Ten-Second Reviews

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"Digressions, incontestably, are the sunshine; they are the life, the soul of reading; take them out of this book for instance, you might as well take the book along with them."

Laurence Sterne

Abrams, Jules, "Dyslexia: Another Hard Look," *Reading News,* College Reading Association, York, Pennsylvania, (November, 1974), Vol. 3, No. 4, p. 2.

Abrams indicates that in the past several decades there have been intriguing professional shifts of opinion regarding the etiology of reading disabilities. There have been so many diagnostic labels used that educators have become antagonistic toward them. He recognizes that the term "dyslexia" has become a "wastebasket" label which teachers hide behind in order to conceal their inadequacies. However, he contends that there are valid cases of dyslexia. He suggests that there are three types of dyslexia and that their incidence is rare—less than 1% of the total population of disabled readers. The author briefly describes the three types and concludes by stating, "The child born with dyslexic tendencies will then develop dyslexia only if the initial teaching to which he is exposed is not sufficiently effective . . ."

Allington, Richard L., "Sticks and Stones . . . But, Will Names Never Hurt Them?", *The Reading Teacher,* (January, 1975), 28:364-369.

In the past decade teachers have been inundated with new educational terminology such as hyperactive, brain damaged, learning disabled, maturational lag, dyslexic, perceptually handicapped, minimal brain damage, and others. Allington emphasizes that this "labeling" phenomena is professionally unsound and educationally unwise. Few of the labels have a single commonly accepted definition, they do not communicate useful information, and the use of a label shifts the burden of failure to the child. The author suggests that educators begin

the remedial process by providing instruction on the task identi-
fied as yet unmastered by the student rather than attempting
to explain why he is not achieving academically.

Axelrod, Jerome, "Getting the Main Idea Is Still the Main Idea,"
Journal of Reading, (February, 1975), 18:383-387.

The main idea is still the central feature of reading compre-
hension. Axelrod's article presents some techniques on the im-
provement of teaching this most important comprehension skill
by offering multiple choice main idea reading exercises. He
stresses that students should understand the question and that
they should learn the meanings of differences in main idea, best
title, and moral of a story. He provides explanations and ex-
amples throughout the article.

Barr, Rebecca C., "Instructional Pace Differences and their Effect on
Reading Acquisition," *Reading Research Quarterly,* (1973-74),
Vol. IX, No. 4, pp. 526-554.

Barr presents and discusses her investigation of the influence
of homogeneous and differential pacing of classes on basal word
learning and mastery, and the effect of basal word learning on
general reading achievement. It is an intriguing study which
could open up a whole new area of reading research.

Berg, Leslie A., "Affective Teaching—Neglected Practice in Innercity
School?", *The Reading Teacher,* (January, 1975), 28:360-363.

Berg specifies that while the attention currently accorded
Black English is intended as a positive step toward improving
literacy in innercity schools, it is concerned principally with
language and the cognitive dimensions of learning as opposed
to the affective domain—such as self-concept and the role of
teacher expectations. This emphasis is not entirely unexpected
considering the injection of linguistics and psycholinguistics into
the field of reading. The overriding issues remain those of inter-
personal relationships and quality teaching with all that the
latter implies. If the teacher cannot accord her students the
respect and dignity due them as fellow human beings, her ef-
forts to innovate, linguistically or otherwise, will not succeed.

Betts, Emmett A., "Reading: Linguistic Guidelines," *Spelling Progress Bulletin,* (Winter, 1974), Vol. XIV, No. 4.

In this article Betts discusses the contributions the field of linguistics has made to reading instruction. He points out that one, but only one, of the prerequisites to understanding word perception in reading is a "working knowledge of phonemics and grammar." Betts states that a streamlined course in phonemics relevant to the needs of teachers provides an understanding of speech sounds related to spellings and syllable stress. It also builds an awareness and respect for different dialects as well as a working knowledge of grammar. Betts remarks that linguistics, psychology, and sociology all offer guidelines to the escalation of reading instruction.

Bleil, Gordon, "Evaluating Educational Materials," *Journal of Learning Disabilities,* 8:12-19.

The author indicates that this introduction to materials evaluation is intended to stimulate the educator to learn to ask the right questions before purchasing materials. He reminds his readers that teachers are less and less dispensers of narrow areas of knowledge, and more and more managers of materials and systems created by technicians and specialists. Evaluation of materials can be on a subjective personal level, or objective measurable standards can be defined. Bleil examines both the subjective and objective approach. He outlines certain qualities to look for and certain pitfalls to avoid.

Boy Scouts of America, *Family Living Skill Book,* (BSA #6587), and *First Aid Skill Book,* (BSA #6588), Supply Division BSA, North Brunswick, N.J. 08902.

These two books are designed for use with children reading on a third or fourth grade level. They are aimed at children from low and moderate income families or children in remedial reading programs anywhere. They are suitable for classroom use. *Family Living Skill Book* will help children better understand child care, family responsibilities, home safety, family recreation, and family problems. *First Aid Book* helps children learn how to respond to common medical emergencies. Sample copies of the two books are 30c each and teachers' guides are also available.

Carver, Ronald P., "Two Dimensions of Tests: Psychometric and Edumetric," *American Psychologist,* (July, 1974), Vol. 29, 7:512-518.

Carver carefully describes and discusses the differences between psychometric and edumetric tests. He indicates that, when a measure of individual differences is desired, a "psychometric" test which measures an individual in relation to a normative group should be used. Similarly when a measure of within-individual gain or growth is desired, an "edumetric" test is desirable. Teacher-made tests and criterion-referenced tests are edumetric in design. The thrust of Carver's article is to point out that there is room for both tests that focus on stable between-individual differences and those that measure progressive within-individual gains. He stated that a test may be evaluated with respect to both psychometric and edumetric dimensions. However, Carver indicates clearly that the edumetric dimension of tests has been neglected by psychologists involved in testing and he expressed the hope that future tests will be developed and evaluated with an appreciation of both dimensions.

Cunningham, Dick and Scott L. Shablank, "Selective Reading Guide-O-Rama: The Content Teacher's Best Friend," *Journal of Reading,* (February, 1975), 18:380-382.

If teachers are to guide students in systematically attacking printed material, they must construct methods which guide the process as the student is simultaneously involved in that process. It becomes the teacher's task to create a step-by-step format for modeling their own appropriate reading behaviors. In attempting to help fellow teachers develop such a format, the authors have developed a workable guidance technique: the "Selective Reading Guide-O-Rama." One teacher who has used this technique stated, "This idea comes as close as I can to standing by my student with my hand on his shoulder while he reads the assignment."

Divoky, Diane, "The Silberbergs: Education's Gentle Iconoclasts, Learn," *Learning: The Magazine for Creative Teaching,* (February, 1975), pp. 72-76.

The article presents the highlights of the Silberbergs book,

Who Speaks For The Child? The book offers advice for teachers and parents and is unique in its reliance on common sense. It presents iconoclasms concerning perceptual-motor training, cheating, poor handwriting, homework, IQ tests and intelligence, learning disabilities, hyperactivity, and normalcy. The Silberbergs emphasize that people must stop assigning blame and start dealing with realities. Children cannot be fitted into neat categories.

Draba, Robert E., "Guidelines for Viable In-service Education," *Journal of Reading,* (February, 1975), 18:368-371.

The author offers a set of twelve guidelines for viable in-service activities to improve classroom reading instruction. These general guidelines express a specific point of view which emphasizes the importance of teacher initiation. The in-service facilitator must interpret the guidelines and determine the extent to which he will use them. Draba suggests that this point of view is one of several concerning the way to achieve productive in-service instruction.

Durkin, Dolores, "A Six Year Study of Children Who Learned to Read in School at the Age of Four," *Reading Research Quarterly,* (1974-75), Vol. X, No. 1, pp. 9-61.

Durkin's study reports the reading achievement during grades 1-4 of children who participated in a two year, pre-first grade language arts program. It also compares their achievement with that of classmates who did not participate in the program. Those who were not in the program attended kindergartens in which some attention was given to numeral and letter naming and also to the building of a small reading vocabulary. The reading achievement of the experimental subjects exceeded that of the control group each of the 4 years. In the interesting discussion of her study Durkin points out its limitations and offers tentative conclusions.

Durkin, Dolores, "The Importance of Goals for Reading Instruction," *The Reading Teacher,* (January, 1975), 28:380-383.

From regular visitations to elementary classrooms the author pinpoints several examples of the indefensible goals of "abiding

by tradition," "abiding by the calendar," and "abiding by the basal reader." Durkin's classroom observations also revealed instruction that appeared not to have a goal—at least not any that related to reading. She outlines various illustrations which demonstrate the urgent need for teachers to ask themselves repeatedly, "Why am I doing this?" The author also indicated that while the details of superior instructional programs vary, visits to schools make it very clear that all of them are characterized by daily efforts to match instruction to what children need to learn in order to become better readers. And, isn't that what individualized instruction is all about?

Ennis, Carolyn G., "The Reading Alibi—A Major School Problem," *Journal of Reading,* (January, 1975), 18:320-323.

The author designs a revealing skit to emphasize the negative attitudes of teachers and parents toward students who are poor readers. Reading and discussion of the skit may help teachers become aware of alternative solutions. She concludes that faith, positive reinforcement, time, and a pupil who is taught to read in grades K-12 is the solution to this major school problem.

Erickson, Lawrence and Wayne Otto, *In-service Education to Improve Reading Instruction.* International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware, 1973.

The authors present the need for and benefits of in-service education. While giving enthusiastic encouragement to in-service programs, they suggest areas of caution in planning and implementing successful workshops. It is indicated that a purpose for in-service must be clearly established and roles and responsibilities of personnel in implementing the program must be properly defined. Suggested models and formats of in-service reading programs are presented. This small booklet is a valuable tool for administrators, curriculum directors, or committees concerned with reading improvement.

Garzone, Tullio, "Is Reading for Meaning a Teachable Skill for the Beginning Reader?", *Reading World,* (October, 1974), 14:25-36.

The author explores and discusses the meanings of "Meaning" as it pertains to the teacher of beginning reading. The

two-fold instructional goal for the teacher of beginning read-
ing is decoding and meaning. Regardless of which program is
used, the teacher quickly discerns the teachable, concretized,
symbolization of decoding. Comprehension, understanding, as-
similation, in short "meaning" is, to say the least, less teachable
less concrete, less symbolic. Garzone goes on to delineate the
meanings of "meaning" and to probe it as a teachable skill for
beginning readers. He cites and describes four meanings of
"meaning" and offers a clearer perception of the concept of
comprehension. For the teacher of beginning reading the major
task seems to address itself to the kinds of questions and exer-
cises that will result in the grasp of the four meanings of
"meaning" delineated by Garzone.

Glasser, William, "A New Look at Discipline," *Learning: The Maga-
zine for Creative Teaching,* (December, 1974), pp. 6-11.

The author presents a ten-step program for teachers in deal-
ing with classroom discipline. While he does not ignore feelings,
he emphasizes behavior through a sequence of responses de-
signed to incorporate success experiences—no matter how
small—for the teacher as well as student. This program is now
in use and works well. However, he affirms that more feedback
is needed to work out various contingencies; and he would like
very much to hear from any elementary teacher who tries this
plan for at least four weeks. Glasser favors clear firm plans for
changing behavior.

Green, Richard T. and Robert Way, "Reading As An Existential Act,"
Journal of Reading, (January, 1975), 18:301-307.

The authors view reading as claiming self and present impli-
cations of this concept for teachers, parents, and children. Learn-
ing to read is not an end in itself. Reading is a means of seek-
ing information, of seeking enjoyment, of seeking understand-
ing; in short, of seeking self. This enables us to see it as a
process. Green and Way carefully explain how reading is a
claiming of self. The self merges the subjective and objective.
The reader reaches out to the world and takes it in. One reads
to become one.

Iles, Betty, "The Effects of T.O. and i.t.a. on Reading and Spelling

Skills of Elementary School," *Spelling Progress Bulletin,* (Winter, 1974), Vol. XIV, No. 4.

The purpose of this study was to gain information as to whether the medium of reading instruction had any measurable effect on the reading and spelling skills of elementary school children. The sample studied consisted of two groups, one of which had learned to read using T.O. (traditional orthography) while the other group had been taught with an augmented alphabet, namely Pitman's i.t.a. (Initial Teaching Alphabet). The group scores from a standardized reading test and two standardized spelling tests were compared to each other and to national norms. Comparisons were made by grade level and for the total group. Spelling errors were classified by type and also compared. According to this study, the i.t.a. group had significantly better reading and spelling scores. The conclusion is that i.t.a. appears to be an effective medium for teaching reading to first graders.

Johns, Jerry L., "A New Graded Word List for a Quick Estimate of Reading Ability," *The Michigan Reading Journal,* (Fall, 1974), Vol. 8, No. 3, pp. 53-54.

The author discusses briefly LaPray and Ross' word lists (1969) and also the list of Harris and Jacobsen (1972). Johns presents a core list of 10 words at each level and suggests that teachers can use the lists to estimate a student's reading level and get some idea of a student's strengths and weaknesses in word attack. Provided are the directions for administering the word lists as well as guidelines for assessing the independent, instructional, and frustrational reading levels. However, the author cautions teachers about the limitations of using an isolated word list in assessing reading strengths and weaknesses.

Klare, George R., "Assessing Readability," *Reading Research Quarterly,* (1974-75), Vol. X, No. 1, pp. 62-102.

The author reviews formulas and related predictive devices since 1960. He presents four categories: 1) revisions of existing formulas, 2) new formulas, 3) application aids for both manual and machine use, and 4) predictions of readability for foreign languages. Klare concludes his study with suggestions for choos-

ing a formula based on the following: 1) special versus general needs, 2) manual versus machine application, 3) simple versus complex formulas, and 4) sentence length versus sentence complexity. The author stresses that formulas provide good indices of difficulty but they do not indicate the causes of difficulty or suggest how to write more readable materials.

Mavrogenes, Nancy A., "Using Psycholinguistic Knowledge to Improve Secondary Reading," (January, 1975), 18:280-285.

Mavrogenes describes the use of a wide variety of cues which can improve secondary reading and offers ways to increase students' awareness of them. Any reader, in order to comprehend, uses any and all cues available to him, so it becomes clear that no cue system can be neglected in the teaching of reading. The author reiterates that reading is a complex process and many factors contribute to reading ability. She emphasizes that in the end it is the teacher who makes the difference. He must understand the learner, the nature of reading, and the procedures of teaching and must apply that knowledge.

Peltz, Fillmore K., "The Effect Upon Comprehension of Repatterning Based on Students' Writing Patterns," *Reading Research Quarterly,* (1973-74), Vol. IX, No. 4, pp. 603-621.

Peltz re-wrote tenth grade studies materials using the language patterns found in the students' own writing. Performance using the students' style of writing was compared with performance when the original version was read. A single multiple choice test revealed that while there was no significant difference in the number of correct responses to the multiple choice questions, the results showed significantly more correct responses to cloze items based upon the students' style of written passages. Continued efforts are needed in the development of materials more easily comprehended by readers of all ages.

Pflaum, Susanna F., "The Development of Language and Reading In the Young Child." Charles E. Merrill, Columbus, Ohio, 1972.

The author divides her book into two parts. Part I deals with language development and its significance for intellectual and academic progress. She discusses language deficit and language

difference. In Part II Pflaum discusses the transition from oral language to reading, the needed reading readiness skills, and also suggests materials for beginning reading. She emphasizes individualizing instruction and provides checklists and diagnostic instruments to aid teachers in planning effective programs for the acquisition of language and reading skills.

Pikulski, John J., "Criterion Referenced Measures for Clinical Evaluations," *The Reading World,* (December, 1974), Vol. XIV, No. 2, pp. 116-128.

Pikulski reviews the general concept of "criterion referenced testing" and discusses its possible implications for clinical evaluation. He points out that the distinction between diagnostic tests and criterion referenced or norm referenced measures is largely a matter of emphasis. Diagnostic tests are concerned with definition of disability and emphasizes the etiology of problems. Criterion referenced tests establish the score necessary for "passing" ahead of time without reference to scores usually obtained by others taking that test. Pikulski discusses five characteristics of criterion referenced tests and then goes on to consider the concept of criterion referenced testing to clinical evaluation in a somewhat directed manner. He points out that criterion referenced testing can be fully used only if clinical programs provide instruction following the diagnosis of a reading problem. He presents five areas of caution in using criterion referenced measurements and concludes that with the small number of students that are typically part of clinical instruction, individualization of instruction and goals should be possible. Criterion referenced measures are simple ways of determining whether goals have or have not been met.

Pryor, Frances, "Poor Reading—Lack of Self Esteem?", *The Reading Teacher,* (January, 1975), 28:358-359.

Pryor gives a striking account of "George," a disabled reader, and reminds readers that how students feel about themselves is a strong factor in the success of anything they do. A student who has a positive concept of self will usually learn faster regardless of mental ability than a child who lacks self-esteem. Bolstering a pupil's feelings about himself is perhaps the first step toward

improving academic problems. If the teacher cannot accord students the respect and dignity due them as fellow human beings, her efforts to innovate, linguistically or otherwise, will not succeed.

Rauch, Sidney J., "The Administrator and The Reading Program: Variations on the In-service Theme," *The Reading World,* (December, 1974), Vol. XIV, No. 2, pp. 112-114.

Rauch reminds his readers that the longest running topic on the education scene is "Why Johnny Can't Read." He also points out that the study, "National Search for Exemplary Reading Programs" suggests four factors that are responsible for reading success or failure. Two of these factors are school leadership and in-service teacher training. The author presents eight workable recommendations to administrators for providing effective in-service teacher training programs in reading.

Siler, Earl R., "The Effects of Syntactic and Semantic Constraints on the Oral Reading Performance of Second and Fourth Graders," *Reading Research Quarterly,* (1973-74), Vol. IX, No. 4, pp. 583-602.

Siler's research investigates an aspect of the relationship between oral and written language. His study is concerned with the effects of syntactic and/or semantic violations on the oral reading performance of second and fourth graders. Findings indicated that sentences violated syntactically were also violated semantically. Siler concluded that syntax appeared to have a greater effect than semantics on oral reading performance.

Thompson, Richard A., and King Merritt, Jr., "Turn On To A Reading Center," *The Reading Teacher,* (January, 1975), 28:384-388.

Many educators are excited by the challenge and interest sparked by the learning center approach. A learning center is a recent innovation and there are many types and many ways to produce a learning center atmosphere. The learning center idea produces eager, aggressive learners rather than passive students. Students develop certain behaviors within an atmosphere of freedom. Pupils work at a pace they choose with materials suited for them. The teacher aids the student by providing opportunities

for self-pacing and independence in planning. The basic structure of the reading center is complete when the furniture, equipment and materials are arranged. The most important step is to design activities for students to learn the reading skills. The authors give suggestions for selecting materials, scheduling time, and evaluating students' progress.

Yoder, Albert C., "Reading Literature: Two Schools of Thought," *Journal of Reading,* (January, 1975), 18:312-315.

There are two popular approaches to reading in the literary world. The first approach is suggested as being impersonal, rigorously formal, text-centered, and detached. The second approach suggests that reading and education consist of understanding one's own experiences and becoming aware of what one thinks, feels, and values. The two approaches reflect De Quincey's thinking on the two functions of literature; the one teaches us and the other moves us. Yoder recommends that teachers of literature draw from both approaches rather than supporting one over the other. He suggests a two step method of drawing from both approaches.