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Ten Second Reviews

By Blanche O. Bush
Western Michigan University

The changing emphasis found in professional literature dealing with the teaching of reading should alert the in-service teacher to the need for more adequate evaluation. Some of the current material related to evaluation are included in these reviews.

Austin, Mary C., Clifford L. Bush and Mildred H. Huebner, *Reading Evaluation Appraisal Techniques for School and Classroom*. The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1961.

The underlying theme, expressed by the authors, is that growth in reading skills plays a crucial role in child development. Methods and procedures for fostering growth must be understood by those responsible for reading programs. Reading achievement is related to multiple factors, physical, social and educational, that influence and limit pupil performance. Concrete suggestions include an informal reading inventory built on a current basal reading series. Charts of selected tests for all grade levels, along with samples of survey, sampling techniques, interpretation and follow-up activities are presented. Forms which can be used in guiding the teaching process and analyzing difficulties are shown.

Carnegie Corporation of New York Quarterly, " 'Tis Time He Should Begin to Read." Vol. IX, No. 2 (April) 1961.

Among the questions that have been explored under Carnegie grants described in this quarterly are, "What do we know about the factors that underlie the ability to read and how are they brought into play?" and "What research has been done on reading, and how are its findings translated into action?" Two articles which appealed to the reviewer are those by Omar K. Moore and Jack A. Holmes.

Moore believes most parents and educators grossly underestimate the intellectual capacities as well as the interests of

young children. They learn for themselves with the adult's role being simply to provide an environment. Moore with the cooperation of the Thomas A. Edison Laboratory is constructing an automated device which will perform many of the teacher's functions. This machine will be tried out on pupils ranging from pre-school age through high school. Moore stated that "his plan will have to stand the test of time and further experience."

Holmes with the aid of a skilled staff and a high-powered computer is trying to find out just what relevant weight each of several skills or abilities has in relation to reading achievement.

Carter, Homer L. J., "The Role of Evaluation in Understanding the Usefulness of Reading," *Journal of Developmental Reading*, 2:3 (Spring) 1959.

In order to evaluate any ability or skill, according to the author, one must know exactly what is to be measured. If reading is a compilation of isolated skills with visual training and speed the chief objectives, there are many standardized tests which can be used for evaluation. If the conceptual aspects of reading are emphasized and if reading is considered to be a thinking process carried on at various levels of difficulty, still other measures must be used such as informal inventories, observations and academic histories. An integration of all these facts and observations can be employed in an interpretation of reading achievement.

Cleary, Florence Damon, *Blueprints for Better Reading. School Programs for Promoting Skill and Interest in Reading*. The R. W. Wilson Company, New York, 1957.

The book is designed for those preparing themselves to teach and offers suggestions for developing specific reading skills. It is also designed as a procedural manual and "idea" book for practicing teachers. The chapter devoted to "Evaluating Skills" stresses the importance of judging the effective use of a skill. The point of difficulty, however, for the teacher is not "what" is to be evaluated but "how" these skills are to be identified and judged on the bases of the child's performance.

Denton, A. E., "Informal Methods of Appraisal," *What the Colleges are Doing in Planning and Improving College Reading Programs*. Oscar S. Causey, (ed.) Texas Christian University Press, Fort Worth (June) 1955.

As reading programs become broader and more flexible because of variance in material and purposes of reading and instructional objectives, it is logical to assume that these factors have influenced the interpretation of reading performance. Evaluation of reading should include standardized measures, but information gathered by informal methods often permits the teacher to adjust measurement to the needs and abilities of the particular student. Clues which might aid the instructor in perceiving the errors in the student's reading process are presented with suggestions for diagnosing reading disabilities which cannot be measured by standardized tests.

Kirk, Samuel A., with an Introduction by Marion Monroe, *Teaching Reading to Slow-Learning Children*. Houghton Mifflin Company, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1940.

Kirk's book will fill a definite need for teachers who wish to evaluate and help their slow-learning pupils. Instead of waiting until children have actually failed to learn to read, educators are now looking for early indications of difficulty and are changing emphasis from corrective to preventive work in reading. Educators are also attempting to recognize and adapt instruction to individual differences to a greater extent than ever before. Objectives and goals are being defined more clearly.

McCullough, Constance M., "Changing Concepts of Reading Instruction," *Changing Concepts of Reading Instruction*, International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, J. Allen Figurel (ed.) Scholastic Magazines, New York, Vol. 6, 1961.

Progress in reading is a reality because we have scientific evidence to judge practices and ways of disseminating that information to a large proportion of those who teach. McCullough sees the reading process as one of many facets. They are: (1) organization as a matter of balancing plans with safeguards, (2) diagnosis as everybody's continuous business, (3) approaches to

reading as requiring objective judgment and educating the public to the meaning of the research findings regarding the approaches used, (4) materials as diversified and requiring careful selection, (5) responsibility for reading instruction by all teachers, (6) research as indispensable for improvement, and (7) professional preparation as needing more stress on research design and instruction in reading methods as well as the language arts. The movement toward the five-year program for teacher education holds some promise of relief in this area. McCullough states that "reading instruction should not be left to one period a day or to one teacher, but carried all the day in all subjects at all levels."

Many other articles included in *Changing Concepts of Reading Instruction* should be helpful and thought provoking to the in-service teacher. McCullough expresses the basic ideas of evaluating and developing reading skills which are elaborated on by other authors.

McGinnis, Dorothy J., "The Preparation and Responsibility of Secondary Teachers in the Field of Reading," *The Reading Teacher*, International Reading Association, Chicago, Vol. 15, No. 2 (November, 1961).

"How well prepared are secondary teachers to develop reading skills on the part of their students?" The author, in attempting to evaluate the preparation and responsibility of secondary teachers in the field of reading, administered questionnaires to a sampling of secondary teachers and college freshmen. From the responses of 570 high school teachers and 1,029 college freshmen, McGinnis inferred that there is need at the high school level for specific training in developmental reading and that at the present time secondary teachers, as a whole, are not providing instruction in reading, nor are they adequately prepared to do so. In order to remedy this situation she suggests that if the schools and departments of education are unable to provide training in developmental reading at the secondary level, that departments of English, communication, history, science and mathematics should set forth and demonstrate reading procedures and especially thinking skills in their subject matter fields. Experimental evidence should be provided to verify the success of the latter

plan. Another suggestion is that departments of education and psychology should cooperate at the graduate level in the training of teachers who plan, organize and manage reading laboratories. Classroom teachers, however, should assume the responsibility for developmental reading in their subject matter fields.

Robinson, Helen M. (ed.), *Evaluation of Reading, Proceedings of the Annual Conference on Reading Held at the University of Chicago*. "Summary and Conclusions," Helen M. Robinson. The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Vol. XX, No. 88 (December) 1958.

In a summary of the papers presented at the conference, Robinson stated that evaluation of reading is not an end in itself but a means to an end. It is a process of assessing progress in reaching goals and attaining objectives. Indeed, it is an essential means for helping teachers to produce a generation of young adults who are competent to take their places in a rapidly changing world.