

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Ruth Streitz

► Anderson, Irving H., and Dearborn, Walter F. *The Psychology of Teaching Reading*. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952. 382 p.

While the modern school is, of course, more than a "reading school," the problem of teaching children to read still rests squarely on the shoulders of teachers and administrators. The American public expects its children and youth to learn how to read effectively and fluently. Therefore, school people continue to search out increasingly efficient and effectual ways to guide children into and through experiences in unlocking the printed page.

Among the many books written on how to teach reading, *The Psychology of Teaching Reading* occupies a unique place. Anderson and Dearborn have reviewed and digested available evidence from research on their subject and have summarized the psychological bases upon which a modern program in teaching reading can be developed. Beginning with the concept of "growing into reading," these authors go on to present significant findings concerning reading as learned behavior. They discuss, specifically, reading readiness, eye movements, silent and oral reading, word perception, methods, and evaluation of achievement. Such an approach gives their presentation its uniqueness and makes their book a contribution on the teaching of reading, about which too many idle words are annually printed.

Certain chapters seem particularly well conceived. "Reading as Growth"

is rooted significantly in the organismic hypothesis concerning child development. "The Concept of Reading Readiness" states particularly well the evidence concerning "forcing," "pacing" and "delaying" as educational practices. In "The Psychology of Word Perception" the authors have skillfully demonstrated in their own writing what problems children face in getting cues for perceiving words. In "The Psychology of Methods of Teaching Reading" Anderson and Dearborn analyze and appraise various teaching methods—alphabet, phonetic, word, phrase, sentence and paragraph—in as succinct and fair a manner as this writer has ever read.

What weaknesses this book may have are its possible omissions. For example, there is no treatment of readability, or the effects of format. There is less consideration of experience-chart reading than one might desire. Studies of children's interests in content of reading matter might have been given some consideration. Despite any such omissions, however, this reviewer feels well-paid for his investment of time and energy in reading from cover to cover.

Unlike so many volumes on education, *The Psychology of Teaching Reading* actually is written with considerable informality and charm. The style of writing in the various chapters matches well the ideas being discussed. The authors' discriminative use of illustrations and quotations further enhances the effectiveness of their presentation of information and ideas. Transitions from chapter to chapter are neatly han-

dled. Surely this book will attract a wide and appreciative audience among educational workers, who may want to use parts of it with parents too.—*Leland B. Jacobs*, associate professor of education, Ohio State University, Columbus.

► French, Florence Felton; Levenson, William B.; and Rockwell, Vera Cober. *Radio English*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1952. 368 p.

This volume is essentially a textbook directed primarily to the senior-high-school student and his teacher. It is a carefully written discussion of the use of radio and television in the classroom with emphasis on written and spoken English. Throughout the book runs the thread of interest and practicality which anything so much a part of the lives of boys and girls as radio and television always holds for them. In the foreword the attention of the teacher is drawn to the fact that "all the fundamentals of English suddenly become more than lessons for students; they become compulsions." *Radio English* includes all the details of radio work in speech and English from the writer and speaker for radio to the more mechanical phases of its production in the secondary-school program. Sections are followed by lists of questions called "activities." These lists, in the opinion of this reviewer, detract from the book and the effectiveness of the program it seeks to promote. The skillful and creative teacher will, of course, have no need for these exercises and it is hoped that only creative teachers will be charged with the fascinating and vital task of helping youngsters learn and participate in the mysteries of radio. The last two chapters of the book are devoted to television in which careful attention is given to the similarities and differences in the production of radio and television.

The book is throughout carefully and attractively written and will be a helpful tool to the teacher of English and speech who vitalizes his program by the utilization of radio and television in the regular work of the class. Occasionally statements are made in the text which might have been strengthened by fuller documentation. The book, however, should be a part of the collection of every high-school library as well as a part of the equipment of the teacher of English.—*James C. MacCampbell*, Public Schools, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

► Froehlich, Clifford P., and Darley, John G. *Studying Students*. Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1952. 411 p.

This very fine book in its field is more nearly a handbook for teachers and guidance counselors than a book on the theory and principles of child

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study. It is carefully and concisely written and is easily read and useful to the teacher and counselor already burdened by too much detail. It is outstanding in its simplification of somewhat complicated statistical material. Such material, in many similar books, is so involved as to be somewhat less than useful to a classroom teacher who has not specialized in statistical procedure. Chapters II and III are particularly valuable in this vein.

Chapter II presents statistical methods for analyzing and summarizing the results of a single test or measuring instrument, while Chapter III presents those methods for analyzing groups of scores. In this way the book throughout carefully helps the classroom teacher to become more adept at making useful to himself and to students the data he collects on them day by day and month by month. School people are long past the period when data were collected for merely the sake of the data. In the good modern school these data are only useful insofar as they provide for better learning in the classroom and better adjustment of the boy or girl to his life at the present and in the future, both in and out of school.

Wide Range of Topics

Other topics treated in the book are techniques of observations, the interview for the gathering of information, self-reporting documents such as the student record form, the student autobiography, and the identification of interests and special aptitudes. Other chapters are devoted to guidance and scholastic testing, and to sociometric techniques involving groups of students. Cumulative records and diagnostic methods are considered as well. In some ways the book seems poorly organized in that chapters relating to one another are often widely separated.

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For example, the final chapter in the book, entitled "Identifying Student Problems," might better have appeared very early in the book, in the opinion of this reviewer. Although some effort was made by the authors to present summary material in this chapter, much of the information given here might better have been used in an introductory way. This is a minor criticism but better organization of chapters might have made more helpful this already useful book.

Altogether the book provides an exceedingly worth-while tool for the teacher, counselor or supervisor who holds the philosophy of making statistical material work for the good of the student and the increased knowledge of his teacher. It should have a wide audience.—*James C. MacCampbell*, Public Schools, Cleveland Heights, Ohio.

► Troelstrup, Arch W. *Consumer Problems*. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1952, 458 p.

This book is written especially for young people of college age. However, many of the later chapters will prove helpful to older persons who have been meeting their financial problems with desperation rather than intelligence.

From the beginning the author leaves no doubt that he believes in an "intelligent free enterprise system functioning in a democratic society." (p. 271) Every chapter gives the reader concrete methods of building his personal and family finances around this tenet of American life.

The outline for the book was drawn from interviews, surveys, individual conferences and class discussions with many students and married couples about their consumer problems. Be-

cause of this close contact with reality the author is able to treat intelligently the most pressing financial problems of the times without writing superficially about them.

Psychological Problems

The reader soon realizes that the author is not merely giving him a course on good buying and saving practices. Here is something different. Money is viewed in relation to the psychological and emotional problems which inevitably arise with its use.

In the chapter, "Democracy in Home Management," for example, many paragraphs are devoted to establishing a proper respect and relationship among the members of the family. Through child psychology the reader is helped to see the role a child should play in the family. From this foundation grows the discussion of the universal disagree-

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ments that inevitably arise between parents and children about money.

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At the close of each chapter are questions included for discussion, and activity problems which if followed through will provide practical experience in handling finances as well as an understanding of the psychological problems involved in the use of money.

The book is written in a clear, simple manner. It has an authoritative tone because it is an outgrowth of many years of research and experimental study. The problems with which it deals are everybody's problems. The solution of the problems is adaptable to every family, for the author deals not only with facts, but with the basic principles of good living. — *Elsie C. Bechtel*, Public Schools, Canton, Ohio.



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