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## Round Robin

Dorothy E. Smith

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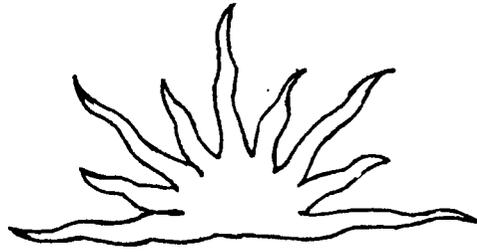
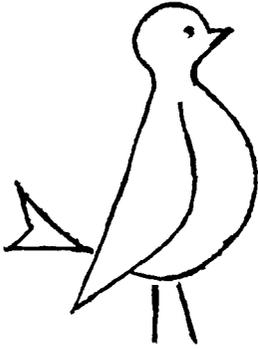
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## ROUND ROBIN

*Dorothy E. Smith, Editor*

Dear Editor:

I had reached my frustration level! As a fairly new art teacher I felt totally helpless in meeting my goals; unifying the wealth of materials and ideas that were to be found in books with my course content. I was slightly familiar with the Montessori Method and the phrase "liberty within limits," which allows each student "the freedom to choose his activity, but requires its execution in a structured framework."<sup>1</sup> It just lent itself to the type of activities and programs I wanted in the classroom.

I had my students do pictorial book reviews with captions which they could show and explain to the class. They had total freedom in their choice of books. However, I had four students who could not read at all, and many who could not spell. And there was one student who never failed to hand in a paper, but I was not prepared to deal with his writing techniques. He would write patterns of four and five consonants in a row, then a vowel, and then repeat the process. From a distant view, his work looked like writing, but up close it looked like someone had gotten hold of a typewriter and just randomly pecked away! I knew from my projects, and general student response, that I had a wide range of abilities in my classes, but I honestly was shocked that I also had non-readers.

I could not put my finger on why, but the self-concept of the non-reader seemed to be very negative. His reading ability seemed to be a factor in his finding time for negative behavior in the classroom—

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<sup>1</sup> Goldberg, Miriam, *Education For The Disadvantaged*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967, p. 383.

perhaps because the success of an art project is dependent on good reading skills. Even in making a simple frame, the student has to know how to read a ruler. Glazes come with prescriptive directions which must be followed carefully. The list is endless.

One method I tried with the non-readers was to emphasize skill and care in lettering the alphabet. Success was almost one-hundred percent. I realized that I was not equipped to teach reading or improve reading problems but I had to do what I could. I extended our lettering unit to advertising and the student response was great. They had to be very careful about spelling, size, meaning, and vocabulary. The interest and success level was so high that I experienced no discipline problems.

I am slowly growing along with my students, and there is one thing I know from my own experience; every teacher is a teacher of reading!

Mrs. June Sturdivant