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## Round Robin

Dorothy E. Smith

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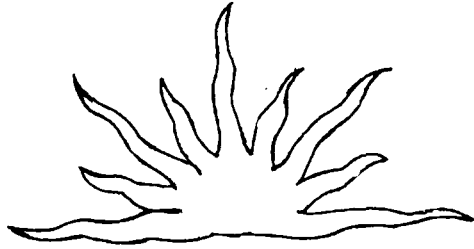
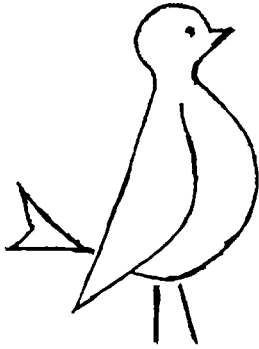
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## ROUND ROBIN

*Dorothy E. Smith, Editor*

Dear Editor,

Why are we always accepting "new" ways of teaching reading when we already have the most flexible way of all: individualized reading?

The term "individualized reading" actually encompasses much more than might be expected at first glance. Rather than being a particular method of teaching as it is most often considered to be, it is a way of thinking about reading which involves the recognition of and provision for individual differences. The child is thought of as an entity in and of himself with unique abilities, disabilities, interests, and needs. It is the realization that just as children grow at different rates physically, they also have their own personal preferences and previous experiences to set them apart from each other in their approach to reading. Why, then, group them together attempting to approximate their needs with the sole use of one textbook for an entire class?

Individualized reading not only personalizes instruction for the child, but also for the teacher. No two programs are or should be exactly alike. Rather, the teacher can tailor the situation to her personality and, at the same time, consider the reading needs of her class. Realizing her own strengths and weaknesses, she is able to formulate an effective program capitalizing on her particular strengths. However the program is structured, it must always be within the limits in which the teacher feels secure.

This type of program is designed to foster a good self concept in

each child. For instance, elimination of grouping avoids the stigma that is often attached to the poor reader. It also allows for limitless development without the frustration of being held back in what has been referred to as the “lock-step” method. And too, a special relationship between teacher and pupil develops readily during the personalized conferences when the child is included in planning his own goals and evaluating his own progress. It becomes obvious to him that his ideas are valuable and worthy of consideration. All of this, of course, results in his reading becoming more meaningful to him. And isn't that our goal?

Sincerely,  
Diane Griewank