

A. W. Combs. *The Professional Education of Teachers: A Perceptual View of Teacher Preparation*. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1965. 134 pp. \$2.95.

This book presents a systematic and clear-cut exposition of the author's views of education in general and of teacher preparation in particular. A reader familiar with Combs' previous writings will recognize that his proposals for a programme of teacher education are based upon his theory of human personality and behavior. Believing that traditional educational practices have been excessively influenced by the behaviorist or mechanistic point of view, Combs suggests that real progress in teacher preparation can come about only by the utilization of the principles of perceptual psychology. Aspects of this psychological position include these important components:

1. The perceptual basis of behavior — the concept that an individual's behavior at any instant is the result of how he sees himself, how he sees the situation in which he is involved, and the interrelation of the two.
2. The self-concept and behavior — the individual's self as the centre of his world and the point of origin for all behavior.
3. The basic need for personal adequacy — the belief that man is engaged in a continuous striving for self-fulfillment.

The relationship of this point of view to teacher preparation is expressed in the following words:

If behavior is a function of perception, it follows that teacher education must concern itself with the inner life of its students. Simple exposure to subject matter is not enough. The maturation of an effective professional worker requires changes in the student's perceptions — his feelings, attitudes, and beliefs and his understandings of himself and his world. This is no easy matter, for what lies inside the individual is not open to direct manipulation and control. It is unlikely to change except with the active involvement of the student in the process. (p. 14)

Combs believes that the effective professional worker is the intelligent human being who uses himself, his knowledge, and the resources at hand to solve the problems for which he is responsible — the "self as instrument" concept. This concept places an entirely different emphasis upon the teaching of methods which traditionally plays an important part in teacher education.

The teacher-education program must help each student find the methods best suited to him, to his purposes, his task, and the peculiar populations and problems with which he must deal on the job. This is not so much a matter of *teaching* methods as one of helping students to *discover* methods. It is a question of finding the methods right for the teacher rather than right for teaching. (p. 23)

Moving from the theoretical

to the practical, Combs discusses in considerable detail the weaknesses of current programs of teacher education and follows this critical analysis with concrete suggestions for structuring a program based upon the principle of perceptual psychology and the "self as instrument" concept.

The reviewer believes that this is an important book and strongly recommends it to anyone engaged in teacher education. Perhaps for too long we have accepted our traditional

ways of doing things and require a Combs to stir us up. The book may even have a disturbing effect since it seriously questions the validity of what we have been doing.

Unquiet is that moment when
 some thought
 Jars on the door of a complacent
 mind
 That trusted in its infallibility.
 Some word, perhaps some act
 That bids us pause and question
 Whether the aims to which our
 lives we dedicate
 Be false.

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