

BOOK REVIEWS

A. Harry Passow, Miriam Goldberg, and Abraham J. Tannenbaum, editors, *Education of the Disadvantaged: A Book of Readings*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1967. 503 pp.

In the Winter 1964 edition of the *Harvard Educational Review*, the late Vincent Conroy reviewed Passow's *Education in Depressed Areas* and noted that public educators had in the recent two or three years discovered the "disadvantaged child" who lives in "depressed areas" and has need of "compensatory education." He pointed out that these same educators had moved the disadvantaged child into the forefront of their concerns. While the tone of his review was generally positive, Conroy suggested that Passow seemed to have rushed his volume into print to be first to define problems of urban education. In retrospect, I think that it would be completely fair to say that, despite the shortcomings arising from the haste inferred by Conroy, Passow's earlier book has done more than any other single volume to generate and to keep the interest of public educators focused solidly on the problems of education for the disadvantaged. For this reason, I welcome the new book edited by Passow, Goldberg, and Tannenbaum as a potentially powerful contribution to this relatively new and extremely important field of educational concern.

Most of the essays included are already available to the reader in other sources. *Education of the Disadvantaged* brings these papers together in a well organized collection of well selected papers by educators and behavioral scientists. The book is divided into five parts, dealing with the nature and setting of the educational problem, disadvantaged minority groups, socio-psychological factors affecting school achievement, education for the disadvantaged, and teachers for the disadvantaged. The editors introduce each part with a brief overview of the concepts dealt with in it; and in addition, each essay is prefaced with an abstract of the concepts, theories, or findings presented in the essay. These overviews and abstracts, combined with the generally high quality and extensive bibliographies of the essays, make this book extremely valuable as a reference work. It is easy to locate ideas, easy to be selective, and easy to delve much deeper into each area if desired through the use of the bibliographies. However, although its mode of presentation makes it a convenient reference work, I would hope that this does not prevent its use as a basic or supplementary text in courses on

the education of culturally differentiated children.

Despite my enthusiasm for the book as a possible text, it is obvious that its content makes it better suited to U.S. than to Canadian classes, especially since it deals in considerable detail with problems of Negro education. But that is not to say that the book is focused exclusively on the problems of American Negro pupils.

Basil Bernstein's familiar theories concerning the inadequacy of the language of pupils at low socio-economic levels as a tool for learning is based on research with English subjects, and Bernstein's findings are probably applicable anywhere. And J. McV. Hunt's article "The Psychological Basis for using Pre-school Enrichment" is, to my mind, an outstanding presentation that could well be read and re-read with great benefit by any educator working at any school grade or socio-economic status level, especially if his personal knowledge of social-psychological theories of learning based on recent research is sketchy, or more than five years out of date.

As I have said, the book has many essays dealing with Negro Americans. But it also touches upon the educational problems of other groups, such as North American Indians, migrants, immigrants, and children attending schools in which they are not of the modal socio-economic status

level. This diversity, supplemented with an intelligent approach by the reader in attempting to extrapolate to disadvantaged children *in general* the findings concerning Negro children *in particular* (and I believe that this can be done easily in a majority of cases) will make the book useful to students in countries other than the United States.

There is one serious shortcoming in this book, but in all fairness to the editors, I must admit that this shortcoming probably results from a dearth of research in a particular field. *Education of the Disadvantaged* does not treat children who live, not in the inner urban areas, but rather in the peripheral "shantytown" areas surrounding many American and Canadian cities, in places where there are no adequate building codes, and where cultural deprivation takes forms different from those found in city slums. It appears to me that the inner-city children tend to have the advantages of well-established municipal services such as baby clinics, community centres, settlement houses, boys clubs, and so on, whereas such services may be relatively scarce or non-existent in the outlying areas. However, much research needs to be done in this field and when it has been accomplished the editors will perhaps include the findings in a future edition of their work.

The book also has one omission, which is a serious flaw for Canadian students. A number of sophisticated studies have led to important findings concerning the educational problems of bilingual pupils. The reader is referred to a good summary of findings by W. E. Lambert in the *Journal of Social Issues* XXIII No. 2 (April, 1967) pp. 91 - 109, since they have implications for the education of students in French Canada, in certain areas on the Canadian Prairies, and elsewhere. Perhaps the editors felt that bilingualism is not a disadvantage — at least not in the sense of the definition used for their book — and this

may well be the case. However, I would hope that future editions might contain some of these findings.

In summary, I would say that *Education of the Disadvantaged* is a sound book. The selections are generally worthy of inclusion, and many of them are clearly outstanding. The organization of the book makes it an excellent reference source for students of education at any level from freshman to graduate.

I would recommend it highly as a text for advanced level courses on the of education of disadvantaged children.

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Nat Hentoff: *Our Children are Dying*. New York: Viking Press, 1966. pp. 141. \$4.95.

In Grade One, slum children are not different from others: if anything, they are more open, kindly, generous, spontaneous and fun-to-teach than are privileged children. This is the firm conviction of Dr. Elliott Shapiro and his staff at P.S. 92 in Harlem. The tragedy is that the slum children slowly die *in school*; the longer they remain, the less they achieve. At P.S.92, though, the achievement is rising. Some will survive.

This book tells of the work of a fine educator, Dr. Elliott Shapiro. His ideas comprehend philosophy and lively innovation. Does the Board of Education ignore long-continued pleas for a

new building? Then advertise in the *World Telegram*, organize the parents, and invite Mayor Wagner to school — to witness an unexpected rat chase. Are more classrooms needed? Open storefront schools that will double as community libraries and invite parents in to help. Is integration a problem? Then set up schools of special excellence (like the Bronx High School of Science) and see how soon students of all colors are mingling in the corridors. Above all, know the children and fit the schools to their needs. This book tells how Dr. Shapiro does it at P.S. 92.

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