

Significant Books in Review

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Early Elementary Education. *Myrtle M. Imhoff.* New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1959.

This book treats the values and principles that underlie the educational period from nursery school through the primary grades. Dr. Imhoff, formerly of the United States Office of Education and presently at Long Beach State College, is a well-known specialist at this level. She offers here a clear and authoritative statement of the need for basing the philosophy of education on the findings of research in child development and for choosing curricular materials that deal with problems of living. There is some factual evidence presented in support of these two theses, and there are some suggestions for specific practices. This is in the main, however, a book of foundational ideas for stimulating the beginning teacher to do his own thinking and for enabling him, consistently and surely, to translate a philosophy of education into a daily program. The author's primary purpose is to give background to the student in training. She has, for this reason, kept the discussion simple even when it deals with some of the most important ideas of modern educational thought. Her work could therefore be used widely. For instance, it would be helpful as orientation for a person newly interested in early elementary education or as a good starting point for curriculum

planning by a group sharing the responsibility for the instruction of small children.

The book is made up of three inter-related parts developed concurrently: exposition, illustration, and bibliography. The actual text, which constitutes about two-fifths of the volume, is a logical presentation of educational principles based on knowledge of child development. First, this philosophy is explained as the necessary outcome of psychological research, and it is defended as the only admissible basis for education in a democracy. The practical application of the theory is then demonstrated in school administration, in curriculum building, and in classroom teaching. Finally these ideas are presented in historical perspective, as an outgrowth of the past and as a prelude to the future. Throughout the text a cyclic repetition emphasizes the main themes to insure understanding.

Examples of specific aids to the new teacher are: the definition of professional terms which would facilitate his reading of related literature, the discussion of the role of the teacher in relation to the guiding principles which should assist his orientation to the job, and the projects and questions at the end of most sections which would amplify or make more vivid the author's meaning. The illustrative materials, which occupy another two-fifths of the book, are interspersed throughout the text.

The bibliographies, which make up the remainder of the book, include both specific and general lists. In several instances, after brief consideration of a topic, the author has inserted the names of key books and articles to invite further detailed study. The summarizing bibliographies at the end of the book are carefully chosen collections of the field's most important professional books, research papers, and audio-visual materials.

If the book has a fault, it is one of brevity, for the text itself is almost too succinct. Dr. Imhoff economically explains her own viewpoint and indicates areas of difference between this and the most commonly held opposing views, but she does not attempt a full discussion of the issues. Because of her professional stature, and because she writes so persuasively of ideas that need to be ably presented, it is to be hoped that she will

restate them at some time in expanded form.

—Reviewed by ALICE HITCHCOCK, *associate professor of education, Illinois State Normal University, Normal.*

Storytelling. Ruth Tooze. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1959. 268 p. \$3.95.

To those fearful that in a day of mass media and richly illustrated children's books the time-honored art of the storyteller may be lost, this will come as a welcome volume.

The book reflects the author's wide acquaintance with books and her years of telling stories to children of all ages. In many sections of the country Ruth Tooze and her Children's Book Caravan are already well known.

The four main sections are these:

"The Heritage" makes the storyteller newly aware of the host of those who

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from ancient times have used this important means of communication.

"The Teller" reflects the author's own joy in telling stories. She indicates how the qualities of any creative artist—imagination, perception, insight, integrity and enthusiasm—present in the storyteller may achieve contact with like qualities in listeners. She encourages development of a broad stock of stories from which to draw a meaningful story for a specific time or need.

"The Telling" describes techniques essential to make stories "come alive." Means of achieving identity with the story, of establishing rapport with children and of improving use of the voice are among those aspects of storytelling which receive specific attention.

"What to Tell" aids the storyteller in selecting stories, in distinguishing between the good and the tawdry. Qualities which appeal at various ages are noted:



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For most readers the two final portions of the book will be of exceeding value. These include 20 stories and ballads for telling and 94 pages of well annotated bibliography. The latter is a resource we have come to associate with the author. Bibliography classification according to age level, countries and special purposes makes for easy location of the desired story.

All those who work with children, whether teachers, librarians, parents, Sunday School teachers, or camp leaders, will find this book rich in suggestions, in sources and in inspiration. Its simple, direct style and its enthusiasm for storytelling should do much toward returning storytelling to its important place in the lives of children.

—Reviewed by AGNES L. ADAMS, director of student teaching, National College of Education, Evanston, Illinois.

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