

4-1-1966

Can We Meet the Challenge?

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Recommended Citation

Carter, H. L. (1966). Can We Meet the Challenge?. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 6 (3). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol6/iss3/1

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Editorial Comment

CAN WE MEET THE CHALLENGE?

Recently numerous sources of federal aid to education have been made available. The last Congress enacted over twenty measures concerning education, most of which affect in one way or another the public schools. Of special concern to teachers of reading are *The Elementary and Secondary Education Act*, *The Vocational Education Act*, and *The Economic Opportunity Act*. Large sums are to be expended for books, trade books, and instructional materials, for mechanized devices, for recordings, filmstrips and storage equipment. Even larger sums are to be spent for teachers, supervisors, consultants, librarians, and principals. These opportunities provided by the government for helping individuals at various levels to improve their reading skills present to all of us a repeated challenge. How well prepared are the teachers for these responsibilities? What will the answer be?

The teacher, in any instructional program, is the most important factor. He must *stimulate*, *inform*, and *guide*. The teacher of reading must view his student from a physical, psychological, and sociological point of view. He must be an experienced teacher who knows the field of reading and be able to instruct at any level. He must be well acquainted in the language arts and love both books and children.

Where can such teachers be found? In one mid-western university alone over four hundred requests were received asking for individuals who *could* serve as reading consultants, reading clinicians, and reading tutors. Only five such persons could be recommended. This challenge has not been anticipated by our universities.

Some school officials preparing to submit requests for government aid have well-designed plans for the preparation of reading specialists. They are not content to assume that if an individual can read he can teach children and adults to read. They, with the cooperation of colleges and universities, are making it possible for experienced teachers to secure a background in psychology, sociology, and educational practicum. These courses even at this late hour can be helpful. Perhaps the challenge can be met—in part.

Homer L. J. Carter
Editor