

## EDUCATION, VALUES and SOCIETY

"... an outstandingly good book ... it is the one book apart from the Bible and Shakespeare that anyone connected with education should take with them on a desert island."

John Pratt, Editor, *Higher Education Review*.

". . . Open it at random and find your educational bluff called ... Find, if you can, any legitimate alternative to the individualising of education which emerges as the overriding need of students, teachers and society..."

Elizabeth Adams, Past President, *National Association of Inspectors and Educational Advisers*.

The book has two main objectives which, because they are so interrelated, are pursued in an epicyclic rather than a linear fashion.

The first is to provide the most thorough evaluation of our educational system that has ever been attempted. In pursuit of this objective, Mr. Raven presents data which enables him to clarify the goals of education and assess the adequacy with which they are being attained. He is not content to let the matter rest with studies of pupils who are still in the school system, but traces the consequences of different types of education for the individuals concerned and the society in which they live.

The second, related, objective is to advance understanding of the psychological nature of the competencies to be fostered in education, the way in which they are to be fostered, and the way in which their attainment is to be evaluated.

Particular attention is paid to the so-called 'non-cognitive' or 'character-development' goals of education. These goals lie at the heart of most 'modern' developments in education (like project work and pupil centred learning) and they were at the forefront of the minds of the great educationalists of the past. Yet they have frequently proved to be serious stumbling blocks for the parents, teachers, educationalists, examiners, evaluators and researchers who have taken them up.

The data base for the book is impeccable. Over 35,000 people have been involved in the studies carried out by Mr. Raven and his colleagues. These studies have included surveys of teachers', pupils', parents' and ex-pupils' perceptions of the goals of education and the problems which prevent the educational system achieving its objectives more effectively, surveys of children's and adults' perceptions of the institutional structures of society (family, workplace, and social and political structures) and their own role in relation to those structures, surveys of general population attitudes and motivational dispositions and the part played by education in fostering these qualities, surveys of the attitudes of businessmen, employees, and employers, and action-research programmes, carried out with teachers, pupils, and businessmen, in order to help members of each of these groups to clarify their life goals and values and thereafter pursue them more effectively.

But research data is not the only source which is drawn on as a basis for the insights presented in the book. Selected aspects of the relevant literature are also reviewed and understandings which have emerged from Mr. Raven's participation in two educational policy committees, his work with a team of teachers and head-masters involved in curriculum development, and his seminars with experienced community development officers and educationalists, are all shared with the reader.

This book will not only be of interest to *educational* researchers, evaluators, curriculum-developers, policy-makers, administrators, examiners, teachers, and parents. Because of the wealth of data it contains on the attitudes, perceptions, motivations, and role expectations of the population, it will be of interest to all concerned with civics and citizenship, economic and social development, and Irish studies. The material on the social and personal benefits of education will be of interest to anyone concerned with the development and utilization of human resources and human capital. As such, the book will be of value to anyone concerned with staff development and utilization in the workplace as well as to economists. The book is of the greatest importance to politicians in both central and local government who are anxious to base educational policy on a firmer foundation.

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