We have seen that schools and teachers do have differential effects upon cognitive and non-cognitive student growth, even when relevant student characteristics such as IQ, SES or previous performance level are controlled. There are even limited stability data to show that some teachers retain their relative effectiveness during consecutive years. Clearly, some schools and teachers do make a measurable difference. Thus, the conclusion that schools or teachers have no effect on student growth is a fallacious overreaction to inappropriate data.

This introductory paragraph to the final chapter of this book by three highly regarded students of classroom life is an accurate assessment of the work they present in their book. It is comforting to educators to have seemingly obvious facts re-stated in the context of a careful examination of a wide range of research studies. Educators have become accustomed to reading in their professional journals and texts that researchers have been unable to say anything of much practical value about the effectiveness of schools or teachers. The general public were then told about the overall lack of effectiveness of schools by Silberman, Holt and others. Finally, major government sponsored research such as the Coleman Report told policy-makers that schools made little difference in adult lives. The results have been serious: cut-backs in educational funding, less prestige for the profession and demands for accountability.

The focus of the book is to examine research which demonstrates how teachers vary in their influence on pupils. The ground is prepared for this task by examining the positions and research methods of the
critics of the schools. The authors point out that studies of process variables in classroom situations are rare, that theory on teaching is lacking, that research on teaching effectiveness assumes that there are some universal characteristics of teachers which would work in any context and with all pupils. Their review of the Coleman Report avoids minor issues which have ensnared professionals and it focuses on a few salient features in research design. For instance, they consider the problem of how does one study the relative effects of community wealth as opposed to money spent on education, when almost all Coleman's schools were highly correlated on these two variables? Other studies, e.g., those by Jencks and the IEA Studies of Achievement, receive similar perceptive treatment.

The book's third chapter is an important one. It analyzes previous research on teachers and schools, citing good ones, and noting the deficiencies of the vast majority. It concludes with a series of recommendations for classroom research. This chapter should be required reading for all graduate students in education.

Chapter four reviews studies which demonstrate that teachers do make a difference and shows that success is achieved in different ways in different settings. The studies are surveyed under the major headings of pre-school, elementary school, secondary level, and higher education with appropriate sub-topics. This chapter also disposes of the criticisms of Popham and others who use the results of "mini-lessons" to conclude that teachers do not make a difference. Not only is it possible to show that teachers are effective but it is possible to relate a variety of behaviors to different outcomes like learning and satisfaction.

A highlight of the book is its analysis of studies related to open education and individualization of learning. A brief description of a variety of programs (PLAN, IGE, IPI, PEP) is given, followed by some research results. The research on open education is limited primarily to studies conducted at O.I.S.E. In one such study researchers found that in schools where a large proportion (>30 per cent) come from homes where English is a second language, openness was associated with low achievement scores, whereas in other schools, there was no apparent relationship between openness and achievement.

The authors then turn to the affective domain and the question of the "humaneness" of schools. Curiously enough, they find that students merely accept schools rather than have strong feelings about them.

The chapters on goals, accountability and testing are less satisfying. They stray from the central purpose of the book and could well be omitted. The book ends with recommendations to teachers, principals and superintendents on what to look for in schools, how to observe, how to establish a self-improvement (or professional development) program, and how to conduct research (or have your questions answered). The techniques proposed may puzzle the traditionally-schooled psychologist, but the sociologist will be right at home. This literature also indicates that educational psychology is moving from academic experimental psychology to a position more closely allied to social and clinical psychology.

This book should not be relegated to the student in teachers' college. It should be directed to the professional teacher and administrator who wants: (1) a brief résumé and critique of the major critics of schools; (2) a review of studies which show how to achieve success with students under specific conditions; (3) some questions to ask in reviewing research on schools; and (4) an examination of what is happening in our schools and plans for improvements. For the graduate student, the book is an invaluable source of significant studies about teachers, and it contains many suggestions for research. The action is in the classroom.

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