

Significant Books in Review

Column Editor: Paul M. Halverson
Contributor: James A. Smith

Children and the Language Arts. By *Virgil E. Herrick and Leland B. Jacobs.* (Editors). New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1955.

The purpose of this book is to aid teachers, administrators and parents as they take responsibility for furthering children's satisfying and successful use of American English. When the language activities of children are guided by significant purposes, the language arts can function more effectively. As teaching methods are made meaningful and lifelike, the child's communicative skills develop best.

Part I of the book deals with the role of language in the elementary school. Because of the complexities of our present society, the most significant purpose of language arts in the elementary schools is to provide for the communication of ideas. Language is a social instrument, and forceful language is important if ideas are to be effectively communicated. The purposes in teaching language arts are related to the social setting in which language occurs, and to the development of each child as an individual. A primary obligation of the teacher is to teach the language processes of democracy which include group discussion and planning, control and effective use of freedom of speech, enrichment of personal and social growth, and development of the necessary language skills for effective daily living.

Part II of the book shows how children's communication skills develop best when teaching methods are meaningful. It reviews the research of the language arts and translates this research into actual school practices through ample use of specific illustrations.

Other chapters deal with children's experiences in speaking, listening, reading, literature, creative writing, spelling, handwriting, vocabulary development, dramatic interpretation and the use of mass media of communication.

The teaching of the language arts has, to a degree, become a science; but the point of view expressed in this section of the book does not allow the reader to forget for one minute that it is also an art, and that it will remain an art as long as teachers draw on their own resources to make teaching a creative experience such as these writers portray.

The remainder of the text (Part III) helps teachers better to understand ways of organizing good language arts programs. Space is allotted to evaluation techniques and ways language may be used daily to promote good home-school relationships.

The editors of this book have collected some potent and critical writing by well-known educators and have placed between two covers as complete a picture of the language arts as has ever before appeared in a book. This is

NEW BOOKS
OF INTEREST TO THE

supervisor

Actual cases—live issues

EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

CASES AND CONCEPTS

Cyril G. Sargent
Eugene L. Belisle

35 new case studies of educational administration

prepared by a special research staff at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education

tested and retested by groups of graduate students in Educational Administration

World wide trends today

THE NEW ERA IN ADMINISTRATION

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

I. L. Kandel

A comparison and analysis of the educational systems of England, France, the U.S.S.R., and the United States which focuses upon the problems common to those four as well as other systems.

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO
DALLAS PALO ALTO

not a rehashing of all that has been written on the topic before; it pushes ahead into new areas and is full of stimulating and exciting ideas. Much of the writing itself is direct, forceful, thought-provoking and, at times, beautiful. Few people will read this excellent book without receiving some new inspiration, and a clarified, more unified picture of the things they already know.

—Reviewed by JAMES A. SMITH, associate professor of education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.

Unit Teaching in the Elementary School. By Lavone A. Hanna, Gladys L. Potter and Neva Haggman. New York: Rinehart and Co., 1955.

This book was written to affirm the belief that the purposes and objectives of education in the elementary school can best be achieved through the integrating experiences provided by a unit of work.

The book is a blend of philosophy, method, suggestion and resource. The authors have vitalized their work with true-to-life classroom situations, sample conversations of children, adequate illustrations and pertinent graphic material.

A curriculum which meets the needs of boys and girls in a technological world must be constantly changing to keep pace with social problems and issues. It must be based on the problems of society and the growth characteristics of children. It must be planned with a sound knowledge of the manner in which children learn. It must provide for the total development of the learner.

Part I of this book deals with these changing cultural patterns of our times and the stages of development through which children pass in normal development. It describes the developmental tasks of children and the manner by which they learn. It demonstrates the relationship of all of these and of democratic values to unit teaching.

Part II moves on to the actual organization, initiation, development and culmination of the unit as the core for the elementary school curriculum. Specific chapters deal with various unit activities: research, problem solving, dramatic play, and construction. Other chapters show how unit teaching develops creative ways of living together democratically and of solving problems.

Part III is written to help the teach-

er find new and simplified ways to pre-plan and organize the wealth of material and ideas necessary for effective unit teaching. Sample resource units are presented in complete form. A teaching unit is presented to show the possible development of a specific unit in a classroom.

The authors might justifiably have named their volume, "How to Meet the Aims of Modern Education," for this book constitutes much more than a text on unit teaching. It is an overview of method for creative and modern teaching. Hanna, Hageman and Potter have given the classroom teacher a long-awaited and well-deserved aid to teaching by making available a clear, composite interpretation of the theory of modern teaching and ways to translate that theory into practice. It will

Invite these experts into your classroom—

Jesse Stuart

William L. White

Dorothy Canfield Fisher

John Gunther



Each month, through notable writers in *Reader's Digest*, you can present to your students stimulating accounts of interesting personalities, of significant events at home and abroad . . . authoritative reports on scientific discoveries, social and economic developments, cultural trends.

The Educational Edition includes all of the Readers Digest plus

- 40 pages of student and teacher aids each month of the school year. Exercises and activities to develop communication skills. Discussion units with challenging questions.
- Complete Vocabulary Program featuring NEW STANDARD VOCABULARY TEST to measure students' vocabulary growth.

Send today for your free special testing kit containing 35 copies of the 125-word FORM A test with answer key and complete directions.

Reader's Digest
EDUCATIONAL DEPARTMENT

Pleasantville

New York

be of special help to the veteran teacher who has little or no formal training in unit teaching, though the volume is a rich reference book for all teachers, supervisors, teacher-education spe-

cialists, administrators and curriculum builders.

—Reviewed by JAMES A. SMITH, *associate professor of education, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York.*

ASCD TO MEET IN NEW YORK CITY, MARCH 19–23, 1956

Conference Theme: Creative Thinking, Living and Teaching

Headquarters: *Hotel New Yorker*

Activities will include:

- ▶ *General Sessions* Developing each major aspect of the conference theme: creative thinking, creative living, creative teaching

- ▶ *Assemblies* Centering on exploration of creative ideas in teacher education, testing, citizenship, curriculum development, etc.

- ▶ *Clinics* Focusing on creative practices to improve education

- ▶ *Study-discussion Groups*
 - (a) Exploring creative ideas in current literature
 - (b) Reporting and analyzing significant research findings
 - (c) Sharing creative ideas on problems facing today's schools
 - (d) Visiting school and community resources in the New York metropolitan area.

For further information and registration write to:

**Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, NEA
1201 Sixteenth Street, N. W.
Washington 6, D. C.**

Copyright © 1955 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.