

The New—in Review

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ADAPTING TO NEEDS. *Flexibility in the Elementary School* is a report of a two-year cooperative study of common educational problems by the Central New York School Study Council. "Flexibility is one of the continuing problems of elementary education. It was our desire to find more effective ways of meeting this problem in our schools which caused us to undertake this study. By flexibility we mean the provision in elementary schools for individual needs of and differences among children."

Chapter II gives a concise account of how the study was developed, and should prove helpful for those planning to conduct similar studies. The study brings out the need for greater skill in identifying differences among children, for improving planning of school practices, and for improving teacher ability to look critically at his own teaching practices.

Chapter VI is devoted to describing practices which make for flexibility. These are grouped under the headings: (1) practices which develop skills, (2) those which develop knowledge and understanding, (3) those which develop desirable attitudes, and (4) administrative and supervisory practices which aid in such directions. The techniques discussed are not intended as examples to be followed, but are presented merely to give teachers and administrators an idea of some of the ways and means that have been found effective in facilitating the adaptation of the curriculum to the needs of the children.

For information concerning the publication and its cost, write to Central New York School Study Council, 219 Slocum Hall, College Place, Syracuse 10, N. Y.

FREEDOM TO LIVE AND LEARN, by Gertrude Noar, is a book devoted to

the techniques for selecting and developing units of learning in the modern classroom. Too often books on this topic are so involved that the teacher becomes confused rather than enlightened. Noar's book is not one of these. It sets forth in a very practical and matter-of-fact way the philosophy and techniques of experience unit teaching. It brings the discussion of unit teaching down to the classroom level and makes it sound so easy that one wants to give it a try. The author points out that: *The modern democratic classroom is a place in which "busy work," following of idle whims, or purposeless play have no place. Never does the teacher confront children with cold questions such as: "What are you interested in?" "What do you want to learn?" or "What shall we do today?" At no time does the teacher abdicate or give up her role as guide, leader, director, or initiator of thought, of activities, or plans.*

How the teacher probes for interests, stimulates thinking, and stimulates experiences are discussed in some detail. Topics such as: Choosing a Unit, Teachers and Pupils Plan Together, Class Organization, and Evaluation are covered in an interesting manner. A section of the volume is devoted to examples of units and culminating activities.

This book should be of great help to teachers who are trying to reorganize their classroom procedures and practices. Franklin Publishing and Supply Company, Philadelphia.

THE CONSTITUTION. *You and the Constitution of the United States*, by Paul Witty and Julilly Kohler, is an interesting departure from the usual book on this subject. Too often this topic is considered by youngsters to be rather dry and

academic. The authors have used illustrations and cartoons cleverly to make this volume attractive for children eleven years old and over; and adults can give it more than a casual glance with profit.

The first section, "What America Means to Me," is based on an essay by Graham Finney, a high school senior. The second phase deals with "The Making of the Constitution." A valuable addition to any child's or classroom library—Childrens Press Inc., Chicago. Price \$1.13.

NEW RECORDS. *Folk Music of the United States and Latin America*, published by the Division of Music of the Library of Congress, lists 107 records and 341 titles of American folk songs. These records were made in the field and present folk singers in their native environment. Not only would these records be of value to music teachers, but social studies people should find many of them helpful in giving youngsters a better understanding of the people of Latin America.

All of the records listed are sold only by the Library of Congress. Copies of the combined catalog of these phonograph records are obtainable from The Recordings Laboratory, Division of Music, The Library of Congress, Washington 25, D. C.—price, 10 cents.

1947 **VISUAL REVIEW**, published by the Society for Visual Education, Inc., presents visual trends as reported by some of the leaders in the field. Trends in the use of visual aids in biology, English, geography, history, teacher training, and religion are discussed. One section deals with programs in the development of audio-visual aids in the various parts of the country. This publication is free. Write to the Society for Visual Education, 100 East Ohio Street, Chicago 11.

SOCIAL STUDIES FILM. Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, Inc. announces a new film, *Story of Christopher Columbus*. "The film re-enacts the dramatic events leading to the discovery of America by Columbus, whose faith in a dream remained unshaken despite the many obstacles placed in his path. Columbus' life is portrayed from boyhood to the time when he lands on the tiny island of San Salvador on October 12, 1492." Through the medium of the film children have an opportunity to visualize the problems which Columbus encountered in his discovery of the new world. As the film runs only seventeen minutes, only the highlights of his life can be pictured.

This film should prove a valuable aid to teachers handling units dealing with this period. Acting, staging, and sound are good. For information on its availability, write to your nearest film rental library or to Encyclopaedia Britannica Films, Inc., Wilmette, Ill.

GROUP DYNAMICS. Today we hear more and more of the skills and techniques required for group leadership and participation. Anyone connected with education realizes how necessary it is to be able to work in committees or to lead a conference. *Two Lessons of Group Dynamics* is a pamphlet which should interest all administrators and teachers. Within the ten pages of this leaflet are many helpful suggestions for any group leader.

Anyone concerned with planning and conducting an educational conference will find many helpful ideas in the section entitled, "When a Schoolman Runs a Conference." This pamphlet may be secured from Educator's Washington Dispatch, Deep River, Conn. Single copies, 25 cents—special discounts on quantities.

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