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Education at Berkeley: The Muscatine Report: [Review of Education at Berkeley: Report of the Select Committee on Education. (Berkeley: University of California, 1966)]

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methods of presentation, history has been left behind in stagnant backwaters.

One aspect of the conservatism of history teachers is the fact that in most schools pupils are still anchored to the single textbook, which is frequently regarded as authoritative, not only by pupils but by their teachers and examiners.

It is in view of this lavish devotion to the one textbook, that the publication of the Clarendon series of biographies by Oxford University Press is to be welcomed. The provision of these accounts of the lives of the makers of history, written by scholars and teachers of experience, will help to involve pupils in the use of a variety of books for information and enjoyment. These biographies, which contain source material in the text, will give young readers a clear picture of the age and encourage them to read further.

A glance at the titles of this series — Charles Darwin, Alfred the Great, John Wesley, Isaac Newton, Napoleon, Queen Victoria, and Gandhi — shows how the scope of history embraces not only the great political leaders of the centuries, but the great thinkers in realms of science.

The biographies are not so massive as to discourage young readers, and yet not so slight as to be found trivial or superficial by the more experienced. The format of the books is pleasing and the style attractive. They will give the reader a taste for literary work in history, indeed this series supplies the need for history readers — not simply textbooks.

These biographies, by the inclusion of fascinating personal details of great lives, will help to *humanize* history.

A.N.B.

EDUCATION AT BERKELEY — 'THE MUSCATINE REPORT'

University of California Press 1968.

In March, 1965, a resolution was adopted in the Senate at Berkeley proposing a commission of inquiry into the state of education at the university, the object being the 'revitalization of educational aims and practices.' The commission was duly appointed with Charles Muscatine as chairman.

After lengthy investigations during which hundreds of members of the various faculties were interviewed and a survey, based on the analysis of a questionnaire submitted to over 2000 students, conducted, the report was issued in 1966.

Certain sections of this report should be compulsory reading for all engaged in higher education in South Africa; although circumstances in this country are in many respects quite different from conditions on campuses in the United States, there are suggestions in the report which could do much to revitalize university education in South Africa.

During the widespread unrest among students in America, especially at Berkeley, many students openly questioned the adequacy of universities as educational institutions. Although many university authorities in South Africa would question the validity of student opinion on these matters, and suggest that instead of paying atention to the complaints of discontented students, who, it is claimed, are only a vocal minority, the needs of the majority of students should be considered, the commission at Berkeley made every effort to ascertain student opinion on all matters concerning the kind of education offered on the campus. The Committee believed that the feedback of student opinion can contribute not only to the improvement of specific courses but also to the assessment and planning of educational programmes. As the Committee expressed it:

> 'The students bring to discussion of educational policy and assessment both a fresh viewpoint and an acute involvement in such discussions. By the time a student has graduated, he is often qualified to evaluate certain aspects of the curriculum better than many of the professors who teach in it. He is in a good position to recognize omissions and redundancies in curriculum.' p.60.

Student ratings were used to recognize distinction in teaching. In appraising their own teaching most lecturers have little communication with students. This is especially true of large lecture groups. Student ratings, like all ratings, are subject to bias and unreliability and cannot always be taken at face value, nevertheless it would appear absurd to deny that such expression of student opinion is a highly relevant factor to be taken into account by a teacher in governing his conduct of a course. It is natural that many lecturers should tend to avoid the possibly traumatic outcome of the collection of student ratings, nevertheless, it is necessary for the maintenance of high quality teaching at college and university level.

The Committee also pointed out that students may also be more strongly motivated in their studies if they sense that lecturers are interested in them as individuals — not just an amorphous student body.

> 'We must try to build bridges across that gulf between generations that separate students from their teachers and their own past . . . professors may themselves re-discover the youthful spirit.' p.36.

The Committee in its analysis of the anatomy of student discontent has some interesting observations on drop-outs and rebels.

> 'Dissatisfaction is most prominent among the nonconformist students who are typically inclined towards the humanities and social sciences . . . The dropout is the extreme case of

the student whose education has been unsuccessful . . . The students who drop out with passing grades . . . offer the most direct challenge to our educational system, since they are young men and women who have demonstrated the capacity to continue at university and choose voluntarily not to do so. Their percentage in the total number of dropouts increases with each year of college.'

The section of the Muscatine Report on the improvement of university and college teaching has a message for institutions of higher learning in South Africa. In commenting on the lecture method, Dr. Harold Taylor stated the case for the student as his own teacher in the following letter:

'There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the lecture as a mode of communication, provided it is given to those who want to hear it by people who have something fresh and original to say on a subject of interest to the listener. But it has to be used sparingly and for particular reasons. It should be a means of starting up some self-generating thought in the student, to start him thinking, imagining and questioning. . . . Discussion and independent inquiry are the natural and most effective ways to learn . . . The real problem is to teach students how to teach each other, from books, from experience, from their teachers, from anything . . .'

The universities, it is claimed, ignore the potential for undergraduate instruction which lies not only in the graduate student-body, but among the undergraduates themselves. The *teaching* programme should be turned around and considered a *learning* programme by the students with such help as lecturing staff and other students are able to give. The use of students as teaching assistants is also justified for other reasons: it may provide the necessary financial support which some students need, it is one of the best ways of training college teachers, and above all it is an excellent means for educating the student-teacher himself.

'To teach your speciality to younger students provides excellent occasion for clarifying your own ideas, plugging gaps in your knowledge, re-examining the basuc assumptions and the relevance of your discipline.'

Smaller classes have to be encouraged, and in these seminars or tutorials, the kind of teaching to be encouraged should be problem-orientated. The need for formal lecturing could be reduced in many of our college courses if the student's "course load" were reduced (but not the amount of work he has to do), that is, if the number of subjects was restricted so that more 'in-depth' study could be undertaken. Research projects, especially field work, needs to be encouraged at student level.

The Committee, in discussing the functions of the professional staff at universities and colleges, emphasizes the need to encourage more research. Teaching and research are not mutually exclusive.

"Teaching and research can be made to nourish each other better. Our ideal here is a kind of teaching suffused with the excitement and authority of research, and a kind of research responsive to the humane requirements of teaching. Our ideal professor is like Chaucer's clerk: 'gladly wolde he lerne, and gladly teche.' " p.6.

The dichotomy between teaching and research is unnecessary. The classroom is but one medium for teaching and its efficacy is debatable. Research, whether in a laboratory or in the field, is another medium for teaching.

A.N.B.

'Tales From The Game Reserve — Reading For Fun' written by, and obtainable from:—

Mrs. K. F Argyle,
'Blue Acres',
Chester Road,
Bryanston, Transvaal.
Telephone enquiries:— 706-2320.
Price R1.50 net.

Whilst this book is designed to cater for 'young children who are good readers and older children who are not able to read at their age level and are having remedial tuition', I consider that it would be especially useful for remedial teachers coping with the latter type of child. I would particularly recommend it as a supplementary reader.

A developmental reading primer, with the unusual title of 'Buck up' written by,, and obtainable from:

Mr. P. T. Pienaar,
P.O. Box 18,
Grahamstown,

at the modest cost of 85 cents.

The reader is, in fact, a collection of short passages, and the author states that 'the passages have a readability level of 9.0 to 10.0, probably the lowest level at which it is possible to write stories which will support the sort of searching comprehension and vocabulary extension questions, which are a feature of any sound developmental reading programme.' The stories have an interest level of 9.0 to 13.0, and appeal to both boys and girls in that age range. However (the author goes on to state), from our experience in pilot classes in which the programme has been tried, the stories seem to have most appeal for children whose first language is English in Standards 3 and 4.'

This book is designed for teachers who wish to improve and extend both vocabulary and comprehension. I would recommend every teacher of English at the Senior Primary level to use this book for reference and class use.