

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Ruth Streitz

►Lightfoot, Georgia Frances. *Personality Characteristics of Bright and Dull Children*. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University 1951. 136 p.

The title will intrigue the teacher and the principal who have tried to deal with bright or dull children in various school situations but it is to the research investigator that this book will have special significance. This is indeed a report of research conducted by one who wished to secure information in answer to the question, "Do personality differences exist between bright and dull children?"

Too often generalizations have been made in the past when evidence was secured from a few isolated cases. Dr. Lightfoot did not have many cases—only one hundred and four—but the care with which the research was conducted makes the study more valuable than the sheer weight of numbers might seem to indicate. One weakness in the study is the small number of judges (two) "who were employed to consider all the data and to render judgments in regard to each variable, by each technique, for every child."

Personality Differences Exist

The conclusions of the study state that there are significant personality differences between bright and dull children as measured by the following six techniques: The "Minnesota Home Status Index," a home and neighborhood questionnaire, the "Maller Personality Sketches," a Rating Scale, a

Projective Technique consisting of motion picture excerpts, and finally a Composite Technique whereby all available data on each child were collected.

The Pre-Adolescent—A Neglected Group

One of the very real contributions of the study is that it is concerned with a little understood group, namely the pre-adolescent. However, on the basis of the investigation, Dr. Lightfoot concludes "that special classes may be the best answer to the question of a better educational process for intellectually exceptional children," a point of view held by leading psychologists and educators in the early twenties but which disappeared with increased awareness of education as a social process. To revive the practice of bright children being isolated from their social peers is indeed questionable. If schools are to approximate the life of the community of which they are a part heterogeneous grouping rather than homogeneous grouping should be the plan of organization with the exception of the definitely subnormal who are in reality institutional cases.—*Ruth Streitz*, Ohio State University, Columbus.

►Strickland, Ruth G. *The Language Arts in the Elementary School*. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1951. \$3.75.

In this effectively written book on the developmental aspects of language, the author has combined much knowledge of the physical, mental and emotional growth of children with ways in which

language serves to encourage and promote living and learning. Particular emphasis is placed upon actual, concrete experiences as a basis for language expansion and facility on the part of children.

Significant attention is given to the association of language development and the other factors of growth which are so frequently neglected even by teachers whose professional education has been carefully rooted in the facts of human growth as they are known today. Specifically the author discusses the variations in linguistic aptitude which individual children exhibit. She compares such factors as economic status, family size, sex differences, and intelligence with the development of language and shows the reader ways in which the school can help the child to overcome deficiencies in language which exist because of these factors.

Relationship Between Language Facility and Mental Growth

Of particular value for teachers is the section on the relationship between language facility and increasing mental growth. Here again experience as a basis for effective language development is stressed. Language is a part of social behavior and, as such, must be carried on in a permissive atmosphere where language activities meet realistic needs of children. Logical thinking and powers of reasoning begin to develop during the early years of the elementary school when children should be gaining increasing ease in the use of the lan-

guage by which cause-and-effect thinking is made possible. The author treats these ideas with clarity and understanding and in such a way that thoughtful elementary school teachers cannot fail to gain insight from the discussion.

Individual Differences in Language Development

The book includes a very helpful section which is entitled, "Individual Differences," but which goes beyond the individual differences which are apparent among all normal children to the child who is atypical in terms of language activity. This section deals in some detail with the many types of language deviation with which the teacher of young children may expect to come in contact. The author cautions the reader against the danger of attempting to do more than he is capable of doing in the treatment of language deviants but emphasizes the fact that all teachers must be sufficiently well-equipped in language development and child growth to detect language problems where they exist.

The author has done excellent work in bringing together existing knowledge in the field of language and has presented it in a form which will be helpful and valuable for the classroom teacher. The format of the book is unusually attractive while the bibliographical entries are complete and helpful to the reader who wishes to discover additional information.—*James C. Mac-Campbell*, Ohio State University, Columbus.

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