

# The Importance of People

Column Editor: Prudence Bostwick

Contributor: Lucy E. Kissell

## Mankind's Great Need

I WAS crossing the city at noon the day Dag Hammarskjöld's plane crashed. The news so shattered me I remember thinking that I would not be able to do a thing the rest of the afternoon. Nevertheless, I got to the school in which I was to work; and the wonderful world of education took over, just as it always had when I worked in a single classroom. I was completely absorbed by the task at hand.

This particular time, my aim was to help second graders understand the logic of our number system as their knowledge of place value was developed. From here I moved on to a first grade room in which the children were waiting to dramatize a story from yesterday's reading; and finally, to an afternoon double-session social studies-language arts-science-art period where seeds were being studied. I was there to share all the different seeds and seed pods I had collected in August in the Southern California desert. We were long-time friends and had much to discuss and discover together.

The time passed all too quickly. Four-thirty came and once more the school buildings became the realm of the custodians. I made room for myself in the front seat of my car and started for home and the job of preparing for an-

other day. The little houses along the way, so much alike on the outside, so different on the inside, were getting their evening papers. Suddenly I remembered Dag Hammarskjöld—and the world; and it was almost frightening to realize how completely I am consumed by the drive to help children learn. I wonder if any other work on earth fosters this concentration.

You see, although I am called a Coordinator of Instruction in the elementary schools of Denver, I am, in fact, a helping teacher. I work with 39 first-, second- and third-year primary teachers. I try to help them meet the ever-present urgencies, all the while hoping to help them discover the nobler goals of education. Along the way I try to give them support and understanding, as well as whatever advice seems feasible at the time. (There are times when I would like to tell George S. Kauffman that the advertising premise of saying everything five times is sound. Sometimes even five times does not seem to be enough.)

## Expectations

I really have only two Great Expectations for the people with whom I work: I want them to recognize the importance of their job, and then to expend some

## Watch *their* language!

Children grow fast—and so does their need for language skills. Meet this growing need with a *total English program* that presents each skill in a separate chapter, emphasizes a careful evaluation of the uses of language, and develops your pupils' confidence in writing through a complete, controlled drill program. Then watch their mastery of language grow!

### THE MACMILLAN ENGLISH SERIES

Thomas Clark Pollock, Senior Author

Grades 2-12

#### THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

60 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, New York

A Division of The Crowell-Collier Publishing Company

effort to do it well. Just knowing how to expend the effort is no easy task for any of us.

To begin with, mastering the content of the instructional guides takes a good bit of painstaking study, even though deviations and extensions based on sound educational practice are welcomed and encouraged. Direction and help are needed here.

Since we have many people who did not train at the level at which they are teaching (this seems to be especially true at the primary level), the guides must be interpreted and the nuances of living and working in a primary classroom need to be carefully explored.

Occasionally those who have had training at a primary level will make the startling revelation that, when they were doing their student teaching, they never prepared a reading lesson or had any training in phonics. Special in-service

sessions are needed to help in such cases.

Many teachers with both training and experience come to us from other places. Sometimes this is the hardest adjustment of all to make. The new system, with its standards of room appearance, its disapproval of dittoed art material, its music program *with the pitch pipe* and its record keeping, often may anger or even frustrate them. Help is needed to make this adjustment as gradual and pleasant a process as possible.

From whatever training or background the teachers come, and in whatever situation they find themselves, I have the privilege of helping them provide good learning experiences for boys and girls. We rejoice together over successes, study the not-so-successful efforts and learn from them. In the process I develop a warm feeling of concern for each and every one of them and for the children for whom we work.

One of my friends once said to me, "It must be hard for you to assume so many concerns." For some reason I thought of Oedipus Rex saying to the people of Thebes:

Oh children, wailing loud, ye tell me not  
Of woes unknown, too well I know them  
all,

Your sorrows and your wants. For one and  
all

Are stricken, yet no sorrow like to mine  
Weighs on you. Each his own sad burden  
bears;

His own and not another's. But my heart  
Mourns for the people's sorrow and mine  
own.

It is true of course that I do have many more concerns than I did as a teacher with one group of children. On the other hand, my feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment are multiplied:

Instead of 35 young children to learn from and teach, I now have 1170.

I have 39 teachers whose eyes I can catch when something unbelievably funny or touching happens.

I have all the stories, and all the paintings, and all the ideas of one set of primary children I can share with another set of primary children all the way across town.

I have a chance to reflect on the beauty of Denver as I drive from school to school, and to carry those reflections into the building when I arrive.

Responsibility and reward come in reasonable balance.

For me this describes the kind of Good Work that Dr. Harold F. Clark of Teachers College, Columbia University, was wont to define as one of the great needs of mankind.

—LUCY E. KISSELL, *Coordinator of Instruction, Elementary Schools, Public Schools, Denver, Colorado.*

As Used in All 50 States, 19 Foreign Countries, 9,000 Schools, 20,000 Classrooms

## An Immediate Success in Phonetic Instruction . . . the **PhonoVisual** method

Thousands of children in kindergarten, primary and remedial classes are learning to read and spell by the simple, effective PhonoVisual method.

As a result of the much-publicized Amidon School Experiment, this modern, carefully organized program for teaching phonics has been enthusiastically adopted for use in all elementary schools in the Washington, D. C. Public School System.

Based on the use of two scientifically planned pictorial charts and organized game-like procedures, the PhonoVisual Method works smoothly, rapidly and with amazing success.

**THE PHONOVISUAL TEACHER GETS RESULTS  
. . . SAVES TIME, EFFORT and CHILDREN**

Write Dept. EL-1

**PhonoVisual Products, Inc., 4805 Wisconsin Ave., Washington 16, D. C.**

Phonovisual Vowel Chart



Write for information about  
"PhonoVisual in Action" (16mm.  
demonstration film in color with  
sound track.)

Copyright © 1962 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.