against a principal from teachers, students, or parents would have little credit with a superintendent if the principal can deliver, year after year, solid evidence that students are learning the curriculum" (p. 16).

The thrust of the remaining eight chapters is on enhancing student achievement. Both scholars and practitioners will relish this important, very readable volume.

Available from McCutchan Publishing Corp., P.O. Box 774, Berkeley, CA 94701, for \$25.25 plus \$2.25 for shipping.

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I studied selected parts of the teacher's edition, including most of the material about geology, and the task left me drained.

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—from a geologist's review, in *Bookwatch*, of a 1987 text about earth science

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