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Guest Editorial

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GUEST EDITORIAL

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DOTHAN EXTENSION

An important reason for school administrators to view the act of reading as not only useful but necessary is seen in the following statement: "As a medium of communication and as a tool of learning, reading serves an indispensable function in society" (Tinker and McCullough, 1962). Casual observation and national statistics indicate that the experience of reading is not given adequate time in most classrooms. We feel it is entirely reasonable to expect every pupil to spend fifteen minutes of every hour in activities related to or directly involved in reading. For this to happen, the act of reading must have a higher place on the list of activities in every curricular area and at all academic levels.

As educational leaders, enlightened school administrators can play the key role in bringing about the change. Each administrator needs to recognize the fact that teachers must be given reading guidelines to make their classroom activities viable seeds of learning (Powell, 1976). Each administrator needs to help content area teachers build reading skills through working closely with reading specialists, as opposed to sending students out of class to "remedial" rooms. Principals need to recall that their own academic successes were derived through the medium of good teaching, not solely through program or materials or building arrangement.

Making administrators aware that good teaching and reading progress are interdependent will require our constant attention and effort, for we may all agree with the thought "the teacher makes the difference" (Singer, 1978), but administrators still make the decisions, and crowding reading opportunities out of the day's activity is still taking place.

Reading teachers need to join in a concerted effort to point the way for administrators, placing before each principal and curriculum director the essential aims of reading programs for children (Harris, 1961):

1. To help children mature in the ability to think critically;

2. To help children understand their own feelings and the feelings of others;
3. To encourage children to explore, become independent and self-directing; and
4. To help children understand the world in which they live and how they fit into it.

Specific aims, to bring about the thoughts listed above are:

1. To help children learn to read--
Developmental reading
2. To help children read to learn--
Functional reading
3. To help children develop the reading habit--Recreational reading

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