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## Quick Reviews

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# QUICK REVIEWS

*By Carter Reading Council*

Ball, Samuel, and Gerry Ann Bogatz, "A Summary of the Major Findings from 'Reading with Television: An Evaluation of the Electric Company'," *The Michigan Reading Journal*, (Spring 1977) 11:50-59.

Major findings by the Educational Testing Service indicate that viewing classes (1971-2, Youngstown, Ohio, and Fresno, California) made significantly greater gains than non-viewing classes in the reading skills which the program was designed to teach.

Bergman, Jerry R., "A New Tool Designed to Develop Positive Attitudes Toward Reading," *Reading Improvement*, (Summer 1977) 14:70-73.

Research shows that a negative attitude is largely to blame for the number of cases of reading difficulties, which in turn leads to non-reading. In this presentation, the author makes a case for helping students learn what is involved in writing, which leads to an improved attitude toward the printed materials all around.

Bradley, John M., and Wilbur S. Ames, "Readability Parameters of Basal Readers," *Journal of Reading Behavior*, (Summer 1977) 9:175-183.

After careful research, using the Edward Fry scale, examining a few different sets of basal readers, the authors conclude that -- a) many more than three sample passages are required to adequately estimate readability variation of a basal reader, and b) the variation of difficulty within a single story could run as high as six grades. The reasonable recommendation is made that publishers include information on readability range in the books they sell.

Braun, Carl, "Pygmalion in the Reading Circle," *Academic Therapy*, (Spring 1977) 12:445-454.

The author asks readers to consider a number of factors which may be involved in the theory that teachers' prior knowledge or expectations of students play a definite role in determining student performance.

(Editors) "Who Is the Child You Teach? -- A Profile of the American Child Today," *Instructor*, (September 1977) LXXXVII:51-68.

The American family is changing. There are fewer children per

family and more working mothers. One in six children is now living with a single parent. The health of American children hasn't changed, despite increased availability of health care services and government involvement. The physical fitness of youth has not improved significantly during the last ten years. Students are smoking at a younger age and the potential for alcoholism has increased. Nine-year-olds are reading and writing better than a year ago, while \$4 billion is being spent on toys. Today's child identifies with television heroes and heroines, to help them feel good about themselves. "Yet they are not fooled; they can differentiate the real from the make-believe both in their heroes and in themselves."

Gentile, Lance M., and Merna M. McMillan, "Why Won't Teenagers Read?" *Journal of Reading*, (May 1977) 20:649-655.

This article suggests ten factors that contribute to secondary students' lack of interest in reading and provides a number of practical instructional procedures to stimulate their desire to read. The authors maintain that students need reading experiences that fully engage their emotions as well as their intellects.

Hertz, Sharon M., Barbara K. Gold, Lenore J. Kaufman, and Meralée G. Wallach, "College Credit for Reading Courses?—Yes!" *Journal of Reading*, (May 1977) 20:688-692.

Strong arguments are presented for granting credit for remedial reading courses for community college students.

Hubert, Karen M., "Escape Into Writing—Ready-to-Use Adventure Story Idea Cards," *Learning*, (August/September 1977) 6:104-114.

Because the experience and skills involved relate so closely to reading, this article and the idea cards have value for the reading as well as the writing teachers. The whole purpose is to involve the student in the printed or the written word, and Hubert's have the potential to bring every student to his toes.

Kasdon, Lawrence M., "One Man's Opinion: What Is Fernald's Method?" *Reading World*, (May 1977) 16:326-328.

Because so many reading specialists tend to think of tracing words when they hear the name of Fernald, Kasdon explains the philosophy of using any means by which the child can learn to read. He shows the place for tracing as being a part of the means for building a word bank.

Lesiak, Judi, "There is a Need for Word Attack Generalizations," *Reading Improvement*, (Summer 1977) 14:100-103.

Extremists at both ends of this teaching-of-reading issue would do well to read this carefully researched paper on the phonic generalizations which fit the majority of the cases. The students, says the author, must have some ways to aid them in new word attack.

Mavrogenes, Nancy A., Carol K. Winkley, Earl Hanson, and Richard T. Vacca, "Concise Guide to Standardized Secondary and College Reading Tests," *Classroom Strategies for Secondary Teachers*, edited by W. John Harker, 1977, International Reading Association, pps. 8-18.

In four categories: Survey, Analytical, Diagnostic, and Special, the authors have listed and described almost sixty tests. Included with each is information about scope and level of test, date of publication and revisions, duration of test, and a brief resume of evaluation. Unless one owns a Buros, this is the best in the current decade.

Morrison, Coleman, and Mary C. Austin, *The Torch Lighters Revisited*, International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, Newark, Delaware, 1977, 94 pps.

As a follow-up study of a landmark survey in 1961 on the preparation of teachers of reading, this work shows both great progress and some disappointing facts. Sixteen years have passed, and we still have not figured out how to help secondary subject matter teachers to include reading skills as they teach! This study gives credit to teacher training institutions for developing reading courses in the curricular offerings, but shows they are weak in selection (or screening). All told, the scores run predominantly positive with a few dismaying exceptions. (Why are we failing to educate administrators in the importance of teaching reading at *all* levels?)

Olshavsky, Jill Edwards, "Reading as Problem Solving: An Investigation of Strategies," *Reading Research Quarterly*, (1976-77) 12:654-674.

The purpose of this study was to identify the types of strategies readers employ to comprehend an author's message. Three factors of strategy usage were examined: interest, reader proficiency, and writing style. The findings include:

1. The results confirm the hypothesis that readers with high interest apply strategies more frequently than readers with low interest.

2. The results failed to support the hypothesis that good readers use strategies more frequently.

3. The hypothesis that readers will use more strategies with abstract style materials was supported by the results.

It was concluded that further research was needed to develop a theory of reading as problem solving and for teaching strategies.

Reichurdt, Konrad W., "Playing Dead or Running Away—Defense Reactions During Reading," *Journal of Reading*, (May 1977) 20:706-711.

This is an interesting article in which the author hypothesizes that in specific individuals an innate tendency toward hypo- or hypertensive levels of arousal wakefulness and specific bodily defense patterns are further developed under positive and negative reinforcing situations such as those found in the classroom. Individuals who enter formal learning situations with some tendency toward under- or over-arousal are further pushed in that direction by having the nondefensive aspect of their internal behavior stamped out through failure in classroom activities. The author says that these findings point to a need for remedial programs which normalize physiological responses *prior* to the normal cognitive procedures found in most special education classes.

(Staff) "News from the Professional Studies and Standards Committee: Department of Education Definition of Reading," *The Michigan Reading Journal*, (Spring 1977) 11:35-36.

The Michigan Department of Education and the Michigan Reading Association have jointly developed a definition for reading. The definition is based on the assumption that the "... final outcome of reading instruction is comprehension." It currently needs a sentence or two about the *affective* area of reading (reading for enjoyment). Since the definition will have an impact on everyone who teaches reading in the State of Michigan, it is an article that deserves your attention.

Vance, Hubert Booney, "Informal Assessment Techniques With LD Children," *Academic Therapy*, (Spring 1977) 12:291-303.

Since there are all degrees and kinds of learning disabilities, teachers should be able to recognize and measure the less severe disabilities by informal means. The position of the author is that diagnostic procedures are not effective unless they lead to the implementation of a practical program for each student. The author goes further, giving explanations and examples, to encourage teachers to make their own informal texts that will identify learning problems.