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Quick Reviews

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QUICK REVIEWS

R H Staff

Classroom Discipline: Case Studies and Viewpoints by Sylvester Kohut, Jr., and Dale G. Range. Published by National Education Association, Washington, D.C., 1979, 112 pp.

This book is presented in two vastly different parts. The first fifty pages are devoted to an account of our growing concern with the need for better classroom discipline. In the second part we find cases describing the results of bad parenting, ethnic and cultural confusion, effects of our increased materialism, and even cases for the school psychologist and the local law enforcement agencies. Statistics alone in the first part are sufficient to cause misgivings in all but the most resolute prospective teachers. Vandalism and property damage alone, for example, are estimated to be \$600 million annually, to say nothing of the psychological and physical harm that teachers risk.

The sixty-four pages which constitute the second part contain case-studies which do little to serve the concerned interest of teachers who want answers to real problems. A case study presented in one paragraph cannot truthfully be called a study. Nor can the real problems of students who disrupt classrooms be solved by a text that asks discussion questions. Experience in various kinds of educational challenge, including "reform" school, prompts the reviewer to note that discipline is not something we can study, as if it were a body of knowledge. The situation that requires the correct decision or action by the teacher is usually like lightning or some other sudden natural phenomenon. The discipline situation is something that explodes or erupts or comes down like a sudden storm. If the teacher has not *lived* with these possibilities, has not considered each student's potential for good *and* bad, *in advance*, then (s)he has simply not prepared for sudden expressions of resentment. Education in the classroom must be based on mutual trust, and the farther one moves up in grade level the more important this attitude becomes to the relationship between the teacher and the learner. We might add a final question to the discussion questions of Part II: If the teacher has not built trust into the classroom atmosphere, how can learning take place?

Practical Communication Skills. New Readers Press, Publishing Division of Laubach Literacy International, Box 131, Syracuse, New York 13210.

To help students function in a complex world full of technology, three texts about telephones, personal communication, and filling out forms are made available to students of about fifth to sixth grade

reading ability. For each text there is a separate, consumable student workbook called the *Skills Practice*. Teachers' Manuals accompany the set.

Persons of all ages may learn tips and ideas in the practical areas of calling long distance (time zones and charges), writing formal and informal letters (invitations and applications), and ubiquitous forms (consumer survival). Interest and ease of reading are special assets.

It seems fair to say that adequate use of these kinds of lessons, applied to everyday life in urban America, will help to smooth out some of the rough spots in the ways that we communicate. One of the major reasons for the deterioration of courtesy in communication in the United States ("Rudeness an Epidemic in the Land" U.S. News & World Report, June 25, 1979, p. 41) is ignorance in how to relate to others.

Slack, Robert C., and Beekman W. Cottrell, *WRITING A PREPARATION FOR COLLEGE COMPOSITION*, second edition. Glencoe Publishing Co., Inc., Encino, California. 1978. 198 pps.

Slack and Cottrell's *Writing—A Preparation for College Composition* is an easy to read, simple approach to acquiring good basic writing habits. While prepared for beginning college students, the book could be easily adapted for high school writing classes also.

The purpose of the book is to teach differing writing styles. Grammar especially as applied to writing skills, is taught as the writing process is developed. However, because of the scope of the book, it is sometimes vague and confusing in defining terminology regarding grammatical and literary terms. Much grammatical knowledge is presupposed on behalf of the students.

The book's format is well-laid out with an example-critique-practice-rewrite-critique approach. This is easy for a student to follow and make comparisons to. The teacher will find this book an easy one to supplement with further examples, discussions and activities.

Savage, John F., and Mooney, Jean F., *Teaching Reading to Children with Special Needs*. Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 470 Atlantic Avenue, Boston, MA 02210. 1979. 395 pps.

Teaching Reading to Children with Special Needs is a comprehensive, well written introduction to both reading theory and practical application in the classroom.

While intended for classroom teachers, the book is well worthwhile for the preservice teacher in training. Even "special teachers," i.e., reading teachers, learning disabilities teachers and special

education teachers will find this work timely and rewarding.

Authors Savage and Mooney have integrated today's newer movements in reading theory including psycholinguistics and in educational mainstreaming with explanations of past movements and practices. They carefully point out that no one magic formula has ever been found for teaching reading and that teachers are wise to take an integrated approach.

The easy to read format includes both chapter previews and conclusions. Activities for both the preservice and inservice teacher are included at the end of chapters. References to major works are additional attractions.

This work would, of course, make an excellent text. However, it would also be a book that any teacher or student of reading could study on their own for personal professional enrichment.