Significant Books in Review

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Curriculum Planning for Better Teaching. ***By J. Galen Saylor and William M. Alexander.*** *New York: Rinehart and Company, 1954.*

This book, written by two authors well known to ASCD members, will be of interest and assistance to all who are concerned with improving educational programs for children and youth. The book's strength is in the insights it provides for understanding better the nature of curriculum planning—its content and processes. Consideration is given to the various levels of planning and the different kinds of participation and activities appropriate on each level, focusing always on how the experiences of boys and girls are enriched. The five parts treat comprehensively these pertinent questions: Why is better curriculum planning needed? What major factors must be considered in curriculum planning? How shall the curriculum framework be organized? How shall we plan the curriculum for better teaching? How shall curriculum planning be organized and evaluated?

Some texts discuss only broad objectives and school-wide organization and fail to provide real help for the key curriculum worker—the classroom teacher. Saylor and Alexander focus on the activities, materials, resources and organization by which teachers and others can plan for richer learning experiences. The nature of participation and activity varies, they point out, with different planning levels: the teacher's, with and for students, the school's, the school system's and the outside groups'. Good planning is always a learning process, particularly as improvement goals are related to instructional problems.

From their combined extensive experiences in all phases of curriculum development, the authors have drawn out the important issues and problems facing curriculum workers. They clearly state their own positions with respect to these issues and, at the same time, examine conflicting views for strengths and weaknesses. Rich illustrative material is well selected and integrated into the text.

Both novice and experienced teachers, supervisors and administrators—all of whom have important roles in curriculum planning—will probably welcome this text. Saylor and Alexander provide a perspective and depth which should contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the principles, problems and practices of planning for better teaching and learning.

—*Reviewed by* A. Harry Passow, *assistant professor of education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.*

Teaching Adolescents. ***By Gilbert C. Kettelkamp.*** *New York: D. C. Heath Company, 1954.*

As a guide for student and beginning teachers, this publication is intended to serve as an introduction to the teaching profession, a reference in the solution of daily problems, and a specific help with many aspects of school and community living. The opening chapters present an overview of teaching, a look at the nature of adolescents and a description of secondary school organization. Kettelkamp then attempts to help the student teacher prepare himself so that his teaching experience will be rich and meaningful. The bulk of the text is devoted to the functions of the classroom teacher and deals with such topics as planning, selecting and organizing learning experiences, classroom management, choosing and developing materials, caring for special problems in learning, evaluation, and providing guidance. The final chapter treats the personal and professional growth of the teacher in the school and community.

Kettelkamp uses considerable illustrative and anecdotal material from his own experience as a teacher and supervisor of student teachers. These appear in paragraphs set in bold-face type which are intended to illustrate a specific point or to provide additional insights into various phases of teaching. Some readers will find this somewhat disruptive, partly because the writing style differs from the main text. While illustrations woven more closely into the text might appeal to more readers, many will find these distillations both interesting and valuable.

There will be some differences of opinion among readers about the choice of topics and the relevant emphasis. This reviewer would have liked greater attention given to such topics as individual differences and their meaning for instruction, how the dynamics of classroom groups affect learning, the special problems of educating exceptional children, techniques of classroom evaluation, and interpersonal relationships of teachers. These are, of course, value judgments with which others will disagree. The author probably gave consideration to other areas in *his* selection because of what *he* considered important for the beginning teacher.

The appendix includes sample unit plans and curriculum outlines, as well as suggestions for securing a teaching position. The bibliography after each chapter is well selected and annotated.

—*Reviewed by* A. HARRY PASSOW, *assistant professor of education, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York.*

Children's Social Values—An Action Research Study. ***By Arthur W. Foshay, Kenneth D. Wann and Associates.*** *New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1954, p. 311.*

"This study was undertaken at a specific time, in a particular place, by a certain group of people." This beginning sentence of the first chapter properly sets the stage for what is to follow, —an informative, readable and penetrating study of curriculum research. Foshay and Wann, supported by the staff of the Horace Mann-Lincoln Institute of School Experimentation and

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numerous public school teachers and administrators in Springfield, Missouri, have prepared an action research report that is in essence a guide for the improvement of teaching and of teachers.

This is a book with many dimensions. The report of the project itself is a significant contribution toward helping teachers understand the foundation, structure and behavioral aspects of some of the social values children hold. Moreover, the account of the procedures used suggests and describes in detail how action research can be undertaken by school faculties. Probably the most important conclusion that emerges from the study is that the improvement of learning experiences for boys and girls depends, to an appreciable degree, on teachers' attitudes toward and understanding of children, and on teachers' conceptions of the curriculum. Thus, as teachers engage in analyzing the behaviors of children, they begin to become more sensitive to their own patterns of perception, and to the nature and effect on children of varying kinds and qualities of learning experiences. In this regard, *Children's Social Values* is an outstanding contribution to professional curriculum materials.

Special note should be made of some specific aspects of the study. An early chapter which defines and illustrates social attitudes in children is the clearest exposition of this subject that this reviewer has ever encountered. The suggestions to teachers at the end of each chapter, designed both to encourage and to guide action research projects in the readers' schools and class-

rooms, are a unique and helpful addition to the report. The authors' conscious efforts to be realistic, by listing and describing the failures as well as the successes, the frustrations as well as the satisfactions encountered in the project, are most effective, and conclusively demonstrate the accuracy of the report.

No teacher can read this study without seeing his own children, his own classroom, and his own problems in relation to the children, classrooms, and problems of the teachers in Springfield. It is in this that the permanent value of the book will be found.

—*Reviewed by* WILLIAM SPENCER, *associate professor of education, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.*

How To Judge a School. ***By William F. Russell.*** *New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954, p. 138.*

The title of this small volume might lead some to assume that it contains check-lists, questions and answers, or diagrams and outlines of schools and their programs. Such a conclusion would, however, be misleading because the viewpoint here is broader and more concerned with interpretation. William Russell, President-Emeritus of Teachers College, Columbia University, from his many years and wide experience in the field of education both in the United States and throughout the world, directly attacks the questions uppermost in the minds of many parents who are concerned about the effectiveness of their children's educational experiences.

This "handbook for puzzled parents and tired taxpayers," as it is called in the subtitle of the volume, ranges across the fields of history, philosophy and psychology in providing a framework for the interpretation of the why, what and how of modern educational programs. Russell's knowledge of educational theory, buttressed by his competency in educational history, is expressed in a series of very readable short essays. He makes extensive use of research findings in discussing such topics as the three R's, the role of education in a democracy, moral and spiritual values in education, education for citizenship, and the many other controversial aspects of present-day concern with education.

"When the American people have more knowledge of the purposes, processes, and place of education in our society, when they appreciate the interlocking role of school, home, church, and other institutions, then they can see their local school problems in a larger perspective, and reach judgments that rise above tradition and prejudice." Russell's book provides help toward reaching these judgments.

—*Reviewed by* WILLIAM SPENCER, *associate professor of education, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.*



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