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Quick Reviews

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QUICK REVIEWS

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To encourage students to read, to see them arrive at the feeling that reading for its own sake is worthwhile, requires every facility and strategem a teacher can employ. For that reason, we may always see teachers and reading specialists looking at new materials, trying out recently published tests, and repeating research studies in all parts of the nation. Because reading is not a subject that is taught as a body of knowledge, the search for "the way" carries us into widely varying publications. We simply want to turn the skills of reading into a deeply satisfying habit in the lives of our students.

Thus, our conviction that every experience with reading is important to the reader causes us to recommend almost every book which comes across our desk for review. However, we are in good company--Johnson (Sam), Thoreau, Tolstoy, and Macaulay all said that wide and regular reading was the "noblest exercise" of all. Reading as a routine pastime is suffering neglect today because passive commercial entertainment captures our attention, and because physical exercise is given more media space. Yet, as we help young people recognize the delights of growing and discovering through reading, this most beneficial habit will come back into its own.

Classics of Children's Literature, edited by John W.

Griffith and Charles H. Frey. New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., Inc. 1981. Pps. 957. Price \$14.95. This volume contains literally hundreds of pieces of literature from several cultures. Many of the old stories are accompanied by illustrations which were part of the originals. This book will provide the basis for students of children's literature to make comparisons and analyses. Sheer size and weight would prevent its being useful to parents with small children.

Building a College Vocabulary, Patricia Licklider.
Boston: Little, Brown and Company. Publ. 1981.
Pps. 269. Instructor's manual and test bank
available.

There is ample evidence that this combination text and workbook was composed by one experienced in meeting real classes with real vocabulary problems. A theory based book would contain orderly exercises in orderly chapters, ad nauseum. This book is instructive, far ranging, and informal. The author devotes a sizable portion of her book to word elements of Latin and Greek origin, recognizing the dynamic nature of American English and the accelerated rate with which our language is becoming predominantly technical in nature.

Reading at Efficient Rates, a Program for Self-Instruction, (2nd ed.), 1981, published by McGraw Hill. Pps. 224. By Alton L. Raygor and George B. Schick. One of six parts in a series, the book deals with practice to attain suitable rates as a reading skill. The system of texts, workbooks, and tests were designed at the Minnesota Reading and Study Skills Center. They are meant to help high school and college students improve their basic skills in study, vocabulary, spelling, writing, reading, and math. It is a volume which can be loaned to a student--an important way to help students help themselves.

Children's Prose Comprehension, Research and Practice.

Editors Carol M. Santa and Bernard L. Hayes. A publication of the International Reading Assoc. Published 1981, pps. 186, Newark, Delaware.

As a work whose title mentions a single facet of reading, this book should be easy to summarize and simple to evaluate. It is neither. So many points of view, concepts of terms, and research objectives manifest themselves that authors might be said to be using different languages. A number of questions occurred to this reader, who ventured into the book looking for answers--does the reading teacher have a reason for reading it? For whom is the book written? In her chapter, Marjorie S. Johnson put the whole matter in a straightforward sentence: "...attention to reading comprehension must be in the context of the reality of reading." We cannot examine the process of reading without observing the reader, the teacher, the parents, what is being read, and who is doing the examining.

Analytical Reading Inventory (2nd Ed.) By Mary Lynne Woods and Alden J. Moe. Publ. 1977,1981, by Charles E. Merrill Co. Pps. 137. Price \$7.95. Here is a versatile diagnostic instrument, for use in analyzing, observing, and recording a student's reading performance. The special virtue of this book is that its use is not limited to specialists. It was written and tested by practitioners in a classroom setting to be a valid tool in professional hands. Procedures, such as administering tests and interpreting results, are explained so that persons without extensive course work in the field will be able to discover the strengths and weaknesses of students at all elementary levels.

ad-sig journal Volume III, No. 1, January, 1981. Edited by M. Jane Greenewald and Ann E. Wolf, this semi-annual publication has a special reason for being. The title says it: "Affective Domain Special Interest Group." As a part of the IRA, this group will meet in New Orleans, Tuesday, April 28, 1:00 P.M., in the Marriot Hotel. If you are able to find a copy of this ad-sig journal read William H. Teale's "What Researchers Mean by Attitude Toward Reading." Another excellent article is one by Kathleen M. Ngandu and Bill O'Rourke, "Older Americans' Reading."

Motivating Reluctant Readers, edited by Alfred J. Ciani. An IRA Publication, 1981, pps. 104. While many reading teachers who work with slower or turned-off readers find their best ideas by experimenting and grasping at straws, all will welcome a collection of practical ideas on how to solve the motivational problem. There is one difficulty with books of this sort; being practical usually requires being specific, which in turn often results in becoming prescriptive. Since all teaching must fit the needs of the group being taught, prescriptive approaches are seldom suitable. Teachers who use this book should be careful to recognize the ideas without becoming bound by an author's insistence on how the ideas should be implemented.