Reviews

The Dynamics of Language Learning: Research in Reading and English

Edited by James R. Squire
Urbana, Ill.:
ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills, and the National Conference on Research in English, 1987

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

A collection of papers presented at a 1985 seminar on connections between reading and writing, *The Dynamics of Language Learning* should be read by all teachers of the language arts, both in the schools and in university departments of education and English. Essays by distinguished people in the field explicate issues at the heart of language learning, such as the necessity of translating research findings into classroom use through the particular expertise of the teacher, the imperative that classroom assessment serve the needs of instruction if it is to be of value, and the importance of emphasizing the philosophical and social aspects of language.

Available from the National Council of Teachers of English, 1111 Kenyon Rd., Urbana, IL 61801, for $25.

The Ecology of School Renewal

John I. Goodlad, editor
Chicago:
The University of Chicago Press, 1987

—Reviewed by Eugene Huddle, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, Washington, D.C.

The Ecology of School Renewal is for scholars of school improvement, not for skimmers looking for a few quick ideas on school reform. It examines the fundamental nature of schools and school reform through a series of discussions, most of which assume a continuation of the current educational system, the present organization and management structures, instructional policies and practices, and the various players from local communities to the Congress. Ways of making the current system functional and healthy are proposed, not ways of eliminating or bypassing the system. This emphasis implies that eliminating the pathology in the system will produce better outcomes. Whether one places more value upon the health of the system or the system outcomes may be of little effectual consequence, since they are interrelated.

The central message is that our present system of education functions as a total unit, much as a small culture, with each component mutually affecting the others. The school is at the heart of the system, and other components (e.g., state, central office) justify their existence only by their ability to challenge and support the school. Other themes address the need for self- and peer-monitoring, broad school goals, a common core of critical learning, and equal access.

Available from The University of Chicago Press, 5801 South Ellis Ave., Chicago, IL 60637, for $23.

Children's Mathematical Thinking: A Developmental Framework for Preschool, Primary, and Special Education Teachers

Arthur J. Baroody
New York:
Teachers College Press, 1987

—Reviewed by Thomas Gibney, University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

The author believes that knowledge of psychology can help mathematics educators evaluate the progress of their students, anticipate where and why students will have difficulty, and determine how to prevent or remedy learning problems. Teachers who believe students should learn basic number combinations mainly as a system of relationships, not as hundreds of separate facts, will benefit from the many comparisons between the absorption and the cognitive models.

Cognitive theory contends that students come to school with some informal mathematical knowledge and that their mathematical competence builds slowly from the concrete and specific to the abstract and general. If teachers do not use cognitive theory, students are likely to use mathematics mechanically or mindlessly. Counting experiences are emphasized as crucial to students' slowly evolving understanding of place value and mastery of number applications and operations. Structured discovery learning is important in primary-level mathematics instruction.

All preschool and primary teachers, and especially special education teachers, will find this explanation of the cognitive model practical and useful.

Available from Teachers College Press, 1234 Amsterdam Ave., New York, NY 10027, for $27.95 (cloth), $16.95 (paper).

Effective Group Problem Solving

William M. Fox
San Francisco:
Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1987

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

Do you want to broaden participation, improve decision making, and increase commitment to action in your organization? Are you interested in achieving the full benefits of participation? Are you concerned about strengthening your participation-based management?

Of course you are. There is ample evidence that shared decision making is more effective in many problem-solving situations than authoritarian approaches. Most fields in America are moving away from traditional authoritarian styles. The issues are how to use the power of the group and how to identify acceptable techniques of group problem solving.

Effective Group Problem Solving answers these questions in a step-by-step guide, from pre-meeting preparation through voting procedures for authentic results. Fox, Professor of Management at the University of Florida, goes far beyond quality circles. He relies heavily on the nominal group technique and a refinement of the Improved Nominal Group Technique (INGT). INGT is easily understood, practical, and feasible.

Much of the material is supported by adequate references. The book contains a self-quiz, which serves as a good review, and a helpful index. An excellent self-teaching manual, it is essential reading for managers interested in the simultaneous achievement of efficiency, innovation, and high morale.

Available from Jossey-Bass, Inc., Publishers, P.O. Box 4305, San Francisco, CA 941144-4305, for $21.95

Improving Teacher Education

Edited by Eva C. Galambos
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1986

—Reviewed by Georgea Mohlman Sparks, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Michigan.

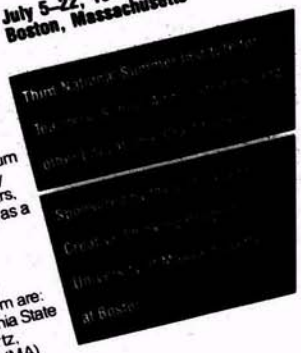
How can we strengthen the subject matter preparation of prospective teachers? How can we provide education majors more and better opportunities to try out teaching skills? How can we integrate theory and research into the professional education curriculum? How can universities cooperate with schools to prepare teachers?

These provocative questions weave their way through this up-to-date summary of the major issues facing teacher education reform today. A well-known and highly respected group of teacher educators (Phillip Schlechty, Willis Hawley, Hendrik Gideonse, Norene Daly, and others) have written thoughtful chapters on teachers' general education, the pros and cons of extended teacher preparation programs, shared action in reforms, laboratory schools, clinical experiences, the reduction of teacher-preparation institutions, and the role of private liberal arts colleges.

Anyone interested in improving teacher preparation will find these chapters fascinating. While the chapters are short and not all give specific examples of exemplary programs, the

Critical and Creative Thinking in the Classroom

July 5–22, 1988
Boston, Massachusetts



This institute gives teachers and other educational practitioners an opportunity to work with leaders in the field of teaching for critical and creative thinking. Participants will gain an understanding of the nature of critical and creative thinking, learn classroom techniques for teaching and assessing it, and develop curriculum materials and teaching strategies for infusing it into mainstream instruction; they may also earn graduate credit. The institute offers one-day practitioner seminars, week-long minicourses, and three-week curriculum-building courses, as well as a special seminar for administrators.

Residential accommodations are available.

The staff will consist of active researchers, classroom teachers, and school administrators who have made major contributions to the field. Among them are: Joan Baron, Connecticut Department of Education; Arthur Costa, California State University (Sacramento); David Perkins, Harvard University; Robert Swartz, University of Massachusetts at Boston; Mary Anne Wolff, North Reading (MA) Public Schools.

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This advertisement appears at no expense to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts

book gives valuable statistics and a comprehensive overview of the issues in teacher education reform.

Available from Jossey-Bass, Inc., 433 California St., San Francisco, CA 94104, for $9.95.

Educational Evaluation: Alternative Approaches and Practical Guidelines

Blaine R. Worthen and James R. Sanders
Chicago:
Longman, Inc., 1987

—Reviewed by Thomas R. Hopkins, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque.

Rather than revise their 1973 textbook on educational evaluation, Worthen and Sanders elected to write a new one. According to the authors, only 15 percent of the old book is included in the new one.

This is a comprehensive, highly professional, college-level textbook. Each of its 24 chapters contains "Orienting Questions" at the beginning, and "Application Exercises" and "Suggested Readings" at the end. The bibliography is outstanding.

The perspective of the book relates more to project evaluation than to school system or classroom evaluation needs, though school systems will find it a helpful reference. The book is rooted in the extensive experience of the authors and has excellent practical content (e.g., evaluation is political and, like education, borrows from several disciplines, though education and evaluation are not considered disciplines). The authors identify and discuss situations when evaluations should not be conducted or should be aborted. Included are checklists, matrices explaining different approaches, and forms. As one would expect, the book will be most helpful to professors who teach educational evaluation and to administrators who must make decisions on educational evaluation. This book is an important addition to the professional educator's reference library and tool chest.

Available from Longman, Inc., P.O. Box 99321, Chicago, IL 60693, for $24.95.

Finding Work: Cross National Perspectives on Employment and Training

Edited by Ray C. Rist
Philadelphia:
The Falmer Press, 1986

—Reviewed by Charles Gibson, Educational Consultant, Castro Valley, California.

How relevant are employment training programs to economic growth and the creation of jobs? This question is significant to all industrial societies as they face the challenges of unemployment, changes in their economies and workplaces, retraining displaced workers, and assisting youth in the transition from school to work.

Editor Rist has brought together 11 essays that explore the employment training policies and programs of a variety of industrial nations whose strategies differ but whose problems are essentially the same. Ranging from England and Western Europe through Australia, Japan, and the United States, the contributors examine different national initiatives for responding to the vast economic changes affecting the world.

Finding Work will be of special interest to adult and vocational educators. It will be useful, also, to major employers and others who must deal with the shifting employment patterns that are having a major impact on all of society.

Available from The Falmer Press, Taylor and Francis, Inc., 242 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19106-1906, for $34 (cloth), $18 (paper).

Society as Educator in an Age of Transition

Edited by Kenneth D. Benne and Steven Tozer
Chicago:
The University of Chicago Press, 1987

—Reviewed by Richard Diem, The University of Texas, San Antonio.

The National Society for the Study of Education has previously published several yearbooks examining interrelationships between schools and society. This yearbook takes a topical approach to the broad societal issues and conflicts that confront the nature of schooling within this country.

The range and nature of subjects revolve around the changing nature of schools as they relate to societal evolution within the United States. Discussions of the role of technology and its concurrent effects on the nature of work are followed by an overview of the directions vocational training may take in the next decade. A review of the history of the family and how its newly developing attitudes are shifting the makeup of our society is also presented. A segment on the purposes of schooling, as seen from an historical perspective, offers an interesting conclusion.

This work makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the role of schooling and its ties to the social/cultural/political makeup of American society. It is an important addition to social foundations literature.

Available from The University of Chicago Press, 5801 South Ellis Ave., Chicago, IL 60637, for $26.

Language, Learning, and Education

Edited by Gordon Wells
Albany, New York:
Delmar Publishers, 1985

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

A second edition of papers collected through the Bristol Language Development Research Programme, this volume represents the results of a longitudinal study of preschool language development, the importance of early language, the influences affecting such development, and the characteristics of increasing linguistic skill that signal success in school. The papers, written at different times for different audiences, discuss such fascinating topics as the significant relationship between talking and learning, the various roles teachers and parents play in conversing with children, and the impact of applied linguistics upon the reading classroom. The author provides an

organizing and clarifying foreword. *Language, Learning, and Education* provides necessary reading for parents, teachers, and anyone concerned with language development.

Available from Delmar Publishers, 2 Computer Dr. West, Box 15–015, Albany, NY 12210, for $11.45.

Thinking Skills Instruction: Concepts and Techniques

Edited by Marcia Heiman and Joshua Slomianko
Washington, D.C.: National Education Association, 1987

—Reviewed by Elliot Seif, Bucks County IU #22, Doylestown, Pennsylvania.

The editors of this eclectic reader have selected 35 clearly written, concise articles by leading experts and practitioners in thinking skills instruction. These not only explain why we need to emphasize the teaching of thinking, but also provide insights into the characteristics of thinking-oriented schools and classrooms and suggest practical approaches to integrating thinking into content areas. The opening article is a witty and all-too-true account of a teacher's view of the introduction of this "new thinking emphasis." Other topics include the school conditions necessary to support the teaching of thinking, metacognitive thinking strategies, the application of Bloom's taxonomy, socratic reasoning, the infusion of the teaching of thinking into the study of literature, history, and music, and descriptions of specific thinking skills programs.

Because the book presents a wide variety of approaches and points of view, some readers may find it unfocused, lacking a systematic framework for teaching thinking skills and strategies. Others, however, will find many articles helpful for understanding the thinking skills movement, fostering discussion and dialogue on the teaching of thinking, and providing practical approaches for integrating thinking skills into the classroom.

Available from the National Education Association, 1201 16th St., NW, Washington, DC 20036, for $14.95.

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