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## **Accent on the Child: Methods and Curricula in Elementary Education by James A. Fitzgerald and Patricia G. Fitzgerald**

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## ACCENT ON THE CHILD

METHODS AND CURRICULA IN ELEMENTARY EDUCATION. By James A. Fitzgerald and Patricia G. Fitzgerald. Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Co. 1955. Pp. xiv-591. \$5.50.

The authors of *Methods and Curricula in Elementary Education* state as their central purpose the effective education of the child. The book is written primarily as a basic text for use in Catholic colleges and universities which train elementary teachers for both Catholic and public schools in the United States. Nevertheless it contains a wealth of material most helpful for educators in the Philippines.

This reviewer has approached the study of *Methods and Curricula in Elementary Education* with a "mind-set" conditioned by over twenty-nine years in the Philippines, training Catholic teachers for Catholic elementary schools, and hopes that the authors will bear with her presuming to consider their text solely from the point of view of educational problems in the Philippines.

The opening chapter analyzes aims and objectives in relation to the philosophy of education underlying a school system. The authors' forthright pronouncement on page 5 regarding the radical statements of some outstanding educators, among whom is John Dewey, is most reassuring in our Catholic Philippines: "Statements which glorify skepticism and naturalism and ignore God are not the real bases for education in this country [the United States]." Such pronouncements provide ample proof that American democracy and the experimentalism of John Dewey are not synonymous terms, and that the ultra-progressive curriculum is not a prerequisite for formation in democracy.

The chapter, "Knowing Children and Guiding Them," suggests plans for character development and draws upon materials from well-known Catholic writers on this phase of education, among them Edward Leen, C.S.Sp., Ernest Hull, S.J., and M. S. Gillet, O.P. The chapter, "Teaching as a Profession," contains much food for thought in its presentation of teaching as an apostolate with superb opportunities to serve God, fellow man, and country. Under the caption, "Preservice Education," the authors offer recommendations with which this reviewer is heartily in accord: "A rich cultural background is necessary for good teaching." "A liberal arts course in an accredited college generally should provide a sound basis for a good cultural background." Our students who aspire to the apostolate of teaching are reminded of their exalted calling: "The reward for many teachers is the satisfaction of guiding children to develop noble characters, with Christ 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' as the model. All who teach must await the reward of the Master."

The following two chapters offer valuable recommendations for curriculum planning. Each curriculum is presented in the

light of its value to the child. Although the child-centered curriculum seems favored, there is recognition of the need to preserve what is best in the traditional approach, blended with what is commendable in the new. On page 149 is a timely warning: "A curriculum should provide materials, content, and experiences which have *immediate* value, *permanent* value, and *eternal* value for the child's education." The authors frankly point out the good points and the shortcomings of both the traditional and the new type program. Among the different curricula mentioned is "The Christ-Centered Plan"; it is regrettable that it was not developed in greater detail.

Subject matter and special techniques are discussed in "Teaching and Learning Through Experience," "Learning and Teaching Through Language," and "Reading: Using Books and the Library." Space does not permit a detailed presentation of the chapters on "Unit Technique," "Problem Solving," "The Project" and "Learning Activities." The dangers of the poorly organized new-type activities curriculum are carefully set forth. One specific danger of particular interest for Philippine schools is "the danger of confusing activity methods with activististic, pragmatic or experimentalistic philosophy." The authors also recognize that "there is danger of misguiding youth in uncontrolled experience and activity."

Audio-visual devices, together with the ever-present problem of comics, movies and radio programs, are treated under "Enriched Learning." The authors warn their readers against failure to train young people in effective and discriminate listening. "A free television, free radio, as well as a free press for a democracy requires an intelligent vigilance which must come through education."

The format of the book is clear and attractive in the presentation of the material. Each chapter closes with a summary of the matter, followed by a list of questions, problems and activities suggested for student assignment. There is an abundance of charts and tables throughout the text.

*Methods and Curricula in Elementary Education* as a basic text on a graduate level has definite value for the Philippines. As a basic text in an undergraduate course it would not be feasible. The present Bureau of Education requirement of several semestral courses in the various phases of Elementary Education makes an integrated course of this type impossible. However, as a reference and source book for both instructor and student, it is valuable.

This reviewer would like to have found more detailed curricula for Catholic elementary schools, particularly the curriculum for "Guiding Growth in Christian Living," so frequently referred to. It might be noted that the authors' unqualified commendation of Dewey's five logical steps in solving problems may prove disconcerting to Catholic educators here.

The fact that this scholarly volume is the work of two members of the laity should be an inspiration to administrators of Catholic colleges who desire to encourage educational leadership among our young people of the Philippines.

SISTER MARY CARITAS

## THE MIND FOR THE MULTITUDE

**PERSONALITY AND MENTAL HEALTH.** By James E. Royce, S.J. The Bruce Publishing Company, Milwaukee. 1955. Pp. xiv-352. \$3.50.

The task of Catholic specialists during the past years has been to sift the true from the false in hundreds of theories respecting mental health, then to systematize into a science, organized and in harmony with Christian philosophy and the Catholic Faith, the enormous sum of data resulting from research and observation.

But exact knowledge about mental health must not remain something esoteric, the private preserve of a small circle of specialists. Before we can hope for any success in slowing down the alarmingly rapid increase of mental disturbance, the general public must be informed. Yet the spread of correct information about mental health is very difficult, chiefly because of the vast confusion of ideas generally held by the man in the street.

It is in this sense especially that Father Royce's book is a valuable contribution: for he has succeeded in presenting in 300 readable pages all the necessary information, organized according to a simple, logical plan. The introduction acquaints the reader with the nature and gravity of the problems; the second part, "The Structure of Personality," presents the basic notions of individual psychology; the third part, "The Development of Personality," explains the principal problems of evolutive psychology; the fourth part, "The Management of Personality," treats of dynamic psychology and the mechanisms of adjustment and maladjustment; finally, the last part, "The Disorders of Personality," gives the symptoms, origins, prevention and treatment of mental disturbances.

This book has all the requisites necessary to present adequate information about mental health to the general public. And though it would not be sufficient for specialized knowledge, even the specialist will find here the clear formulation and organization of many notions he has already acquired from reading the voluminous literature and from his personal contact with the problems of persons emotionally disturbed.

The book is easy and pleasant reading. It avoids the technical jargon of the specialists as much as possible. The author