

Significant Books in Review

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Reading in Child Development. By *William H. Burton and collaborators Clara Belle Baker and Grace K. Kemp.* New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956.

In this very worthwhile book there is an unusually fine integration of practical materials and fundamental principles. In many respects it is more profound and scholarly than most books on the teaching of reading. Some books give the impression that the author "shuffled the cards and dealt another hand," but this one gives the impression of creativity and thorough command of fundamentals.

Part I presents an analysis of the nature of reading. The chapter on the nature and development of meaning merits special mention. It includes comprehensive sections on the process of developing meaning and the function of language in the development of meaning. These sections are followed by implications for teaching. Reading specialists who emphasize relationships of reading and other language arts will find these materials useful. Likewise, the materials will be welcomed by those who are interested in relationships between reading and child development. The authors place considerable emphasis on "ability to read in the broadest sense" as well as "ability to read words," but unfortunately in Parts II and III the reader fails to find as much follow-up on this idea as might be expected.

Part II, approximately 60% of the book, is concerned with the aims of reading instruction, reading readiness, and the

usual topics in the area of developmental reading instruction. Oral reading, free reading, vision education, and listening skills may receive more attention here than in many books. There is an abundance of materials on developmental reading instruction. An outstanding feature is the continuous undergirding of practical suggestions with basic theory and fundamental principles. This makes the materials especially appropriate for advanced students. On the other hand, beginners may be confused by the comprehensiveness of the presentation.

Part III includes chapters on grouping, evaluation and diagnosis, basal reading materials, and the correction of reading disabilities through remedial measures. A summary of the features of a good reading program in the final chapter should be of particular value to individuals concerned with evaluation of reading programs and construction of curriculum guides.

The authors are to be commended for making liberal use of meaningful headings which contribute to readability. Nevertheless, the pages appear to be solid with print. It may be that practitioners who want to accumulate a few teaching techniques with a minimum of reading and thought will turn to other books. However, teachers and supervisors who want to gain insight on what reading is, how pupils learn to read, and what methods are useful will be delighted with this contribution.

—Reviewed by ALVIN W. SCHINDLER,
professor of education, University of
Maryland, College Park.

Improving Reading Instruction. By Donald D. Durrell. Yonkers-on-Hudson: World Book Company, 1956.

Improving Reading Instruction may be regarded by some people as a revision of the author's 1940 publication, *Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities*. However, it is essentially a new book, and it is an improvement over the first one even though that volume was very useful. Materials which were included in the first book have been reorganized and supplemented, and new materials have been added. Significant additions include a chapter which presents an overview of the reading program, two chapters on reading readiness, an additional chapter on word analysis, a chapter on special reading services, and a chapter on classroom analysis of reading needs.

According to Dr. Durrell, his aim was "to present a practical handbook." Also, the author states that "it is the purpose of this textbook to suggest and illustrate many ways in which the teacher may supplement the basal reader to the advantage of her pupils." *Improving Reading Instruction* is outstanding for its pointed statements and suggestions.

The format of the book contributes to its readability. Headings and italicized sentences are used frequently. There is unusually wide spacing before and after each heading. In general, the pages give the impression of being easy to read. Ideas stand out clearly.

The chapters on reading readiness give less attention to language facility, utilization of situations already familiar to children, and social adjustment than most current discussions of readiness. On the other hand, there is more material on the development of auditory and visual perception, with emphasis on the kinds of perception directly related to reading.

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There is also specific consideration of tests for measuring visual and auditory perception. As the author anticipates, some teachers may not agree with his viewpoints on skills considered important for beginning reading. For example, his recommendations on learning the names and forms of the letters of the alphabet during the first two months of the first grade may be somewhat controversial. Certain conclusions on the nature of reading readiness may arouse considerable argument and re-evaluation of old ideas. Some readers may question the conclusion that the mental age of six or more "is somewhat irrelevant in regard to predicting success in primary-grade reading." In the preface the author states that "the research background for this volume will appear in an accompanying monograph." It would have been well to include some of the research background in this volume.

THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

by **VIRGIL E. HERRICK**, *University of Wisconsin*, **JOHN I. GOODLAD**, *Emory University*, **FRANK J. ESTVAN** and **PAUL W. EBERMAN**, both of *University of Wisconsin*

The book provides a thorough and logically presented study of the elementary school today. The authors examine first the major ideas underlying the study, the historical development of the elementary school, its functions as a social institution, and its purposes. In the light of these concepts, learning and child development are scrutinized and then related to the problem of curriculum.

Major generalizations are drawn for determining good instructional practice, with reference to which the chief instructional areas are considered in detail. The educational program is now placed in its organizational and administrative setting. Finally, the authors make recommendations for evaluating and improving present practice.

474 pages 6" x 9" Published May 1956

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by **RUTH TOOZE** and **BEATRICE P. KRONE**

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Nearly one-third of the book consists of materials on word recognition and word analysis. The suggestions are definite, and there are many of them. The suggestions are applicable regardless of the basal reading program being used by the reader. Word analysis is related to the improvement of spelling.

This volume may have less emphasis on remedial reading than the author's 1940 book. The chapter on special reading services sets forth some propositions on this matter. The appendix includes a remedial reading vocabulary for the primary grades.

—Reviewed by ALVIN W. SCHINDLER.

How to Increase Reading Ability (Third Edition). By **Albert J. Harris**. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1956.

The revised and enlarged third edition of *How to Increase Reading Ability* retains the scope, balance, and practicality that the author presented in his earlier editions. New material includes an expanded general survey of the reading program, more material on how to meet individual and group needs, and more detailed descriptions of individualized and group techniques of teaching reading. Visual problems, directional confusion, personality effects on reading, and the significance of hand-eye dominance in relation to reading disability are represented. Chapters on word recognition skills are also enlarged.

The only area deleted from previous editions is the chapter on teaching reading to "specially" handicapped children.

The author's central idea for the book is that reading instruction can be most effective when it is based on an understanding of pupils as individuals, and when organization for instruction, reading materials and instructional methods

are suited to individual and group needs. Recurring emphasis is placed on the primary importance of wholesome teacher-pupil relationship.

Dr. Harris organizes the book into three main parts: the over-all classroom reading program, methods of evaluating group and individual reading needs, and developmental and remedial teaching of specific reading skills. The author presents no *best* way of teaching reading; rather he reviews thoroughly many procedures used successfully in reading along with helpful listings of related research. In controversial issues such as the importance of eye-hand dominance, phonetic training and different methods of groupings, his summaries of different techniques give the reader an up-to-date view.

The author draws upon his experiences in graduate classes over the country and upon the findings of other authorities in

the field to present a practical compilation of approaches to reading. Although the book is oriented to the problems of teaching reading at the elementary level, helpful suggestions for procedures in secondary schools are presented.

As far as materials on grouping, reading readiness, practical principles of reading instruction, developing word recognition skills and developing understanding in reading are concerned, this book is much like other books on the teaching of reading. It may be that in these areas there is more than the usual amount of emphasis on finding and correcting causes of reading difficulties. The book is relatively unique in terms of its materials for specific problems in reading. It has materials designed to foster reading interests and tastes. It has a different treatment of rate of reading. Its case studies of reading disability demonstrate the application of various remedial

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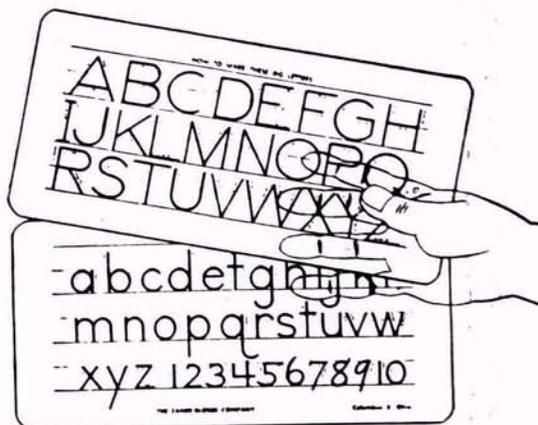
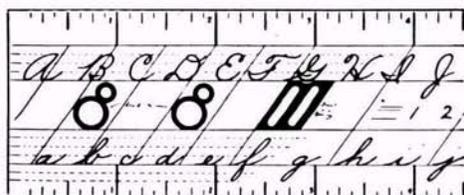
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techniques. Its alphabetized list of tests with annotations in the appendix may be of interest to people looking for measurement devices. Its fairly comprehensive list of graded books for remedial reading purposes in the appendix may also be of real value.

—Reviewed by JENNYE FAYE SCHULTZ, graduate assistant, University of Maryland, College Park.

Reading in the High School. By Leo C. Fay. Washington, D. C.: Department of Classroom Teachers and American Educational Research Association of the National Education Association, 1956.

The pamphlet, the eleventh in the series on "What Research Says to the Teacher," promises to be a valuable resource for anyone concerned about the improvement of reading in secondary schools. It

provides practical suggestions and a sound framework for further study of reading instruction.

Within the limited space of 32 pages the author reacts to lay criticisms of reading instruction, identifies goals of reading instruction at the high school level, explores alternative ways of organizing high school reading programs, offers definite suggestions on developmental reading instruction, clarifies the role of teachers of content subjects in the improvement of reading, and presents principles to be observed when remedial instruction is attempted. He also provides references which may be useful to anyone making an intensive study of reading in secondary schools.

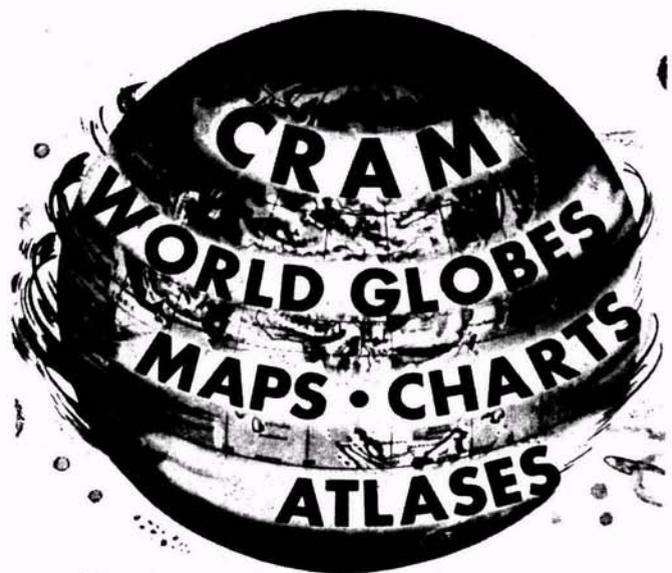
Reading in the High School has several features which make it a useful base for further exploration of reading instruction. First, the author urges that attention be given to "the many different aspects of

reading," and he objectifies this idea by identifying reading skills which are especially worthy of emphasis in secondary schools. His analysis provides a balanced framework for a more detailed outline of reading goals to be achieved by pupils. Second, he challenges curriculum makers to find a situation for systematic developmental reading instruction instead of assuming that the job will be done by relying on each teacher to be a teacher of reading. He does not attempt to provide a formula for solving this problem in all high schools, but he does suggest possibilities.

A third feature which makes the book a useful base for further study may be found in the author's identification of important aspects of developmental reading instruction and his suggestions on promising methods. Many practical ideas on developmental instruction are immediately applicable to classroom situa-

tions even though space limitations did not permit detailed elaboration of methods. Fourth, the author sets forth certain propositions on the teaching of reading in the content subjects. He clarifies the role of teachers in those areas and identifies reading skills on which those teachers should concentrate. Fifth, he presents definite principles on remedial reading which might well be considered by any secondary school which plans to provide such instruction. In doing this the author stimulates thinking on the problem instead of attempting an arbitrary solution applicable to all schools.

Without minimizing the potential values of the pamphlet it might be well to refer to a possible shortcoming which lies in the author's use of some language which may convey little meaning to readers who are not well informed on reading objectives and instructional methods. For example, in the section on



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—Reviewed by ALVIN W. SCHINDLER.

Reading: A Symposium. *Association for Childhood Education International, 1200 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Washington 5, D. C.: the Association, 1956.*

This thirty-two page bulletin consists of seven articles, each written by a different author or group of authors. The titles of the articles are: Child Growth and Development; Reading Ability: An Organismic View; Reading: A Process of Behavior; A Design Commences; Gaining Momentum in Reading; Through Self-Direction—Progress Unlimited; and, Reading—for What?

The first three articles are concerned with "basic viewpoints in reading." The article on Child Growth and Development presents data and reasoning to support the viewpoint that achievement in reading cannot be divorced from other fundamental aspects of growing up. The article on "An Organismic View" emphasizes the importance of considering the individual, his goals, and the impact of the environment on him. The role of experience in determining the growth of reading ability is a major concern of the third article. The author "calls attention to the need for primary reading (the direct reading of things) in order that secondary reading (the reading of symbols) may have potentiality for provok-

ing meanings or for making sense." The theoretical analyses in these articles merit considerable thought. It may be that rather commonplace ideas are expressed in somewhat unusual ways.

In "A Design Commences" the author shows how a child acquires the vocabulary and concepts which are essential for successful reading achievement. Parents would probably enjoy the vivid word pictures in this article. The author concludes with "it takes time to grow a child."

"Gaining Momentum in Reading" is more definitely concerned than the other articles with procedures in the teaching of reading. If teachers evaluate this bulletin, they will probably identify this as the practical article.

The sixth article concludes that "progress is unlimited for every child in the classroom through self-selection." It states that "self-selection is a permissive program in a carefully planned environment."

The trend of thought in the last article is revealed in the following sentence: "In planning a reading program, we must relate reading experiences to the developmental tasks so that children associate reading with the mastery of new skills, the fun of new interests, the challenge of peer associations."

Within the limited scope of this bulletin the *thoughtful* reader will find very worthwhile trends of thought. However, the reader must remember that the seven articles do not present a complete picture of reading instruction, and he should be critical as well as thoughtful. The articles will probably be difficult reading for most parents. Somewhat contrary to many short bulletins, this one leans toward the theoretical.

—Reviewed by ALVIN W. SCHINDLER.

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