

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Paul M. Halverson
Contributors: Vincent J. Glennon
William H. Burton
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Language Arts for Today's Children.
The Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English. New York: Appleton - Century - Crofts, Inc., 1954.

This book, the second in a series of five by the Commission, focuses on the development of language experiences for children in the elementary and junior high school. The other three forthcoming volumes will deal with the secondary school program in the English language arts, with the teaching of college English, and with the preparation of teachers of the English language arts.

The present volume begins with a straightforward analysis of children's language needs in our society, and of the principles of child development which pertain to the language arts program. Out of this analysis grows the continuity which is needed in the language program.

Part II develops the four major strands of listening, speaking, reading and writing. The theoretical considerations are richly supplemented with examples of teaching materials and practices, helpful to teachers and supervisors alike. Part III goes beyond isolated methods into examples of integrated programs of action at the early childhood, upper elementary, and early adolescent levels.

For members of ASCD, Part IV may be of the greatest interest. Here are treated the problems of building and appraising a program of language arts. Factors which facilitate a good program, the importance of cooperation between the school and home in promoting language growth, and creative techniques in evaluation are the major emphases of this section.

In the opinion of this reviewer, the National Council of Teachers of English has scored a hit again in providing teachers and supervisors with a readable, practical book on teaching. It is a sound book in respect to its social and psychological foundations, and beyond that, translates theory and research into clear, realistic classroom practices with live boys and girls.

—Reviewed by PAUL M. HALVERSON, School of Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

Approaches to An Understanding of World Affairs. Howard R. Anderson, Editor. 25th Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies. Menasha, Wisconsin: George Banta Publishing Company, 1954.

This particularly timely volume defines world affairs in part as "the relations of nations and people, the tensions which tend to keep them apart, the factors which make cooperation

desirable, and the practical efforts being made to further cooperation among nations and peoples." Part I deals with the philosophical and psychological factors, and the economic realities producing tension.

Part II draws from history, geography and anthropology, among other fields, to give pictures of eleven countries or areas crucial in world affairs.

Part III gives suggestions for teaching and understanding of world affairs at various grade levels. Finally, the book concludes with some recommendations for developing world-minded teachers. Of particular interest is a list of criteria for assessing the "world-mindedness" of teachers.

"The world-minded teacher is on his way to becoming:

"An integrated individual, skilled in the art and science of human relations, and conscious of the wide variety of behavior patterns in the world to which he may have to adjust.

"Rooted in his own family, country and culture, but able to identify himself with the peoples of other countries and cultures.

"Informed about the contemporary world scene and its historical background, and concerned about improving the conditions of people everywhere.

"Convinced that international cooperation is desirable and possible, and that he can help to promote such cooperation.

"An intelligent participant in efforts to improve his own community and nation, mindful of their relationships to the world community.

"Clear in his own mind as to the goals of education for international understanding, conversant with methods and resources for such programs, and able to help create world-minded children and youth.

"Buttressed by a dynamic faith or philosophy of life whose basic tenets can be universalized."

This is a book which should be of help, not alone to social studies teachers, but to all people of good will, interested in the facts which underlie some of our international dilemmas and in the prospects of peace and understanding in the world.

—Reviewed by PAUL M. HALVERSON, *School of Education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.*

Guiding Arithmetic Learning. By *John R. Clark and Laura K. Eads.* New York: World Book Company, 1954, 280 p.

In the title of their book on the teaching and learning of arithmetic, Dr. Clark and Dr. Eads have captured the emerging concept of the role of the arithmetic teacher—that of "guiding the learning of children: by giving them opportunities to question, to explore, to experiment, to use ingenuity, to think things through, to try various ways of doing things." The authors reject the earlier (but still widely practiced) concept of the role of the teacher as one in which he "taught by telling, showing how, giving assignments, hearing lessons, and checking"; and in which the role of the learners was that of "memorizing, citing, and reciting, and performing exactly as they were told or shown to do." Further, the authors have written from the defensible point of view that the modern arithmetic program can be learned with greatest facility when it is "not taught in a haphazard fashion . . . In other words, social experiences do not determine sequences for arithmetic

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learning; *arithmetic sequences determine those aspects of an experience that will be emphasized.*"

To this reviewer one of the most significant contributions of the book is the detailed spelling out of the thought processes of children as they reorganize their learning from one level of maturity (or immaturity) to a higher level of maturity. These analyses will give the teacher an insight into the learning of arithmetic as a developmental process and will suggest to him the need for adjusting his teaching to the readiness (maturity) of the learner and the pacing of his teaching to the ability of the child to learn.

In what is a successful attempt to write for the classroom teacher and the college student, and to provide thorough treatments of the topics discussed, while at the same time keeping the

size of the book within predetermined limits, the authors have not discussed some topics which would have been of particular interest to the advanced student. Extended discussions of such topics as patterns of curriculum organization in the elementary school and the role of arithmetic within each; of criteria for determining which meanings should be taught; of the place of arithmetic within units and of units in arithmetic; of the importance of learning *through* arithmetic as well as learning *in* arithmetic; of the arguments for and against the teaching of certain topics such as the one-rule or the two-rule method of dividing by a two-digit divisor; and the citation of research studies throughout the volume—all would have made the book of particular value to the graduate student.

A few days ago an experienced teach-

er passed along to this reviewer this comment of a fourth-grade child's feelings about arithmetic. "You know, Miss Wilson, the harder the arithmetic gets, the easier it gets." A thorough knowledge of the ideas developed in *Guiding Arithmetic Learning* would help teachers guide learning in such a way that most children would feel the same way about arithmetic.

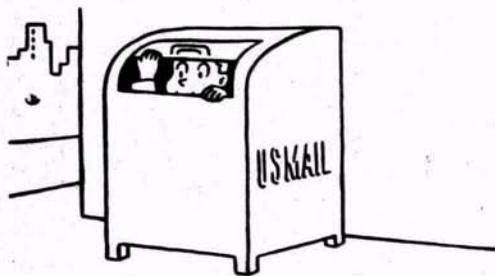
—Reviewed by VINCENT J. GLENNON, professor of education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

Frontiers of Elementary Education I. Vincent J. Glennon (editor). Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1954. 120 plus vi p.

The proceedings of the First Annual Conference on Elementary Education presented jointly by the faculty in Elementary Education and the Division of the Summer Sessions at Syracuse University should bring considerable pleasure and stimulus to elementary school workers. Elementary education has only recently become a concern of advanced graduate study, a development too long delayed. The conference at Syracuse grew out of summer session discussions of problems in elementary education. The report is the first of what we may expect to be a continuing series.

The keynote is admirably presented by the director of the conference, Vincent J. Glennon. Its tone is indicated by the following phrases chosen at random:

"The American elementary school program has not been the same in any two succeeding generations in the more than three hundred years of its history; nor has it been uniform throughout the nation or throughout any given state in any



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“ . . . general agreement . . . that today's American elementary school is superior to the schools of yesteryear . . . also agreement that the school is in need of continued improvement; . . . school is not nearly as good as we know how to make it . . . this first series of annual reports . . . scholars of different orientations and perspectives . . . bring their thoughts to broad general problems of elementary education. Other succeeding reports will treat different aspects.”

The only negative criticism, a very minor one, refers to the organization of the several chapters, each of which is a separate lecture by a specialist in a given area. The order of appearance of the articles is the order of original presentation. An organization with related lectures grouped would be an improvement in future reports. For instance there are two general treatments of basic issues in education with special reference to elementary education, “Can America Lose Her Free Public Schools?” by Virgil M. Rogers; and “The Future of Progressive Education” by John T. Wahlquist. The two, particularly the first one set the general tone and direction of the conference and might have been placed together. Each is a distinctly helpful analysis of historical developments and interpretations. Some readers will wish the treatments abbreviated, but others will like the detailed spelling out of some important issues.

The second four excellent treatments dealing with elementary education as an area might have been placed together. “The Elementary School of Tomorrow” by Marion Nesbitt of the justly famous Maury School of Richmond, Virginia, gives an understandable, straightforward outline of the important aspects of a school on the march. The paper by William E. Young might well have come next. “The Dynamics of the Elementary School Program” deals in forward looking fashion with group process, participation, leadership and the like. “The Importance of Good Teaching Methods” by William H. Kilpatrick carries the thinking closer to the firing line with his familiar plea for the best in methods, prefaced by a brief historical orientation. A grouping such as this would have closed naturally with Mr. Nicholas Hans’ “Frontiers of Elementary Education in Europe.”

The next grouping might have included the four specialized statements: “Identifying and Helping Children with Language Disabilities,” by Dorothea McCarthy; two by Helen M. Robinson, “Emotional Problems and Reading Disability” and “Visual Problems Related to Reading”; and “Frontiers of Industrial Arts in Elementary Education.” The reviewer took special pleasure in reading the last named chapter, recognizing in it parts of a term paper done by Professor Hammond in the reviewer's seminar. The two by Miss Robinson are fully up to her usual standard. Miss McCarthy's paper is, like the others, a scholarly discussion of a specific problem.

The final grouping would include a different type of specialized paper:

"Recent Trends in Education of Children with Retarded Intelligence," by G. Orville Johnson; "New Frontiers in Education of the Young Blind Child," by Georgie Lee Abel; and "Guidance Foci in Elementary Schools," by Claude W. Grant. The last one might also be placed in the second grouping above. The three papers on narrowly specialized areas live up to the rest of the volume in being direct and specific, helpful to the regular teacher as well as the specialist.

Most of the papers include good bibliographies.

The university and the faculty in Elementary Education may take real pride in these published proceedings. An excellent example has been set for succeeding participants.

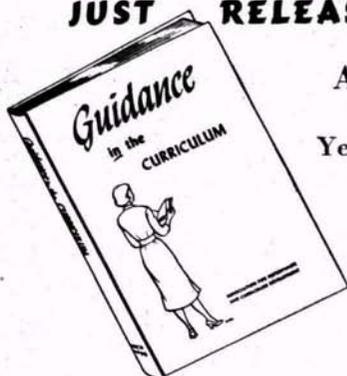
—Reviewed by WILLIAM H. BURTON, *Harvard Graduate School of Education, (Visiting Professor, University of Oregon School of Education 1954-55).*

Arithmetic and Curriculum Organization. By Vincent J. Glennon, with Catherine Stack and Students. No. 3 in a Series of Monographs on the Teaching of Arithmetic. Syracuse, N. Y.: Bureau of School Service, School of Education, Syracuse University, 1954. 140 p.

This significant monograph opens with a discussion of "Arithmetic and Three Patterns of Curriculum Organization": the Separate Subjects pattern, the Needs-of-the-Individual pattern, and the Child-in-Society pattern. Each is presented in terms of its major characteristics, its basic assumptions, its advantages and its limitations.

The second chapter centers around

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a discussion of "Arithmetic and Unit Teaching" and the unit method of curriculum organization. Special attention is given to the social and mathematical aspects of arithmetic instruction, to the role of a systematic arithmetic program, and to the role of practice—all in relation to unit teaching. This chapter concludes with a suggested outline for the organization of units in arithmetic.

The third chapter completes the introductory phase of the monograph with a discussion of the "Three Theories of Teaching Arithmetic" which originally (1935) were identified and characterized in detail by Brownell: the Drill theory, the Incidental-Learning theory, and the Meaning theory.

Readers familiar with Dr. Glennon's preceding monograph, *Teaching Arithmetic in the Modern School*, will observe two things among others. (a) The second and third chapters of the present volume represent a reorganization of, and slight addition to the same material discussed in a single chapter (II) of the earlier publication. (b) The remaining nine chapters of the present monograph follow the same pattern utilized in the body of the preceding volume, but differ in their central themes.

Each of these remaining nine chapters (IV-XII) is an illustrative unit developed in accordance with the principles and plan discussed earlier by Dr. Glennon. One illustrative unit is given for each of the grade levels from the kindergarten through the eighth grade. Different central themes are used at each grade level: e. g., "Pets Are Fun" (first grade), "Communication" (third grade), etc.

The appendixes to the present monograph include: a unit-outline plan; a list of available films, filmstrips, charts, and manipulative materials; and a bibliography of professional references.

It is felt that *Arithmetic and Curriculum Organization* can be of definite value to all of those interested in improving the quality and effectiveness of arithmetic instruction in the elementary schools. As planned and organized, the illustrative units take adequate cognizance of the important objectives of arithmetic instruction—both the social and the mathematical, with emphasis upon concept development and understanding—in relation to the broader objectives of education in the elementary school.

—Reviewed by J. FRED WEAVER,
School of Education, Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts.



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