

# Tools for Learning

## SCHOOL EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

P. B. JACOBSON

ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT in school buildings is seldom chosen by those who use it. It is usually selected and installed during construction which is before the faculty moves in. During the war it has been very difficult, practically impossible, to purchase equipment. In the immediate future, schools will be choosing much equipment. Since it will be used for relatively long periods of time, it is doubly important that it be chosen carefully.

Equipment may be secured from government excess, from government surplus, or purchased new. At the present time, and in the immediate past, it has been possible for schools to secure excess equipment from government agencies for the cost of crating and transporting. This is to be considered as part of the payment which a nation gratefully makes to the schools for their magnificent job in war training. By and large, much of this excess material has been heavy equipment, which is suitable for school shops. Care must be exercised in selecting this equipment so that everything received is usable. Thoughtful educators have plotted their needs for several years and have made known the amount of excess equipment they can use with profit. They know it is false economy to accept an expensive machine which proves too large for accommodation in the school shop, even though it can be secured for nothing.

Many school systems, particularly the large ones, and some states, have almost entirely refitted their school shops from excess equipment. The work done in Wisconsin by the State Education Association, the High School Principals Association, and the state adminis-

tration makes known the needs of the schools. This program provides a revolving fund, as well as personnel who can locate excess equipment.

The recently organized program of the U. S. Office of Education which provides for the establishment of a state educational agency for surplus properties, with clearance through the U. S. Office of Education, gives promise that even the small schools will secure a fair share of surplus property without a state agency. The large schools which have specialized purchasing officers have been in a position to take advantage of the opportunities. Since the new SPA Regulation #14 provides for discounts of 40 per cent from the fair value of surplus property, there also will be a great opportunity to repair in large part the inadequacy of the school equipment. Certainly only a fraction of the equipment can be secured from surplus property; the rest must be purchased new.

In most schools expansion of the amount of equipment is warranted. Home economics classrooms are in need of unit kitchens to replace out-moded arrangements. Power sewing machines will undoubtedly replace the treadle machines, where they have not already done so. And most schools could use more dinnerware and silver service than they now possess. The shops that have profited much through the surplus equipment are in need of additional equipment in every field—in woodworking, in metal working, and in plastics. In those areas located in industrial centers most school foundries must be totally re-equipped if they are to train boys for foundry work.

Many classrooms are in need of movable seating. In addition, all sorts of concrete materials which can be handled are needed to teach numbers and to make intellectual understanding less abstract. Science classrooms need models of all sorts, as well as

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*The ways and means of acquiring school equipment and supplies are discussed by P. B. Jacobson, superintendent of schools, Davenport, Iowa, in this month's "Tools for Learning." Mr. Jacobson emphasizes the need for equipment which is functional as well as economical.*

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growth tables and cages for animals. A large number of classrooms need to be entirely re-equipped to bring the science laboratories up to date.

The new program on physical fitness and body conditioning will demand much new equipment in the gymnasium. Apparatus, climbing ropes, and many other types will be needed to supplement the program of game skills which have been taught. A great expansion of athletic supplies and equipment will be needed to provide adequate intramural programs for the large percentage who should be encouraged to participate.

In the commercial field most schools lost 25 per cent of their typewriters through the exigencies of war. They have been unable to purchase any for the past five years. Most schools will increase the number of typewriters beyond the number in use before the war. In addition, on the vocational level, comptometers, bookkeeping machines, and other office machines which are in use in the community will of necessity find their way into the commercial classrooms. This equipment is beginning to wear out and must be replaced. Some of this can be done by surplus, and some must be new.

If time and money are to be utilized wisely, the following suggestions can be made for the purchase of equipment. First, there should be an inventory of needs—then adequate budgeting should be provided over a period of years so the needs can be met. Second, it is desirable to centralize the responsibility for purchasing in one person and to keep records of equipment on hand.



*Spring tonic  
for teacher discussions:*

## SOME DO'S AND DON'TS FOR PRIMARY READING

To start an appraisal of reading methods used so far this year and their results in the classroom . . . or to stimulate a spurt ahead for the rest of the semester, you might like to use these Do's and Don'ts by **Lillian Gray**.

1. **Do** set the stage for understanding and enjoying the story to be read. **Don't** be satisfied with the blunt direction to "turn to page 34."
2. **Don't** present new words before the children have meanings to attach to them. **Do** tie up the new words with the meaning they will have in the story.
3. **Do** guide the reading of your basal-reader stories for good interpretation. **Don't** just have the pupils "read orally around the class."
4. **Do** take advantage of all the help you can get in having an effective reading program. **Don't** be bashful about using a reading manual or guidebook for the help it can give you.
5. **Don't** feel that you have to hurry along to the next story. **Do** take time for discussions, for careful skill building, and for correlated activities.

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Free from our Service Department is a copy of *Teaching Trends* with Lillian Gray's complete article (reprinted from *Primary Activities*) including her comments on each of the **Do's** and **Don'ts** above. Ask for *Teaching Trends*, Lillian Gray (A-551-30).

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