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BOOK REVIEW

Suzanne Thorsen Schoen

Miller, Lyle

Maintaining Reading Efficiency, Revised Edition

Laramie, Wyoming: Developmental Reading Distributors,
1966, 393 pages, \$4.50

Maintaining Reading Efficiency, by Lyle Miller, is the revised edition of his developmental reading text of the same title formerly published by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. The earlier edition is no longer in print. The revised edition is a collection of thirty new, updated, long selections and two standardized developmental reading essays, each approximately 4,600 words, with standardized comprehensive tests suitable for pre and post testing.

Miller asserts that most reading programs and books provide a structural sequence of reading drills to develop flexible reading skills and aid students in achieving maximum reading rates. According to Miller, Professor of Education at the University of Wyoming and author of several reading manuals, there is a serious need for "another type of reading exercise designed for more continuous reading for content." Thus, *Maintaining Reading Efficiency* is intended to increase and stabilize reading skills directly through reading long selections and through taking the accompanying comprehension tests. A test scoring key and a progress chart are provided at the back of the book and are removable. The perforated pages throughout the entire manual make it possible, at the teacher's option, to tear out exercises for tests or machine use.

The selections, each with a Flesch readability score, are divided into three sections and planned for sequential practice at all levels—junior high, high school, college and adult reading. For maximum flexibility, Miller categorizes each of the three sections into two classifications: easy level—exercises 1-5, 11-15 and 21-25; and the advanced one—exercises 6-10, 16-20 and 26-30. The readability scores range from 27 (very difficult) to 79 (fairly easy), and the two standardized selections have a readability score of 44 (average difficulty).

The selections, all non-fiction pieces from books, magazines and pamphlets, are primarily standardized adaptations of the most popular *Public Affairs Pamphlets*. Their infinite variety, from self-improvement articles to anthropology, offer the reader stimulating, high interest

level pieces. Moreover, the selections are not “standard ones,” but fresh, new and thought-provoking. Choosing essays to accommodate junior high through adult reading levels and selecting articles to cover a wide range of interests, maturity and sophistication are Herculean tasks, but Miller’s choices are excellent in these respects.

While primarily devoted to reading for content, the workbook contains two introductory chapters which afford a thorough, comprehensive survey of reading and some study skills. In these superlative chapters, the author stresses his “seek the ideas behind the words” and his reading efficiency score (words per minute multiplied by percentage correct on comprehension test). Ideally, this score represents “the amount of material comprehended per minute of reading.” A time budget sheet and hints on planning a better study schedule are provided at the back of the text.

Professor Miller’s developmental reading manual fulfills its stated purpose in providing content material for reading practice to stabilize and achieve optimum reading skills. Utilized with a supplementary book on basic reading drills and exercises and a variety of lectures and discussions on reading skills, this workbook, with its first-rate articles and flexible, sequential approach, is worthy of close consideration for various developmental reading programs or for individual use to maintain reading efficiency.