

Reviews

Toward Civilization: A Report on Arts Education

Frank Hodson, Chair
Washington, D.C.

National Endowment for the Arts, 1988

—Reviewed by Richard Sinatra, Chair, Arts in Education Network, ASCD, and Professor, St. John's University, Jamaica, New York.

In March 1988, the National Endowment for the Arts published its extensive report on the scope and nature of arts education in American schools. The 99th Congress of the United States commissioned the report in 1985, marking the second time in American history that Congress has mandated a report on arts education.

The thesis of the report is simple enough: basic arts education for all students K-12 needs to be provided by schools just as other basic school subjects are offered. The problem, however, is that basic arts education does not exist in America today. The arts appear to be, the report notes, in triple jeopardy: "They are not viewed as serious; knowledge itself is not viewed as a prime educational objective; and those who determine school curricula do not agree on what arts education is."

The far-reaching consequences of a basic arts education are fourfold. First, arts education provides students with a sense of the civilizations which have contributed to and enriched our collective sense of vision, idea, and vocabulary. Second, arts education provides students with the means and disciplines for expressing creativity. Third, through the arts, schools teach an effective alternative means of communication. Art forms provide verbal and nonverbal message contexts to communicate meaning and feeling. Finally, arts education provides choices in making the discriminations, evaluations, and critical assessments needed for awareness of excellence.

To remedy the consequences of our present failure to provide basic arts education, concrete recommendations are made for the general classroom, the curriculum, testing for achievement, teacher preparation, leadership,

research, and the role of the National Endowment for the Arts. While the report is decisive about the direction of arts education in the schools, the biggest task will be marketing these ideas to the general public. A wide gap exists between understanding the importance of arts education at the top echelon of policymaking and the commitment shown to basic arts education at the local school level. It is not that the last seven Presidents, the Council of Chief State School Offices, the College Board, or the National School Boards Association need convincing; but the parents, the local school boards, and the local school staffs need to be convinced about the importance of systematic instruction in the arts for all students. These are the people whose hands hold the future of arts education. It is now time for active grassroots implementation of the basic arts disciplines and curriculum ideas outlined in the report.

Available from National Endowment for the Arts, Washington, D.C. 20505.

Competency Training for Managing Productive Schools

Karolyn J. Snyder
San Diego, Calif.

Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1988

—Reviewed by William Bailey, University of Delaware, Newark.

This companion volume to Karolyn J. Snyder and Robert H. Anderson's *Managing Productive Schools: Toward an Ecology*—has synthesized a wide range of research to present a model by which schools can become more productive. Aply titled, this manual, based on sound research and sensible training activities that have been field-tested, provides the how-to component of school reform in a practical, logical fashion with the training ideas and activities spelled out in detail. Even the inexperienced trainer/principal can conduct these activities with faculty groups.

The emphasis is on the application of successful practices such as clinical supervision, school-based management, work group development, and

organization development principles. Presented in workbook format, the book contains many easily understood graphics, diagrams, and systems flowcharts. Finally, educators have a valuable fix-it book to help them put theory into practice.

Available from Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, College Department, 1250 Sixth Ave., San Diego, CA 92101, for \$14.00.

Improving the Quality of Schooling

Edited by David Hopkins

Philadelphia:

Taylor & Francis Inc., 1987

—Reviewed by Janet M. Pblegar, Program Coordinator, The Regional Laboratory for Educational Improvement of the Northeast and Islands, Andover, Massachusetts.

The findings from the International School Improvement Project (ISIP), detailed in this volume, have as much relevancy to teachers and administrators in the United States as they do to those in any of the 14 countries that participated in the international effort. The book presents expanded conference proceedings from a 1986 conference in England, but its usefulness is greater than that description usually implies. It is a valuable contribution to the literature on school improvement.

In examining school-based review, the roles of internal and external change agents, and development and implementation of school improvement policy, the book maps the territory of school improvement. Within the overall framework, the book gives emphasis to the two broad findings of the ISIP—emphasis on the school as the primary unit of change, and the fact that quality schooling occurs when certain internal factors (like emphasis on the teaching-learning process, an agreement on goals, a supportive learning climate, high expectations, and so on) are embedded within the fabric of the school. The rich detail provided by the case studies brings these findings to life, and the learnings are all the more powerful because they transcend national boundaries.

Available from Taylor & Francis, 242 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 29206-1906, for \$21.00.

Strategies for Classroom Discipline

Meryl Englander
New York

Praeger Publishers, 1987

—Reviewed by Mildred G. Ness, Rochester, New York.

As long as classroom discipline continues to be a major problem for teachers and administrators, there will be an audience for the assistance that Meryl Englander offers in this volume. The text has more depth than its title implies.

The major treatise deals with an understanding of intervention in the conflict cycle and how to structure an environment that reinforces proper behavior. Nine well-accepted theories and practices relating to therapy, moral development, behavior control, and assertiveness are outlined. Detailed examples are given to elucidate the best time and situation for employing each strategy. In the concluding section, Englander recognizes the school as an organization, especially as it affects the teacher's autonomy and control in the classroom.

Strategies for Classroom Discipline is comprehensive, richly illustrated, and readable—an invaluable resource for all teachers and support staff in our schools today.

Available from Praeger Publishers, a Division of Greenwood Press, Inc., 88 Post Rd., West, Box 5007, Westport, CT 06881, for \$15.95 paperback and \$39.95 hardback.

Making Choices for Multicultural Education

Christine Sleeter and Carl A. Grant
Columbus, Ohio

Merrill Publishing Company, 1988

—Reviewed by George Henderson, University of Oklahoma, Norman.

Christine Sleeter and Carl Grant are iconoclasts who skillfully challenge the illusions of progress heralded by

teachers and administrators content to conduct business as usual. The rapidly changing demographic characteristics of our schools require that our pedagogy change too. With this in mind, the authors have written a basic cultural manual for educators. They provide impressive cursory reviews and critiques of over 200 articles and 60 books on multicultural education. Each chapter is a careful blend of theory, strategies for change, and recommended practices. Individuals concerned about the quality of education in their schools can use this text as a solid foundation for devising a local plan for excellence.

But *Making Choices* is not a pretentious manual. The authors leave ample room for readers to make up their own minds about the best strategy to use. Individuals who seek to destroy the *isms*—racism, sexism, elitism, handicapism—will be more knowledgeable after reading this book.

Available from Merrill Publishing Co., 1300 Alum Creek Dr., P.O. Box 508, Columbus, OH 43216-0508, for \$17.95.

Motivating Minority Students

Simon O. Johnson and
Verna Jackson Johnson

Springfield, Ill.

Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1988

—Reviewed by Cynthia Prather, Creative Associates International, Inc., Washington, D.C.

Designed for easy reading and use, this book is written for educators who have tried to motivate minority students academically but have had limited success. In addition to motivation, the authors address discipline, self-concept development, and parent involvement.

After describing some behaviors commonly demonstrated by minority students and general strategies to success, the authors present 23 "Examples," of social and academic situations teachers often face because of these behaviors and offer practical "Activities to Try" in solving them. Also included is a variety of enrichment

activities for capturing students' attention and stimulating their interest. The closing chapter includes a brief but interesting summary of research studies that report success in motivating minority students.

Occasionally, a proposed activity seems a little simplistic for the type of problem addressed. In addition, readers are cautioned not to make broad generalizations about the behaviors of minority students and the strategies that will motivate them. Nevertheless, the book provides practitioners with ideas to stimulate their thinking and gives documented evidence that success can be achieved.

Available from Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 2600 S. First St., Springfield, IL 62794-9265, for \$19.75.

Sex Equity in Education

Anne O'Brien Carelli
Springfield, Ill.

Charles C. Thomas Publisher, 1988

—Reviewed by Fred Rodriguez, University of Kansas, Lawrence.

Whether you are a teacher, guidance counselor, principal, superintendent, or school board member, the entire contents of the text are relevant to your role and responsibilities. As the authors point out, all educators need to work together to establish sex equity in education. The task of achieving equal treatment and equal opportunity in education involves the blending of equitable principles and activities into curriculum, instruction, policy, and evaluation.

Pertinent topics include computer and equitable education in math, science, and technology; bias in textbooks and instructional materials; administrative policymaking; and women in educational administration. The book is designed to encourage educators to weigh facts, personal values, and experiences and to determine what activities and approaches can be carried out to eliminate sex role stereotyping, sex bias, and sex discrimination.

Available from Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 2600 S. First St., Springfield, IL 62794-9265, for \$42.75.

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