

Reviews

Give Me a Child Until He Is Seven: Brain Studies and Early Childhood Education

John Brierley
Philadelphia
The Falmer Press,
Taylor and Francis, Inc., 1987

—Reviewed by Rebecca Bunch, Tarrant City Schools, Tarrant, Alabama, and Samford University, Birmingham, Alabama

John Brierley uses findings from brain research to support 21 commonly contended principles of early childhood growth, development, and learning. The book's most powerful point confirms that, for child or adult, learning and memory depend upon one's perceiving a pattern or making a generalization from the environment. Brierley has made a valuable first step toward establishing a brain research base to support the common principles of how young children learn.

In this work, teachers and administrators will be reminded that concrete experiences are essential to learning readiness. University instructors could readily use Brierley's research-based explanations to support their teaching of child development and learning theory.

Available from The Falmer Press, Taylor and Francis, Inc., 242 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19106-1960, for \$12.00.

Questioning and Discussion: A Multidisciplinary Study

J.T. Dillon, editor
Norwood, N.J.

Ablex Publishing Corporation, 1988

—Reviewed by Meredith D. Gall, University of Oregon, Eugene

J.T. Dillon has invited 17 American and foreign experts on teaching to analyze transcripts of actual high school discussions, using the concepts and methods of their respective disciplines (philosophy, sociolinguistics, and psychology). The transcripts, which are included in the book, allow

the reader to witness how different disciplines generate different insights about the same classroom phenomena. The experts' findings and recommendations are sufficiently general that educators at any grade level will profit from them.

Several weaknesses of current teaching practice are laid bare by the experts' analyses. Most teacher-student interaction is shown to be recitation rather than discussion. Teachers are preoccupied with controlling classroom conversation, rather than sharing control so that students can take a measure of responsibility for their learning. Reasoned argumentation and analysis are almost entirely absent, even when the teacher's apparent intent is to develop students' thinking.

The critical tone of the book is tempered throughout by affirmations of the value of questioning and discussion when properly applied. Unbound by traditional notions of effective teaching, these experts from other disciplines offer fresh ideas about how to foster student responsibility, reasoning, and ability to communicate.

Available from Ablex Publishing Corporation, 355 Chestnut St., Norwood, NJ 07648, for \$45.00 cloth and \$24.95 paper.

Philosophy Goes to School

Matthew Lipman
Philadelphia

Temple University Press, 1988

—Reviewed by Jonathan Baron, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

Lipman argues convincingly for the inclusion of philosophy in the curriculum, beginning in kindergarten. When taught through a "classroom community of inquiry," using affectively involving materials (novels) and methods that provide "do as I do" models rather than "do as I say" instructions, philosophy can serve as a vehicle to make the entire curriculum more thoughtful.

On this grand and compelling vision, Lipman superimposes a list of "skills" drawn mainly from logic, the centrality of which he fails to defend.

In the novels, however, logic serves as material to reflect about, not content to be learned, so the value of these skills is undiminished.

This somewhat redundant collection of essays pays special attention to creativity, moral education, the problem of finding and training teachers, and the relation of philosophy instruction to other parts of the critical thinking movement.

Available from the Temple University Press, Broad and Oxford Sts., Philadelphia, PA 19122, for \$34.95 cloth and \$14.95 paper.

Computing and Education: The Second Frontier

Jonas F. Solitis, editor
New York

Teachers College Press, 1988

—Reviewed by Kathy Fite, Southwest Texas State University, San Marcos

Educators have come to realize that computers are not a panacea for all student needs yet do have merit as a learning tool. Included in this special issue of the Teachers College Record are 8 articles and 2 book reviews that will most likely appeal to the experienced computer user. They explore current and projected technology, research results, the use of computers to develop higher-level thinking skills, and theoretical ways computers can enhance education. In addition, there are reviews of books that address other educational issues, such as the raising of intelligence and developing human potential.

Available from Teachers College Press, Columbia University, 525 West 120th St., New York, NY 10027, for \$7.50.

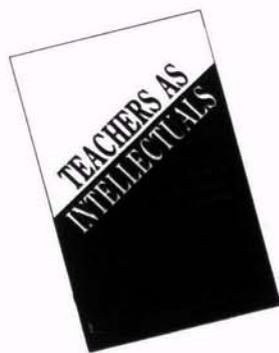
Teachers As Intellectuals

Henry A. Giroux
Granby, Mass.

Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc., 1988

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

School personnel frequently disparage the relationship between politics



and schooling. As day-to-day instructional planning distances faculty and staff from the sociopolitical, socioeconomic functions of schools, practitioners envision administering and teaching in an apolitical/neutral environment—one without external "influences."

Teachers As Intellectuals reminds us that schools are embedded in a cultural milieu and reflect cultural goals, paradoxes, and contradictions. That is, schools do not have inherent, a priori aims and goals. Rather, parents, teachers, students, and community leaders define and articulate the values and objectives that shape and maintain the structure and policies of schools.

Giroux helps us analyze the structuring of schools by focusing upon vocabulary and concepts: power, equity, excellence, resistance, pedagogy, knowledge, empowerment, and transformation. Using the framework of critical sociology, Giroux explains the dichotomy between schooling (credentialization/social reproduction) and education (transformation/empowerment) and suggests ways of rethinking and restructuring our conceptualization of schooling.

Despite the delimiting nature of the title, *Teachers As Intellectuals* is a book for all practitioners and all members of the greater community. Giroux demands reader involvement, transformation, and empowerment. He helps us understand that the political relationship between schools and society is neither artificial nor neutral nor necessarily negative. Rather, school personnel have a positive and dynamic political role to play.

Available from Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc., 670 Amherst Rd., Granby, MA 01033.

Preventing Classroom Discipline Problems

Howard Seeman
Lancaster, Pa.

Technomic Publishing Company, 1988

—Reviewed by Shirley A. McFaul, Chair,
Department of Education, Lewis University,
Romeoville, Illinois.

Using real examples from his experience as a secondary teacher and university supervisor, Seeman has created a text that can be used as a self-help guide or a training manual for preventing and solving discipline problems. He claims not enough attention is given to this important topic in teacher training and that teachers need not just understanding, but skills to deal with classroom situations. Divided into three parts, the text deals with understanding the problem, preventing the problem, and handling the sources of disruptive behavior. The book is short on theory and heavy on descriptive situations and practical applications.

Seeman claims that teachers need to be clear when a situation is a "disci-

pline" problem and not a guidance or an educational problem. If not, teachers will tend to make "miscalls" and create their own problems. The author identifies the 15 most common "miscalls" teachers make, analyzes why they make them, and suggests alternative approaches. Numerous lists, scenarios, and reflections by teachers who have taken discipline courses with Seeman are included. At the end of every chapter are training exercises and checklists to assist in mastery of the skills presented.

The book includes a lot of common-sense advice, but for beginning teachers, it may be helpful. Claiming that a teacher's value system and behaviors must be congruent, Seeman tries to show teachers concretely how to avoid "miscalls," to "duck" when necessary, and to improve their environment and interactions with students, rules, and instruction. For the author, those factors, coupled with *who* the teacher is as a person, make all the difference.

Available from Technomic Publishing Company, 851 New Holland Ave., Box 3535, Lancaster, PA 17604.

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