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Personality Development Through Reading

Dorothy J. McGinnis
Western Michigan University

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Editorial Comment

PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH READING

This is an invitation to you, the teacher of reading, to lay aside for the moment the common quest for a magic list of reading skills and turn to that more nebulously defined objective, personality development through reading. Reading, like all human behavior, is a function of the total personality. When an individual reads, he *identifies*, *interprets*, and *evaluates* in accordance with his needs, goals, wishes, defenses, and values. Furthermore, his willingness to put forth effort to learn to read will be proportionate to his desires, goals, and needs.

The concept that desirable personality characteristics and effective reading development are interrelated and interdependent is not new. Most teachers are willing to accept this hypothesis. But the ever-practical question remains: Precisely *what* can be done about it in a classroom of thirty or forty children? Perhaps the following suggestions may serve as a springboard for action: Get to know and understand your children without prejudice of cumulative records or negative reports from others. Respect the integrity of each individual and *believe* in his basic desire and ability to succeed. Teach skills and use materials that are at instructional learning levels rather than frustration levels. Try to make them meaningful to the child. Show your own personality, breadth of interests, and recognition of individual needs by providing an open and rich atmosphere for reading in the classroom.

If you have the energy to make full use of these suggestions, your reading program will incorporate motivation, experiential background and its enrichment along with a recognition of needs and abilities in the classroom. It will be centered around meaningful, successful learning experiences, and growing children. It will be an integral force in the lifetime process of personality development.

Dorothy J. McGinnis
Editor