

other hand, does little to show how the practitioner can use the literature to help his practice, or even how curriculum writings and practice influenced each other. In order to bridge the gap, perhaps persons like Tyler and Schubert need to take note of each other. Moreover, it is to be hoped that someone in the near future will write a history of American curriculum that considers all the facets and their complex web of inter-relations: intellectual history, societal trends, curriculum writings, curriculum research, curriculum materials and resources, classroom practice.

Notwithstanding these comments, it is worthwhile adding Schubert's book to one's personal library, as I have done. The summary overviews of the development of curriculum thought are helpful, succinct statements. The lists of books are useful both for finding books by specific authors or on certain topics, and for getting a feel of the types of books published during various decades. For curricularists, it is a book that on occasion will save several hours of library searching. For practitioners, it is a guide to the most significant books and a checklist on books dealing with specific topics. Come 1990, we can only hope that Schubert will provide us with a supplement to cover the present decade.

* The many split infinitives in the book are only one example of the lack of proper editing from which the book suffers. However, because of the nature of the book, this is not a major drawback — it is still useful for its intended purposes.

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Raymond, James C. (Ed.). *Literacy as a human problem*. University: The University of Alabama Press, 1982. 206 pp. \$16.50 (U.S.) cloth; \$6.95 (U.S.), paper.

The title of this collection of essays may strike the reader as a bit pedantic, if not strictly redundant, because one may, upon encounter, retort: "Well, whose problem could literacy be? The animals'?" Perhaps at this point, this may be a rash judgment to make. Looking at the contents, we find an introduction by the editor, and three parts dealing with the major issues of the problem of literacy, namely, (I) Law, Linguistics and the English Language, (II) Testing: Art or Illusion? and (III) Literacy, Culture and Human Consciousness.

First, a word about the Introduction. The editor presents a clear, concise introduction to the anthology, identifying the problems inherent in the linguistic, phenomenological, and psychological perspectives on literacy. He is correct in saying that the linguists have a totally different interest in language as empirical data from the journalists' or the English teachers' concern, i.e. the precise, refined and effective use of the language. Their interest, however, does not completely separate them from the realm of pragmatics. In fact, it is primarily their view on language and dialects that forestalls our respect and regard for differing linguistic groups. The linguist has shown that each dialect, irrespective of the socio-economic status of its speakers, is comparable to every other dialect in its basic structure and primary function. This notion could lead to an attitude of equal respect towards the speakers of different dialects. To a large extent, this is the essence of granting a speaker (being a person) of one dialect the same worth or value as any other speaker of another dialect or language. With this view, coupled with his recognition of the varying functions of language, the linguist cannot be completely noncommittal on the question of which dialect of English is to be preferred for the purpose of promoting literacy. It may be safe to venture that his/her preference will be no different from the dialect that the non-linguists in the subsequent essays appear to agree on.

Part I consists of four essays as follows: (a) Thomas H. Middleton, Don't Grammar Count?, (b) Vivian I. Davis, Literacy: A Human and a Legal Problem, (c) John Simon, Why Good English Is Good for You, and (d) Elisabeth McPherson, Language: Unites or Divides? The Students' Right in Retrospect. It is a treatment of the controversy over standard English and minority dialects. Middleton and Simon are the outright sponsors of teaching standard English in the classroom, be it loosely defined as the English of educated users of the language or the 'good English' wherein a listener or reader is not

left to 'figure out' what is meant. In other words, they favour the teaching of that brand of English that helps foster communication for mutual understanding, which is a matter of clarity and concision (p. 58). Their quarrel is not so much with minor errors as with basic sloppiness or ignorance or defiance of 'good English'. Middleton thinks that clear writing depends upon the understanding of certain rules, and that "writers who best express the product of their reasoning are those who have mastered the structure of the language" (p. 35). In some sections this writer may have overstated his case particularly with such statements as "How do I know what I think until I've put it in writing?" or "Writing is, indeed, the test of thinking." Even if we grant that learning the rules of English and adhering to them in writing may help one to think logically, the relationship between them is not one of logical necessity. For Simon, who also expounds a close connection between ability to think and ability to use English correctly, the stress in training to speak and write correctly implies developing at least two extremely useful faculties: sense of discipline and memory. It also means that learning good English is fostering awareness of and developing the ability to deal with both form and content. He lays out clearly and rather convincingly what profits good English in terms of one's career, social relations, and even basic self-confidence.

Davis and McPherson are concerned more with the legal and human problems of literacy that students from minority groups face. By human is meant the treatment or "valuing" deserving of a person, a human being and the equal opportunities that go with providing each of them education. Two basic questions are raised in the course of various legal cases cited. Firstly, how do schools provide appropriate language instruction for minority school children so that whatever dialect or language they know and use does not become a barrier to their learning to read and write? Secondly, what do teachers need to do to improve the teaching of literary skills, especially writing? To the first question, it appears that the problem is in reality not one of whether to teach standard English or not, but it has to do with how the teachers or the school community respond to the language that the minority school children use in or bring to the classroom. Are these children being treated with the same regard given others who speak the "preferred standard dialect"? Are they being allowed to express themselves in the only dialect that they can masterfully handle as yet? Or are they being ridiculed and assessed unfairly for it? All will perhaps agree with McPherson's statement that "the real business of English teachers is to help all students to read with understanding, talk with confidence, and write with clarity and help students accomplish these aims with the pleasure that should accompany them rather than the pain that so often does" (p. 74). No one would argue against "achieving the highest degree of literacy" of which the students are capable (p. 90). Upon reflection, we note that the disagreement on the problem emanates from the manner of going about it. The humanists spell real literacy as *starting* with helping students to learn to reason, to see the world they live in honestly and clearly, to communicate in whatever dialect they grew up speaking. Only after they have learned to respect themselves and their own language can they be helped to edit their writing in a step-by-step process. Towards this end, one strong recommendation is for teachers to learn linguistics in order to be informed of the nature of language and to develop appreciation for its diversity, particularly with reference to various social functions.

In Part II, which deals with testing, there are only two essays. The first one is Thomas Newkirk's "How Competent Are the Writing Competency Tests?" It uncovers some serious deficiencies in a number of reputable writing tests examined. They are (a) triviality of the test, (b) inadequacy of time allotments, (c) confused notion of "creative writing", and (d) poor choice of topics. Each of these is carefully analyzed, discussed and illustrated to demonstrate bad practices in testing writing. Then, the consequent question of evaluation is raised which leads to the conclusion that "no single piece of writing can be a (sufficient) measure of writing ability; no single topic can be fair to every student" (p. 113).

From the second paper, "Who Am I Unless I Know You? Another View of Competence" by Richard Lloyd-Jones, we are introduced to a more abstract treatment of competence in using the language. The author identifies the concern of literacy as not the competence measured in tests of usage and mechanics or even tests in reading and writing but rather the written language which

represents one's conscious and most refined efforts to say to other people who he is in relation to what he knows. Such skill is viewed as being progressively developed in the framework of actively engaging in discourse, always exhibiting human value and human relationships.

Part III has three essays: (a) Edward P.J. Corbett, "A Literal View of Literacy", (b) Frank J. D'Angelo, "Luria on Literacy: The Cognitive Consequences of Reading and Writing," and (c) Walter J. Ong, S.J., "Reading, Technology, and Human Consciousness." While the first makes no pretense about the simplicity of its content, it provides some practical questions relative to literacy as literally defined as well as its desirability. It outlines certain developments that have contributed to the growing sophistication of teachers of writing.

The last two papers share the similar concern pertaining to the relationship between an individual's literacy and his corresponding perceptual and cognitive abilities. It is shown in D'Angelo's review of Luria's psychological work that cognitive processes change qualitatively as a result of literacy, thus radically altering one's perception of reality. In the last and longest article, Ong discourses on the way various media alter perceptual and cognitive styles of people who use them. He delves into an elaborate discussion of reading and the reader, writing and the writer as growing out of or alongside phenomenology and psychoanalysis, bearing upon consciousness and its substructures as well as on human interiority. Finally, he talks about the technology of words and its impact on human consciousness.

By and large, this collection of papers profits the reader not only in confirming the need for pursuing the "traditional" goals of literacy - reading with understanding and writing intelligibly in proper form. Not one would disclaim these admirable goals as long as the learner's worth as a human being, as well as his rights to his own dialect or language are recognized and respected; that in the effort of promoting literacy, the human element in the learner is kept paramount over the trivia and contradictions that oftentimes muddle the goals which the teachers are trying so hard to attain. This book, in effect, sums up the "human-ness" that is inextricably linked with the goals of developing literacy. Thus, the title is after all most appropriate.

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Gordon, J.C.B. *Verbal Deficit*. Totowa, New Jersey: Croom Helm Ltd., 1981. 181 pp. \$25.00.

The present work is a succinct survey of various theories and hypotheses generally subsumed under the label "verbal deficit". Its professed aim is to serve the needs of linguists and educationalists and to make a contribution to the history of education. Given its broad topical compass and short length, however, it is difficult to demonstrate that it attains all these goals or, at least, that it attains them equally well. This reviewer, writing from the perspective of sociolinguistics, indeed finds little new (apart from a few bibliographical references) that is not available in the exhaustively researched, carefully reasoned and convincingly argued critique of "the deficit hypothesis" by Dittmar (1976). Readers of Gordon's brief survey are referred to the latter for the definitive (negative) evaluation of work in this area.

As one of Gordon's aims is to place verbal deficit in the wider context of educational theory, his first chapter surveys the rise and fall of "psychometric intelligence theory" and the second treats "classical verbal deficit theory". Since all these theories have been advanced to explain "differential educational attainment", their inclusion in this short volume is appropriate despite the fact that the former is based on assumptions about the hereditability of intelligence and the latter is associated with views which treat "environment" as the primary causal factor. Nevertheless, as Gordon points out later in the work (p. 121) "on closer scrutiny it is apparent that there is no clear-cut antithesis between these two theories. Both are essentially deterministic and hold that when children embark on their statutory schooling they already differ markedly in terms of educability." Chapters One and Two (and to an almost equal extent Chapter Five) may be of the greatest interest to students (or historians) of educational theory.