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Quick Reviews

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QUICK REVIEWS

Homer Carter Reading Council

Adams, Marilyn Jager, Richard C. Anderson, and Dolores Durkin, "Beginning Reading: Theory and Practice," *Language Arts*, (January 1978), 55:19-25.

The authors emphasize that there is still much to be learned about beginning reading, what it is and how it should be taught, and also, that classroom practices fail to reflect what is known to date. They present a detailed discussion of the problems that arise in beginning reading, and suggest ideas for effectively coping with these problems.

Blaschowitz, Camille, "Cloze Activities For Primary Readers" *The Reading Teacher* (December 1977) 31:300-302.

Many primary grade students have trouble with comprehension after they have acquired good decoding skills. Cloze activities that work for older readers will intimidate first and second graders. Simpler techniques may be used as: Oral cloze, "zip," "maze" and synonym cloze. These introductory cloze procedures lay the groundwork for standard cloze procedures in the middle and upper grades.

Cassidy, Jack, "Reporting Pupil Progress in Reading: Parents vs Teachers" *Reading Teacher* (December 1977) 31:294-296.

This is a research study done to show the ten factors both parents and teachers felt were important in relating children's reading progress. Both groups seemed to be most interested in what parents can do to help their children, and second, in knowing what each child's specific weaknesses and strengths were in various reading skills. At the bottom of the list for *both* groups were such factors as reading levels and letter grades.

Chambers, Aiden, "Letter From England: Talking about Reading—Back to Basics? Part II," *The Horn Book Magazine* (December 1977) 53:700-708.

The author charges the administrators of our schools with devaluing reading literature as a life habit, by the way they set priorities on activities. Questions which administrators should answer are: "How much time is Johnny given to read for reading's own sake? How many books is he given to choose from? How much

do his teachers read? How much are his tastes and opinions allowed to enter into the work? How much do we value Literature as a primary, unique, essential feature of any life worth living?"

Degler, Lois Sauer, "Using the Newspaper to Develop Reading Comprehension Skills," *Journal of Reading* (January 1978) 21:339-342.

"With careful planning, fun and motivating skills, based on the newspaper, can help students develop their reading-thinking skills" — recall, infer, evaluate, and appreciate. Degler provides good creative examples of activities to do with the newspaper that reinforce these skills.

Forester, Anne D., "What Teachers Can Learn From Natural Readers" *The Reading Teacher*, (November 1977) 31:120.

A report of a study at first grade level which suggests that the natural learning strategies used by children who learn to read at home might be effective in a classroom setting.

Fowler, Charles W., "Making the Most of the School Day," *The Education Digest* (December 1977) 43:28-29.

If student test scores are falling, it may be because schools are devoting about 100 hours less time to teaching than they did twenty years ago. Lengthening the school day and/or the school year could pay off in increased learning and higher test scores.

Gentile, Lance M., and Merna M. McMillan, "Humor and the Reading Program," *Journal of Reading* (January 1978) 21:343-349.

"Out of the overflow of good humor and comedy comes a healthy sense of proportion or sanity." Gentile and McMillan lament the passing of humor in our literature and on television — no more Mark Twain riverboat pilots delightfully directing landsmen in moving a gangplank. Because types of humor are dependent on age and experience, the authors define what's funny for ages ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen, and then provide a list of *funny* books for each age group.

Goodman, Yetta and Dorothy J. Watson, "A Reading Program to Live With: Focus on Comprehension," *Language Arts* (November/December 1977) 54:868-879.

Teachers are becoming disenchanted with highly specific skill-oriented programs, this article claims. Teachers are discarding some of their previous practices to search for activities and procedures suitable to a reading program that is student-centered in nature,

keeps language and thought intact, and has comprehension as its focus. Before setting up a new reading program, they suggest teachers answer these four questions: What is reading? How do children learn? What instruction is compatible with my views of reading and learning? What resources are available?

Hack, Gary, "Theme Schemes," *Teacher* (January 1977) 94:77-78.

Theme Schemes is a stimulating and fascinating way to entice children to read a variety of content. Motivation techniques include: bulletin boards that flash lights, activity cards, and books of adventure, mystery, and autobiography. The children make their own choices, prepare a folder, and are evaluated with a teacher-pupil conference.

Harper, Robert J. and Gary Kilarr, "The Law and Reading Instruction," *Language Arts* (November/December 1977) 54:913-919.

The authors discuss what has led up to more and more state legislatures establishing and redefining, with great specificity, the exact outcomes of the educational process, and, as a result, to the courts having begun to entertain more and more specific charges of inequality and inadequacy in fulfilling these established objectives. In cases where a school's reading program is deemed inadequate, courts have used test scores to set up requirements based on grade equivalent scores. Unfortunately, say Harper and Kilarr, grade equivalent scores should not be interpreted as reading levels for grades in school. The notion that there is a reading level for each grade is false.

Indrisano, Roselmina, "Managing the Classroom Reading Program," *Instructor* (January 1978) 87:117-120.

This model for classroom management is based on the individual child's needs and strengths. The ideas include usage of learning centers, skills checklists, and color-coded instructional materials which, according to the author, should result in greater productivity for teacher and learners.

Lawson, Tana, "Word Search Center," *Learning* (January 1978) 6:20.

This description of a unique use for a montage of words created by teacher and/or students would be applicable at most grade levels. Eleven suggested tasks could be added to or recycled with a new montage. Vocabulary—classification—alphabetizing—and much more. *Clip and Save!* item—share with your fellow teachers.

McDonnell, Gloria M. and E. Bess Osburn, "New Thoughts about Reading Readiness," *Language Arts* (January 1978) 55:26-29.

Several Title I teachers in Fairfax County in Virginia, dissatisfied with the information received from existing standardized reading readiness tests, decided, in order to help their children more effectively, to construct a readiness checklist based on Marie Clay's research and her diagnostic test (Clay, Marie M., *Reading: The Patterning of Complex Behavior*, Auckland, New Zealand, 1972, and *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties: A Diagnostic Survey*, Auckland, New Zealand, 1972). A diagram and explanation of this checklist is included in the article.

Morrison, Faye, "On the Right Track," *Teacher* (February 1977) 94:94-99.

Practical and useful techniques for teaching elementary students to organize research materials are discussed in this article. The ideas are designed for teachers to help students in the lower grades learn methods and techniques of research which will adequately prepare them for the upper grades.

Muia, Joseph A., and Eugene T. Connors, "Legal Entanglements of Reading Clinics' Diagnostic Procedures," *Journal of Reading* (January 1978) 21:321-328.

Dear me! Reading clinics beware! Do you realize you could land in court if you do not heed PL94-142? You could be cited for your referral process, your interview procedure, and your follow-up prescriptions. In this article the authors provide seventeen recommendations from the Education for All Handicapped Children Act to help reading clinics avoid legal involvement.

McNair, Shirley, and Velma Bischoff, "Cooperative Reading," *Teacher* (December 1976) 94:61-62.

Can a classroom teacher find happiness with a remedial reading specialist in a coordinated curriculum? The article deals with steps one might take to develop, maintain, and improve a reading program for disabled readers, with the concentrated effort of classroom teachers *and* the reading teacher.

Peterson, Jean, "A Painless Approach to Vocabulary Building" *Instructor* (December 1977) 87:86-88.

An interesting and enjoyable way of developing vocabulary is presented, emphasizing identification and, most importantly, usage of each week's new words. Practice and useful ideas are given which should result in very *loquacious* students.

Shafer, Robert E. "Will Psycholinguistics Change Reading in Secondary Schools?" *Journal of Reading* (January 1978) 21:301-316.

A convincing argument for initiating the psycholinguistic approach at the secondary level is presented by Shafer. He first reviews the history of reading at the secondary level, going back to Strang, Traxler, McCullough, Early, and Karlin; however, we discover that in the past thirty years the status of reading instruction in the secondary school has changed very little. Perhaps the skills model isn't doing the job. By using the psycholinguistic approach; i.e., by directly attacking the written language for meaning first, "we can make learning to read easy for the thousands of high school students who not only find reading difficult but well-nigh impossible."

Stecher, Judith, "TV As A Two-Way Street in Learning," *Teacher*, (November 1976) 94:46-52.

Television is influencing today's children as a passive, second-hand experience, occupying far too much of every child's life. Judith Stecher says teachers can use the "boob-tube" as a valuable stimulus for language expansion, and makes several suggestions for applying TV as a teaching tool.

Strange, Michael, and Richard L. Allington, "Use the Diagnostic Prescriptive Model Knowledgeably" *The Reading Teacher* (December 1977) 31:290-293.

Teachers need a knowledge of reading theory and methodology in order to use this technique. However, the authors point out that a disturbing tendency exists, which places excessive reliance on systems, testing, contracts, and so forth. This can be a detriment to the use of sound teacher judgment. The authors discuss the proper use of the various techniques.