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Quick Reviews

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QUICK REVIEWS

Homer Carter Reading Council

Beil, Drake, "The Emperor's New Cloze," *Journal of Reading*, (April 1977) 20:601-604.

In a humorous style Beil attempts to present six new variations on the cloze procedure. However, only two appear to be new. The first is to apply the cloze procedure to other instructional areas such as music. After providing students an opportunity to use the cloze test on popular lyrics assigned by the teacher, students can begin to design their own. The second was to provide a chance to express language development by using the cloze approach with famous poetry, haiku, cinquain, or limericks.

Billig, Edith, "Children's Literature as a Springboard to Content Areas," *The Reading Teacher*, (May 1977) 30:855-859.

Why not use *Julie of the Wolves* and *Island of the Blue Dolphins* to teach social studies and science? Billig presents a convincing argument for getting away from the original textbooks when kids aren't turned on. Let them live a little while they read. Nothing wrong with finding content reading pleasurable.

Cole, William, "Children's Books: The Best of the Season," *Saturday Review*, May 28, 1977, pp. 31-33.

Because he is also a writer of children's books, Cole adeptly chooses fifty of the best books, describes them in a most charming way, and gives reading levels and interest areas. The range of book types is incredibly wide, from nature study to comic verse, from sports biography to Indian art.

Criscuolo, Nicholas P., "Book Reports: Twelve Creative Alternatives," *The Reading Teacher*, (May 1977) 30:893-895.

When a steady diet of written book reports induces the "ughs" try a Criscuolo remedy: "Academy Awards, Lost and Found, Reading Mobilizers, Book-A-Trip, Dress Up Day, Computerized Dating, Rebuses, Quiz Shows, It's in the Headlines, Book Friends, Collage Posters, or Shape It, Scrape It, Drape It." Reporting will be exciting.

Davis, Jerry B., "Improving Reading and the Teaching of Science," *The Clearing House*, (May 1977) 50:390-392.

In a series of rather general statements, this author seeks to show how science teachers may help students become more effective in the study of science. The article is unique in that there is an attempt to use non-print materials to provide background for improving reading. The trend has been to substitute non-print materials for reading assignments.

Hawkins, Joseph A. Jr., "How Should Reading and Study Skills Test Scores Correlate?", *Journal of Reading*, (April 1977) 20:570-572.

Reading achievement and study achievement failed to correlate significantly in a study conducted at Howard University's Center for Academic Reinforcement. However, the belief that reading and study skills should be taught together was not disproven by the limited findings of the study. Since the scope of both study skills and reading skills is very diverse, it was indicated that further research was needed.

Hildreth, Gertrude, "One Alphabet for Reading and Writing English," *Spelling Progress Bulletin*, (Spring 1977) XVII: 10-11.

The history of teaching reading and writing in America is marked by obstacles unwittingly put in the path of progress. Hildreth narrates the story of one aspect of our difficulties with teaching writing, showing convincingly how much simpler it would be if we would adopt a single model that has proven best. Her recommendation is an italic handwriting, brought into close alignment with the sans-serif printing press letters.

Johns, Jerry L., et al, "Assessing Reading Behavior," *Informal Reading Inventories*, International Reading Association, 36 pages, 1977.

The author and his helpers have performed a valuable service for all teachers who are interested in the hows and whys of informal inventories; having packed into this small booklet information ranging from history and construction to names and locations of informal test publishers. Included also is a carefully done summary of each article listed as dealing with the subject.

Kozol, Jonathan, "How Cuba Fought Illiteracy," *Learning*, (May/June 1977) 5:26-29.

The most outstanding thing about this article is the blithe manner in which this astonishing story is told. UNESCO officially

described what many people called a miracle as “a difficult conquest obtained through work, technique and organization.” Facts defy acceptance — 100,000 teenagers went out and taught three-quarters of a million adults to read in less than a year.

Peck, Cynthia Van Norden and Martin Kling, “Adult Literacy in the Seventies: Its Definition and Measurement,” *Journal of Reading*, (May 1977) 20:677-682.

It became evident in the early 1970’s that the definition and assessment of adult literacy was relevant only to a given population rather than a nation as a whole. Through a number of key studies and the re-examination of the “criteria of literacy,” a new definition evolved. Instead of grade level designations, the definition emphasizes functional reading: “. . . reading as a tool and as a measure to apply life skills in the context of the learner. At present a single standard of measurement for all populations has not been found.”

Pikulski, John J. and Pikulski, Edna C., “Cloze, Maze and Teacher Judgment,” *The Reading Teacher*, (April 1977) 30:766-770.

Use caution on the cloze if you’re using it exclusively to determine a student’s instructional level. The Pikulskies found in their study that the cloze and maze when compared with teacher judgment overestimated a child’s independent, instruction and frustration reading levels.

Piper, Terrence and Rosemary Hahn Powe, “Motivating the Slow Reader,” *Academic Therapy*, (Spring 1977) 12:357-360.

This article outlines a means of motivating slow readers without employing the behavior modification techniques, which are seen as too closely related to bribery by some. The description includes the use of smiling face rewards on short term goals and development of a mural for long term goals.

Rieck, Billie Jo, “How Content Teachers Telegraph Messages Against Reading,” *Journal of Reading*, (May 1977) 20:646-648.

A survey of thirty-four high school content area teachers indicated that although they assigned students a certain number of pages to read, their non-verbal attitude told the students that there was no real reason to do so. A series of questions were presented to stimulate the readers to look at their own attitude toward reading.

Rigg, Par, “Getting the Message, Decoding the Message,” *The Reading Teacher*, (April 1977) 30:745-749.

The consultant-author found some real eye-openers about

prejudice and definitions of the reading process as reflected through the attitudes of two teachers and two Chaldean students labeled with “severe language impairment” and “inability to comprehend.” Worth noting that one boy read words beautifully with no regard for meaning; the other read for meaning with little concern for word accuracy.

Sawyer, Diane J., “Developing Articulated Reading Programs,” *The Clearing House*, (December 1976) 50:174-177.

Using quotes and the philosophical support of many experts, Sawyer arrives at the invincible position that “if we are to promote reading attainment” we must first lay out precise courses of action which all reading teachers must accept and adhere to. Her logic is flawless and her reasoning excellent. It is tragic that teaching reading cannot be like using a recipe; having all the ingredients in proper proportion *should* (but does not) result in perfection.

Venezky, Richard L., “NAEP—Should We Kill the Messenger Who Brings Bad News?” *The Reading Teacher*, (April 1977) 30:750-755.

Shame on the National Assessment of Educational Progress for coloring the results of their 1971 and 1975 surveys “to make them appear more like what the general population wants to hear.” Venezky decides “we should neither kill nor embrace the messenger who comes with news from such a group; instead we should send him back to work in his own garden.”

Wyatt, Flora, “The CB Reading Center—a Big 10-4,” *The Reading Teacher*, (May 1977) 30:887-892.

Flora Wyatt gets a big 10-4 for capitalizing on the current CB craze by setting up a CB station learning center. Students get a “handle,” get tasks from the CB Station, use *Break, The CBers Handbook* to decipher a code. The author makes it easy for anyone to set up this center by supplying a list of resources, materials, physical plans of the center, and instructions for the tasks.

“The Learning Center: Reading Success,” *Learning*, (March 1977) 5:66-67.

To teach the use of a dictionary for spelling one must provide the student with a background in the possible spellings of each of the sounds of the language (phonics). With this the student has experience on which to base an “educated guess” as to what spelling should be applied.