

Significant Books

Contributors: Richard E. Ripple

Learning and Human Abilities: Educational Psychology. *Herbert J. Klausmeier.* New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961. 562 p.

The field of educational psychology is in a period of ferment. Questions have been raised as to whether educational psychology should be taught primarily at a scientific-theoretical level or at a technological level. Older texts reported research but did not translate it into suggestions for the teacher.

There is a growing edge in educational psychology which conceives the introductory text as serving the purposes of an engineering manual that bridges the gap between psychological theory and the practice of teaching. Too often this expectancy has resulted in texts which emphasize practical application at the expense of theoretical issues and orientations. It is refreshing to find a text designed for introductory courses in educational psychology in which practical suggestions for the teacher are based on research evidence and set forth in the context of a theory of classroom learning.

Learning and Human Abilities is not an ordered catalogue of educational prescriptions. Rather, the educator will find information and principles that will make it possible for him to formulate hypotheses on how he may stimulate and nurture the development of student abilities. The greatest value of the text lies in its

potential for helping teachers acquire the skills and approaches needed in intelligent hypothesizing and the testing of these hypotheses.

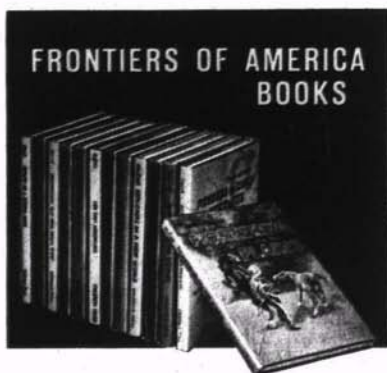
The volume is arranged in four parts: Essential Components of Teaching-Learning Situations, Achieving Learning Outcomes Efficiently, Desirable Conditions for Efficient Learning, and Evaluation and Measurement. Part I deals with the nature of human abilities and the teaching-learning process. The author has attempted to bridge the gap between growth and learning as separate entities through the use of the concept of human abilities.

A concise treatment of the main components in an educational setting and their relationship to efficiency of learning is presented. Components discussed include the objectives sought, the types and range of abilities and other characteristics of the students, the types and range of abilities and other characteristics of the teacher, and the interactions among the teachers and students.

Part II is concerned with outcomes of learning; cognitive, psychomotor, and affective. The nature of the outcomes and underlying processes, developmental trends in acquiring the outcomes, and instructional principles for improving efficiency of learning are treated for each of the following: facts, concepts, problem solving, creativity, psychomotor skills, at-

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titudes, values, personality integration, and character.

In Part III the author discusses motivation, retention and transfer, provisions for individual differences, and new settings and contexts for learning. These areas are discussed in relation to the efficiency of achieving the learning outcomes considered in Part II. The chapter on new settings and contexts for learning includes reference to TV instruction, teaching machines, electronic laboratories, instructional teams, and other innovations.

Evaluation and measurement are considered in Part IV. This section includes a presentation of the main purposes of evaluation and measurement, descriptions of widely-used standardized tests and research instruments, considerations of teacher-made tests and informal evaluation procedures, and discussions of statistical and research terminology.

The theoretical models and research orientation are particularly appealing features of the book. The model on page 28, presenting the interactions of the various components in a behavioral setting for learning and their relationship to efficiency in achieving long-term and more immediate goals, is illustrative of the many helpful models interspersed throughout the book. While recognizing that knowledge about many phenomena related to learning and human abilities is incomplete, the author has brought together a wealth of current and classical research evidence that deals with efficiency of learning. The research studies reported at strategic points throughout the text are amplified by suggestions for further reading in the references at the end of each chapter.

The instructional principles presented are also a notable feature of the text. A set of instructional principles is presented for facilitating the learning of facts, con-

cepts and attitudes, for improving problem-solving abilities and skill learning, for encouraging creativity and personality integration, and for facilitating motivation, retention and transfer. The statement of each instructional principle begins with a verb; the teacher is the assumed subject. Each principle is well documented with supporting research. The principles are stated in such a way that they will be clear-cut guides for achieving outcomes efficiently.

In view of the inroads of automation and technological developments on the educative process, the chapter on new settings and contexts for learning is a valuable contribution. Descriptions of technological and other innovations are well handled, available evaluative research is discussed, and some provocative research questions are raised.

The entire section on evaluation and measurement, consisting of three chapters, is noteworthy. Particular strong points include the discussion of the specific purposes of evaluating and measuring, the descriptions and illustrations of commonly used standardized and other published tests, and the discussion of research instruments used in evaluating teacher effectiveness.

General weaknesses of *Learning and Human Abilities* can be classified as faults of omission. Although developmental trends of youth are discussed in connection with acquiring educational outcomes, there is no comprehensive treatment of growth and development. For those institutions which include human growth and development in the introductory course in educational psychology, the text would need supplementation. While research studies in education, psychology and other areas are reviewed extensively throughout the text, the motivated student will want to obtain

more from these researches than can be put in an introductory text; namely, the rhetoric of conclusion. For this reason it would be desirable to augment the text with a book of readings in educational psychology. It would be advantageous, also, to supplement the final chapter on statistical and research terminology with a standard introductory statistical reference.

These omissions, however, do not seriously detract from an introductory educational psychology text which should find a warm reception from the profession. This volume should be particularly useful for introductory courses in educational psychology with prospective teachers. All those who are concerned with the efficiency of student learning in schools should find *Learning and Human Abilities* of value.

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Editorial—Evaluation

(Continued from page 6)

specialists must come to know each other's needs, concerns and insights. Both should possess a veto power over test selection in the individual school, since neither group alone is qualified to choose wisely. If the two cannot agree, it is probably best to avoid choosing any standardized instrument within the area of disagreement but to use locally developed devices instead. Further, such lack of agreement indicates a possible focus for in-service education.

3. *Make teacher-made tests an integral part of the total evaluation program.*

It is a travesty to call a program "The Testing Program" of a school when this program contains only a minor fraction of

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