

Tools for Learning

READING FOR TEACHERS

LOIS COFFEY MOSSMAN

In his autobiography called *Connecticut Yankee*, a former dean of Yale Graduate School and likewise a former governor of Connecticut, Wilbur L. Cross, tells how he was asked by a group of twenty-five women to lay out a course to guide their reading.

Today in this strenuous wartime when one knows not how he can do the things that are needing to be done, it seems almost amusing to a busy person to think that these women had to ask someone how to spend their time in reading. And yet it is a matter of relative importance how we shall spend the time we have for reading.

How shall teachers apportion their time for reading? What shall be their purpose in taking time to read? The demands upon them are heavy. Never has there been a time when teachers have had so much responsibility. The way they handled rationing problems is but an index of their growing responsibility in the community.

We talk about teachers' reading. One asks where the time can be found for a

planned program of reading if one does all the things expected of a teacher today. Should there be a plan of concerted effort in reading or should reading be incidental, reading when there are a few free moments, reading whatever fancy dictates? Is it important that a teacher read?

Listing some of the things reading may do for the teacher, let us note if they are sufficient to make a reading program desirable.

1. The first point that comes to mind is *reading for relaxation*. Reading of humor, fiction, poetry, or any form that is restful to the individual is important.

2. *Reading about current life* is very important to one who would be a helpful member in the community. The daily paper, supplementing the radio, with a weekly review of the news seems indispensable to a competent, active member of a community.

3. *Reading for information* on a subject is essential for intelligent action relative to that subject.

4. *Reading to further one's own growth* is vital to leadership. Unless one is himself growing he cannot stimulate growth in others.

5. *Professional achievement* depends much upon one's reading in the field of his choice. A teacher who never reads in the area of his work will not long remain a true teacher.

6. Going again and again to the

Introducing this month's Tools for Learning is Lois Coffey Mossman, Gladstone, N. J., who talks with us about the benefits which teachers receive from reading and gives suggestions for choosing books and periodicals. Announcements of new publications especially for teachers appear on the pages following Mrs. Mossman's discussion.

sources of his strength, inspiration, and vision is essential to being a true teacher. Reading provides many such sources.

7. *Enjoyment of life in the true sense of living abundantly* can be greatly furthered by reading.

These imply some of the reasons why teachers should read. They indicate the value of access to daily papers, weekly summaries, magazine articles on vital problems, and books. One needs access to book reviews in such sources as the *Saturday Review of Literature*, the *New York Times Book Reviews*, *School and Society*, *Childhood Education*, *Time Magazine*, and *Educational Leadership*, for there are far more books coming from the press today than one can possibly read.

What we know about the development of the individual into an effective

personality is short of a desirable knowledge, but we do know that there is prominent in each person an element of self-determination which must not be stifled in a free man. This element manifests itself in one way in how he uses his time. What one reads must be what he wants to read. He heeds the opinions of those he respects, but he must decide what he shall think about and reading may have a significant part in his thinking.

In the planning for educational leadership, let there be great care not to confuse true leadership with a method of prescribing courses in reading for teachers. Leadership does not mean authority. Something much finer than authority is needed if one would see the teachers he works with go to books for the help and strength they need and want.

Reading for Teachers

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