

Curriculum Bulletins

Column Editor: Arthur Hoppe

NOTE: Various faculty members of the School of Education at Indiana University have assisted the column editor by appraising materials in their respective fields: Ruth Strickland in elementary language arts; Emily Hunting in homemaking; Fred Mills in art education; Leo Fay in elementary reading; and Prevo Whitaker in science.

Des Moines Public Schools. *Communication Skills: Listening, Speaking, Writing*. Des Moines: Department of Elementary Education, August 1958, 58 p. (\$2.25)

The Elementary Language Committee sought information for their guide from schools in 43 cities comparable to Des Moines in size and from all of the elementary teachers in Des Moines. The results show many good suggestions for teaching certain communication skills, with an up-to-date approach especially in relation to grammar. Basic goals are set forth and succinct explanations of each skill are offered in the bulletin, plus many activities to facilitate learning each one. Suggestions to pupils themselves constitute a conspicuous feature of the guide. Several good questions and suggestions are available here to guide evaluation by the teacher himself and by teacher and pupil working cooperatively. Many examples of pupil products appropriate to this age group are to be found in the section on writing.

The handbook was designed to give security to beginning teachers and to encourage the creative teaching of more experienced teachers. In order to prevent the possibility that this guide might set a rigid pattern for teaching communication skills, or mold the teaching of language skills for years to come, it has a built-in feature: a section at the end calling for comments and suggestions for improving the bulletin by teachers who use it. It would be well if more of our curriculum material included such a device.

Florida State Department of Education.

Florida Homemaking Education. Bulletin No. 23. Tallahassee: the Department. Revised 1955, 243 p. (No price indicated.)

Many teachers, representing all areas of the state, worked with supervisors and consultants for a long period of time to produce this bulletin. The product proves the excellence of their work. This guide for homemaking in grades 7-12 was done in scholarly fashion. It is presented in unique format, with interesting use of line, form, space and color.

The guide begins with careful statements of philosophy held by the Florida homemaking teachers, objectives for work in their field and many methods of teaching and evaluation. A two-page scope and sequence chart shows a skeleton of the content for all the secondary

school grades. The program is family centered and the key questions for guiding learning experiences are the very ones youngsters do and should raise about problems of a personal and family nature. The problems increase in complexity from year to year, as do also the suggested content and resources—reflecting desirable growth from year to year.

Many suggested activities are presented and many teaching aids, particularly pamphlets, films and filmstrips. The guide contains clear, concise and convincing explanations of the use of this material by teachers.

Maryland State Department of Education. *Art in Our Maryland Schools*. Baltimore: the Department, 1954, 48 p. (No price indicated.)

Through a large variety of well chosen photographs and a minimum of words, the compilers of this guide have highlighted their basic beliefs about art in the daily lives of learners. The scenes chosen are vivid and fascinating; the remarks are succinct. Both require thoughtful interpretation, but they leave the teacher relatively free to adapt the materials to particular groups and purposes. It pictures the meanings of art, the necessary atmosphere and the elements of art, the different goals and motivations of art, the purposes and potentialities of art for boys and girls in school.

Art is presented as an important vehicle for interpretation of surroundings, for working independently, for satisfying curiosity, for solving personal problems. Great freedom of ideas is expressed while at the same time the guide points out where students may get leads to art experiences. Many examples of student work are shown for the reader's interest.

On the whole, the guide is in good format, contains sound philosophy and workable suggestions for its implementation, and should prove highly useful to teachers.

Minneapolis Public Schools. *Reading Readiness in Kindergarten and First Grade*, (a Supplement to the Guide to Teaching Reading in the Elementary Schools). Minneapolis: the Schools, 1956. 108 p. (No price indicated.)

Both teachers and parents in Minneapolis sought specific information on reading readiness, particularly on the relationship between reading readiness and child growth characteristics. This handbook was designed to fill the gap. It was developed by a committee of kindergarten and first grade teachers, principals and consultants.

The handbooks began with a brief but clear description of important theories of readiness for reading. It goes on to suggest important needs of young children related to love, security, discipline, responsibility and patience, and the critical role of parents in ministering to these needs. Part III and especially Part IV present in much detail the contribution of the kindergarten and of the first grade, respectively, to reading readiness. They offer a great wealth of activities through which readiness for reading may be promoted. Sample schedules for entire school days are included. Finally, many practical suggestions are made for the evaluation of developing readiness to read.

The parts are separated by interesting color pages and there are numerous clever drawings throughout the guide. It is a thoroughly pleasing and useful work.

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