

## EDUCATION

DIARY OF A HARLEM SCHOOL TEACHER, by Jim Haskins. 1969. Grove Press, Inc., New York. 167 pp. \$4.95.

The author, like a number of other teacher-writers in similar situations, communicates his feelings of frustration, despair, and anger about the quality of life in the neighborhood as well as the quality of education in the school.

Most of the book consists of diary entries made daily during a school year. A shorter section contains brief biographic descriptions of the nine children in Haskins' class who received most of his attention. He attempts to describe the life style of the children, their family situations, and their individual needs.

Haskins' diary provides insights into relationships between black and white teachers in P.S. 92. The latter fear discrimination and loss of their jobs if parents and others in the neighborhood gain a major voice in making policy decisions. Black teachers and parents indict white educators for being concerned with the control of education but not caring enough about its present state.

I do not consider this an important book. Other authors, such as Herbert Kohl and Peter Schrag, have written about the same problems more effectively and in greater depth.

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GROWING FOOD, by D. J. Edwards. 1969. John Day Co., New York. 48 pp. \$2.68.

Intended for learners in primary and intermediate schools, this is a resumé of ecologic conditions for growing food crops in all parts of the world. A unique feature is the use of diagrams from which children can derive facts and ideas in addition to the text material. Measurement and number are frequently used to amplify the basic facts.

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ENCOURAGING CREATIVITY IN THE CLASSROOM, by E. Paul Torrance. 1970. Wm. C. Brown Co., Dubuque, Iowa. 136 pp. \$2.25.

Torrance outlines and discusses ways to awaken and to realize the potential for creativity in children, as well as to identify their creative needs. He defines creativity as "a special kind of problem-solving," which has as its product "novelty and value, either for the thinker or for his culture."

Certain kinds of skills necessary for creative thinking are identified, and chapters are devoted to ideas a teacher

might use in developing these skills—which include creative reading. Extensive lists of learning experiences are supplemented with examples of materials one might use to encourage particular experiences.

The suggestions for building creative reading skills were of special interest to me as an elementary teacher, as was the author's checklist of the characteristics of the "ideal child." For instance, one of the most basic of children's creative needs is curiosity; yet the category "Always asking questions" was ranked by both parents and teachers 39th among 62 characteristics to be encouraged. This checklist provides some important clues for teachers interested in providing a "responsive" classroom environment, in which creativity is encouraged and rewarded.

The author has done much of his research with the disadvantaged child. Two chapters are devoted to techniques for finding hidden talent in such children—and the techniques are of even wider application.

The value of learning by creative methods lies in the fact that motivation and reward are intrinsic. The book encourages this kind of learning.

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WHAT'S HAPPENED TO TEACHER?, by Myron Brenton. Coward-McCann, Inc. New York. 280 pp. \$5.95.

Brenton's book is based on interviews with more than 250 teachers and administrators throughout the country, with officials of the National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers; and with federal, state, and local education officials. The intention was to explore the condition of public school teachers in contemporary American society.

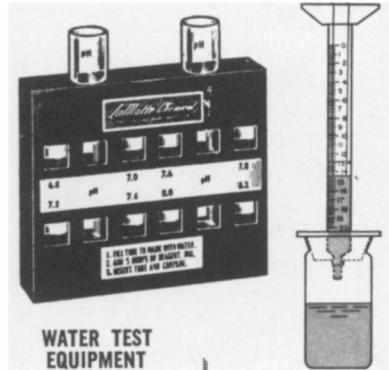
The volume is written in an organized but discursive style. To those who have been working closely with schools, most of the information here will be a straightforward description of the life they know. Little or no controversial information or major new insights are included. However, those unacquainted with the politics and policies of public schools may be surprised at some of the problems discussed.

I was disappointed with the relative paucity of data. Even the data that are present may escape the superficial eye, since they are thoroughly woven into the text. Some subjects, such as teacher effectiveness, are grossly oversimplified, but this might be expected in a wide-ranging discussion. Much of the volume is made up of statements or impressions gleaned, apparently, from the interviews; these pertain to the feelings of individuals about the role and stature of American public education. Topics receiving major attention are historical perspectives, description

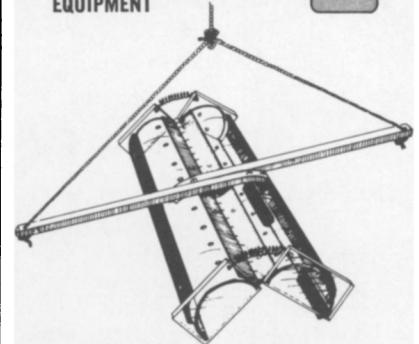
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