



Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

Volume 2
Issue 3 April 1962

Article 7

4-1962

Reading Horizons vol. 2, no. 3

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons

 Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation

(1962). Reading Horizons vol. 2, no. 3. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 2 (3). Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol2/iss3/7

This Complete Issue is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Education and Literacy Studies at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.



A stylized green plant with multiple pointed leaves growing from a central base. The leaves are dark green and have a slightly wavy, elongated shape. The plant is positioned in the lower center of the page, with its base resting on a thin, horizontal green line that represents the ground. The background is a light cream color.



Reading **HORIZONS**

Editorial Board

Homer L. J. Carter, Editor

Louis A. Govatos

Paul V. Sangren

Dorothy McCuskey

Russell A. Strong

Dorothy J. McGinnis

Helen F. Wise

Published quarterly by the Psycho-Educational Clinic and the Western Michigan University Chapter of the International Reading Association, Kalamazoo, Michigan—Address all communications to Homer L. J. Carter, Director Psycho-Educational Clinic, Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan—Business Manager: Blanche O. Bush—Subscriptions Manager: Charlotte B. Sumney.

Table of Contents

President's Message	93
Helen F. Wise	
Editorial Comment	95
Homer L. J. Carter	
Developing Mental Content Through Creative Activities .	97
Martha Barrett Newell	
<i>Spinster</i> : A Novel by Sylvia Ashton-Warner	103
Reviewed by Dorothy McCuskey	
The Role of the School Psychologist in the Teaching of Reading	106
Ruth C. Penty	
Ten Second Reviews	111
Blanche O. Bush	

President's Message

“Books give us all that mankind has done and dreamed and planned.”

. . . Frederick Babcock

If we are to help children derive inspiration from books and to help them achieve optimum learning in and through reading, we must master the art of reading ourselves. It is with this thought in mind that we proudly present the spring edition of **READING HORIZONS**.

Helen F. Wise
President

Editorial Comment

The Spring issue of *Reading Horizons* for 1962 stresses the development of mental content through creative activities. Creativity is the result of a desire to seek and express truth or beauty. It is born of a consuming desire to solve a problem or to reveal an idea in words or other media. Creativity is the outcome of a need to build, construct, write, compose and to bring into existence that which is new. The individual who creates must possess mental content and a rich background of knowledge and experience. He must have materials with which to work and the dominant urge to use them. If teachers are to be effective in showing their students how to think creatively, they too must be creative and possess mental content in the field in which they are working and be able to apply it constructively and critically in their classes. To teach reading creatively, one must have in mind more than aims, materials and procedures. The teacher who would show boys and girls how to create must be a realistic dreamer and an artist.

Homer L. J. Carter
Editor

Developing Mental Content Through Creative Activities

By Martha Barrett Newell

Sara Teasdale¹ in her little poem, "Barter," says that life has loveliness to sell, and we must give all we have for one white singing hour to remember. One moment of this hour is exemplified in ". . . children's faces looking up holding wonder like a cup."

It is this wonder that is the magic upon which the adult contributors of childhood education can build. It is this wonder which is so easily overlooked by adults in their over-stimulated emphasis on theory and standards of excellence.

Despite the unfortunate fact that grown-ups seem to lose their "Magic Shoes" of creativeness, children seem to hold tenaciously to them and it is in these shoes that a child can be allowed to put to use his creative spirit. When this spirit is at work, not only the child's mind and body are at work in the most delicious manner, but here also the language art is functioning at a fantastically high degree.

The classroom, unfortunately, is the chief offender in not correlating these two facets: the open wonder and awe which a child brings to any experience and secondly, the innate ability to produce individual, *creative* activities.

Each of us seeks the approval of our peers, and this is a natural desire of children, too. But, as adults we seem to have forgotten the warmth of response to the fact that "I made it myself." There is magic in creation, and a very special kind of magic to the child who senses that he is indeed part of what he produces. Everything, from the molded handprint of the earnest kindergartener (Do you not still have one of these pieces of loveliness . . .?) to the finished mural of the high school student, has in it a part of the person who formed it. One of the most satisfying moments to a child is the knowledge that here "is a piece of *me*!"

That there can be a definite carry-over into other areas of learning using the creative spirit is seen in the following example of classroom activity. This will prove to be definitely early elementary activity. Do

¹ Sara Teasdale, *Love Songs* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1917), p. 20.

not let this discourage the ideals of creative expression being carried over into all grade levels.

One of the greatest challenges to the first grade teacher is the method of teaching reading. Here a child will develop a vocabulary which he will take with him the rest of his life. It is this foundation which is so necessary and it is in this early stage of learning that the child is the most perceptive and retentive.

Most reading programs offered by schools today fall into a staid, set, stereotyped pattern. Too often the *Teacher's Guide* does all the work and the teacher lets the valuable process of learning by creating go out the window. "Let the art or music teacher use the creative mode" is the by-word of many elementary reading teachers. Yet the use of such can produce results far beyond the everyday, grouped reading approach.

Lack of training in the creative arts does not need to be a hindrance. A teacher merely has to recall the imagination she must have had in her childhood and use it daily. She does not need special training either in art or music. (Although it is seldom that an elementary teacher has not been at least exposed to these.) The record player, several recordings of the picturesque type of music and an area where the children may have room for freedom of movement are all a teacher needs above the normal classroom facilities.

A good example of picturesque music is Ferde Grofe's "Grand Canyon Suite." This has been used to great effect with children. The initial activity should be postponed until the end of several weeks of school. It is necessary that the teacher be well acquainted with her group in order to know just how to begin this project. It must be noted here that this is not just a one day exercise, but a continuous process and can replace or supplement the prescribed reading program of the school. It has been used successfully in either case. It would be well to discuss this approach with the school system's reading consultant or the school principal in order to eliminate future misunderstandings.

There are many ways to begin this program. It is up to the teacher to take into consideration her abilities in relation to her group's potentials.

When introducing the music, do not give any hint as to the composer's intent in writing it. Do not rush the ground work laid in preparing the children for listening. The way these first moments of motivation are handled will set the stage for the whole program. Now is the time to build on the wonderful imaginations of children. Tell

them that they are going to hear some magic music which will take them to faraway places, or will tell them exciting stories of many people. The music will tell them to do something, too. A tremendous suspenseful moment comes when the teacher finally turns on the record player and the music begins.

Let the children listen to several minutes of the music and then ask them to show what the music told them to do. This can be either through dance, art or song. It is suggested that the first time this is done the children use the art form as this allows for more originality. The children should be scattered around the room, not sitting in rows. This will allow for freedom of expression in any of the modes suggested. While the class is producing what the music told them to do, the music could be replayed. Then comes a "Show and Tell Time." This will prove interesting and the teacher must be alert to trends set by the class.

In *Children and Music* Beatrice Landeck² says, "Nevertheless, however intricate the pattern of learning or teaching may be, it must, if it is to be effective, have an underlying design and a purposeful continuity. Unless there is an underlying purpose and design in experimentation, what follows cannot be properly called growth. A child needs a vast number of experiences and a vast amount of material for his play before he can discover a fact or truth. Once he has discovered it, however, it is the responsibility of the adult guiding him to articulate the principle and to offer him other opportunities for applying his newly gained knowledge."

Too many adults allow children to have plenty of play activity without bringing them to a definite educational climax. The creativity is dissipated and it becomes meaningless. Experience, the course of knowledge and understanding, is wasted. It must be remembered that the fun of an experience is not lost when the teacher begins to relate these acts of imagination to impersonal fact and theory. The child will welcome this intrusion because it pertains to his own interest and activity. Building on these experiences with new ones is, after all, the framework of learning.

After each child is given the opportunity to express his thoughts, actions or art depictions, the class then is led to analyze the total

² Beatrice Landeck, *Children and Music* (New York: William Sloane Associates, Inc., 1952), p. 234.

result. There will be a close relationship between several of these works and from these can be created an original story. This story now becomes class property and each child is encouraged to let his ideas be a part of the whole.

The story is first only verbal. It can be worked over several times during a week's time. The end result need not be hurried. When the story is polished by the class and all seem satisfied with it, then is the time to put it down on an experience chart. The teacher and class can work together in putting it on the chart. Whenever there is a word which will seem too difficult for the class, a picture may be drawn by a member of the class and substituted, *but the word itself should be placed beside the picture.*

The next step is for the teacher to duplicate these charts with a mimeograph or ditto process machine. The story should be in manuscript letters, written as the class has dictated and produced so that each child will be able to read it. This entails extra work on the part of the teacher, but the end results are well worth this effort. Each day or so a new page or chapter is added to the story, until the class now has an original reading book all its own.

There are many supplemental materials and creative projects that might be used to further the experience of the class. Plays may be written depicting the story. A puppet show presented to another class is great fun.

All forms of language arts have been brought to use in this method of reading. It is a fresh approach, using music, art, literature, dramatics, and, above all, originality.

Carroll Pratt³ said in a lecture delivered in the Whittall Pavilion, The Library of Congress, "All art is thought of as involving some kind or degree of emotion either through direct arousal or through indirect representation. In this regard music is often assigned first place. 'Music stands quite alone,' said Schopenhauer in his penetrating treatise on art. 'It is cut off from all the other arts. It does not express a particular and definite joy, sorrow, anguish, delight, or mood of peace, but joy, sorrow, anguish, delight, peace of mind *themselves*, in the abstract, in their essential nature, without accessories, and therefore without

³ Carroll C. Pratt, *Music as the Language of Emotion* (Washington, D. C.: The Library of Congress, U. S. Printing Office, 1952), p. 5.

their customary motives. Yet it enables us to grasp and share them in their full quintessence."

The joy of creation, of producing original things, is what motivates the children in this activity. The work may be crude or beautiful, but the spontaneity of producing is delightful.⁴ "The spirit of attack and enthusiasm has carried over and shows its results in other forms of study."

Children, from infancy, are real experimentalists in language. Why not continue it into formal schooling? Is it necessary to fence them in with unnatural, set rules in order to acquire adult forms of communication? It is necessary in the classroom to create a "language environment" through these stories which closely correlates with the musical activity of doing what the music said to do in order to build a pattern for mature speech and reading.

The use of dramatics is a necessary part of any elementary classroom. It develops a natural, spontaneous situation in which the child may lose his self-consciousness. Dramatics is part of the growing up process of children and is a natural thing to allow in the school.

Education must learn to use the natural impulses of children to best advantage. The usage of these, however, must be guided and channelled by understanding and appreciative teachers. Teachers ought not forget to look for the loveliness of wonder in a child as he creates, as he is *allowed* to create, as he is *encouraged* to create.

To relate this to mental content, then, is to quote from Carter and McGinnis.⁵ "The obtaining of meaning from symbols, or reading, depends upon *sensation*, which is physical, and upon *mental content*, which is psychological. These two factors should be understood by the individual who is interested in the process of reading. Reading is a communicative skill and is closely related to speaking, writing and listening. It is a function of the whole organism and is carried on for a definite purpose." Reading must become a part of a child's total existence. It must be a *natural* part of everyday experience. What better way than through creativity when the child has used all his

⁴ Gertrude Hartman and Ann Shumaker, *Creative Expression* (Milwaukee: E. M. Hale and Company, 1939), p. 26.

⁵ Homer L. J. Carter and Dorothy J. McGinnis, *Learning to Read* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1953), p. 10.

faculties to develop an original experience in creating the story and he has had the total involvement of his body through rhythm, sight, sound, touch and the satisfying fact that he is a *part* of the completed work.

References

1. Bauer, Lois M. and Barbara A. Reed, *Dance and Play Activities for the Elementary Grades*, Chartwell House, Inc., New York, 1951.
2. Carbo-Cone, Madeleine, *The Playground as Music Teacher*, Harper and Brothers, Publishers, New York, 1959.
3. Carter, Homer L. J. and Dorothy J. McGinnis, *Learning to Read*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1953.
4. Coleman, Satis N., *Creative Music in the Home*, Lewis E. Myers and Company, Valparaiso, 1927.
5. Hartman, Gertrude and Ann Shumaker, *Creative Expression*, E. M. Hale and Company, Milwaukee, 1939.
6. Landeck, Beatrice, *Children and Music*, William Sloane Associates, Inc., New York, 1952.
7. Nelson, John Herbert and Oscar Cargill (Eds.), *Contemporary Trends*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1949.
8. Pratt, Carroll C., *Music as the Language of Emotion*, Library of Congress, Washington, 1952.

Martha Barrett Newell was graduated from Western Michigan University in 1956. She has been a first grade teacher in the Public Schools of Berkley, Michigan, and in the Army Dependent's School in Germany. Currently, Miss Newell is a full-time graduate student at Western Michigan University.

SPINSTER: A Novel

by Sylvia Ashton-Warner¹

Reviewed by Dorothy McCuskey

Western Michigan University

(*Editor's Note:* The article by Martha Barrett Newell has dealt with the problem of creativity. This brief review of *Spinster* is relevant to the topic discussed by Miss Newell and may stimulate the interest of our readers in an outstanding example of creative writing.)

Sir Herbert Read: "Alive with passion and beauty; it has a poetic quality that reminds me of Emily Dickinson, so precisely does it register a special kind of experience."

Kathryn Hulme: "A rare book, so infinitely tender, with its wild little warrior children, deeply revealing of the creative spinster soul who wins their hearts. A whole new world opens up in these pages."

Lewis Gannett: "It creates a world of its own, dewey and fresh, with an accent of its own, and a passionate and unforgettable character who is at once all woman and inspired teacher. *Spinster* both delighted and disturbed me."

No review can recreate the spirit or the content of *Spinster*, but the attempt must be made, for how else will creative teachers of reading know to turn to the pages of a novel entitled *Spinster* for the account of creative teaching and a truly basic theory of teaching of reading? Anna Vorontosov, the spinster, is a New Zealand "infant mistress," teaching some seventy Maori children aged four to seven in a tin shack. Miss Vorontosov was not a model teacher—she burnt her plan book, couldn't or wouldn't keep records, and was understandably terrified of Inspectors. But—she loved and listened, washed and ironed, played Brahms and Grieg, combed matted heads for cooties, and carried little Hinewaka with the turned-in feet when they went on field trips. The children danced to her music, they painted at the

¹ Published by Simon and Schuster, New York, 1959. Also available in paperback: Bantam, F2228, 50c.

ten-child easel, they talked—how they talked—they listened to stories, but they edged toward the outdoors when reading time came.

Anna Vorontosov began by writing special books for them with Maori children as central characters, and she illustrated the books with little brown children like themselves. The children wrote in their notebooks. They wrote stories like

“I dreamt
about the ghost.
The ghost went
in our kitchen
and frightened
us. It had big
fat eyes. It had
white sheets.”

From the stories Anna Vorontosov began to reach for “the key.” Perhaps she really grasped it from Rangi:

“What are you frightened of, Rangi?” I ask as he sits in a knot of others.

“P’lice.”

“Why?”

“P’lice they takes me to gaol and cuts me up with a butcher-knife.”

I print these words on separate cards and give them to him. And Rangi, who lives on love and kisses and thrashings and fights and fear of the police and who took four months to learn ‘come,’ ‘look,’ ‘and,’ takes four minutes to learn:

butcher-knife	Daddy
gaol	Mummie
police	Rangi
sing	hake
cry	fight
kiss	

So I make a reading card for him: out of these words, which he reads at first sight, his first reading, and his face lights up with understanding. And from here he goes on to other reading, even the imported books. His mind is unlocked, some great fear is discharged, he understands at last and he can read.

From the key words came stories, and finally “books” written by the children themselves. The early part of the morning Miss Vorontosov began to see as “output” and later, after playtime, there was what she

called the “intake” and the words were checked again. It was true that there were some unlikely words lying about the room from the butcher-knife set through ghosts, along to spiders, ol’ Mummie and sky, but Anna Vorontosov had nothing to lose—except her rating, of course.

From the experimentation came theory:

I see the mind of a five-year-old as a volcano with two vents, destructiveness and creativeness. And I see that to the extent that we widen the creative channel we atrophy the destructive one. And it seems to me that since the words of the Key vocabulary are no less than captions of the dynamic life itself they course out through the creative channel, making their contributions to the drying up of the destructive one. From all of which I am constrained to call it creative reading and to teach it among the arts.

There are in the book three major threads—an existential account of Anna Vorontosov the woman and the teacher, an engaging account of the tempestuous Maori children, and this serious hypothesis about creativity and reading. This is not a book about creativity; it is a creative act.

The Role of the School Psychologist in the Teaching of Reading

By Ruth C. Penty

Battle Creek Schools

The school psychologist or psychological examiner without specific training in the reading area can help the teacher of reading to better understand her task. The psychologist or examiner with background in the teaching of reading can be of even more help to the classroom teacher.

Estimate of Reading Readiness

A decision in regard to a small child's readiness to begin formal reading experiences must involve observation and evaluation on the part of the teacher over a period of time. Physical, mental, social, psychological, emotional and educational readiness necessary to successful reading experiences cannot be quickly assessed.

The psychologist can, however, assist the teacher of beginning reading in making the very important decision in regard to a child's readiness to begin reading. The manner in which a child relates to the examiner, the maturity of his responses, his attention span, his success or lack of success in establishing left-right progression and his freedom from reversals are among the observations which a psychologist can make in a short time. Cumulative records, teacher reports and observations assist physical, social and emotional evaluations. A child's vocabulary, his ability to detect likenesses, differences and analogies, his understanding of rhyming tasks, and his description of interpretation of pictures—skills tapped on the lower scales of the Stanford-Binet Tests of Mental Ability—help establish an estimate of his educational readiness for reading. The determination of whether or not a child has reached the mental age thought necessary for his success in reading is an accepted duty of the psychological examiner. Many reading specialists opinion that this mental age should be six years and six months.

Assessment of Potential for Reading

The assessment of mental ability and the estimating of a child's potential for growth in reading are two of the most important contributions of the psychologist in relation to the reading program.

Children with reading difficulties are penalized on group mental maturity tests which involve reading.. They usually score much higher on individual tests administered by a psychologist, such as the Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler Intelligence Scales. Such intelligence tests involve less reading or measure fewer skills dependent on reading than do most group tests. The Wechsler Scales yield both a performance and a verbal quotient.

Reading ability is highly correlated with mental ability. Therefore, a comparison between a child's reading age derived from a reading test and his mental age inferred from an individual test, such as the Stanford-Binet, will help the classroom teacher to know if a child is reading at about mental age expectation, the approximate number of months which he is retarded in reading ability and therefore his probable mental potential for growth in reading. Many reading specialists regard a retarded reader in need of special remedial therapy as one whose reading age is two or more years below his mental age.

The Wechsler Intelligence Scales provide a verbal and a performance quotient. The verbal quotient which results from the assessment of vocabulary, information and other skills somewhat dependent on reading ability is usually depressed if a child has trouble with reading; whereas, the performance quotient will be higher, unless there are other conditions which affect performance skills. The quotient derived from the performance tasks then is usually a better measure of the mental ability of the child with reading difficulty. In turn, the discrepancy between the verbal and the performance quotient is some indication of the child's potential for growth in the reading area.

Suggestion of Effective Methods of Teaching

The manner in which a child responds to visual, auditory, and performance tasks on psychological tests helps the examiner to suggest to the teacher whether the child has the best chance of success in reading through word methods, phonic methods, tactual-kinesthetic methods or a combination of all three of these approaches.

A child's greater success on the visual retention tasks rather than on the auditory retention tasks of the Stanford-Binet points to the probability of his making better progress with the visual or word method than with the auditory or phonic method. Such tasks include copying of geometric forms and the reformulation of bead patterns from memory after a few seconds of exposure.

Likewise, the greater success of a child on auditory retention and rhyming tasks than on visual retention tasks suggests that he may make better progress through auditory or phonic methods. Such Stanford-Binet tasks include the recall of meaningful facts from reading selections read orally to the child and the recall and repetition of words, sentences and digits after oral presentation. Responses with rhyming words are also included among these tests. The Wechsler Scales assess ability to recall digits forward and backward after oral naming of such digits.

In turn, much more facility with performance than with verbal tasks on individual tests or observed skill in drawing can provide an examiner bases for recommending tactual-kinesthetic methods for the teaching of reading to a particular child. These methods can be especially recommended for the teaching of a child who has not met success through word or phonic methods or through a combination of these approaches. The Fernald Tracing and the VAKT (Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic, Tactual) Methods provide tactual-kinaesthetic training.

Poor auditory and visual retention will emphasize to the psychologist the need on the part of the classroom teacher to repeat both auditory and visual presentations several times in teaching procedures.

Detection of Emotional Problems

The evaluation of emotional factors which assist or impede a child's learning to read has long been considered among the tasks of the school psychologist. He is able to tap such factors through observation, test profile characteristics, projective techniques, child and parent conferences, records and case study. Not only is the psychologist expected to detect emotional problems which may be affecting the progress of a child in reading, but a recommendation is expected from him in regard to ways of relieving emotional pressures after they have been diagnosed. Diagnosis and recommendation in the emotional area continue to be two of the most important contributions of the psychologist to the teacher of reading.

Other Psychological Services

The psychologist who observes the child closely in a person to person relationship is frequently able to detect physical conditions which may have bearing on a child's success or failure in the reading

area. Visual and hearing weaknesses may be quite apparent. Possible thyroid difficulties may be suspected with resultant transfer to a physician for verification. The psychologist can make an estimate of dominance—handedness, eyedness and footedness—as confusion in dominance may be a factor in a child's inability to make progress in reading. The possibility of organic involvement which makes reading progress slow or impossible can be detected through observation of behavior, psychological test profiles and parent interviews in regard to birth and health history. The transfer to a neurologist for a neurological examination will then rule out or confirm presence of brain injury.

In addition to the services which the teacher of reading can expect from all school psychologists and psychological examiners, the technician who is trained in the reading area can give additional helps to the classroom teacher, if his time permits. He may help parents understand their role in developing reading readiness and in other aspects of the reading program through the building of their child's health, the providing of rich experiential background, the establishment of a climate in the home which will develop emotional security, and the stimulation of love for books and reading. He may assist in the determination of reading ability and also in the diagnosis of specific reading difficulties through the administration of reading tests and use of other oral and written diagnostic instruments. Besides preparing an evaluation of a pupil's current reading strengths and weaknesses, he can also prescribe teaching materials and methodology to assist the teacher in helping the child develop his reading ability.

Summary

Psychological services should help the classroom teacher in preparing a child for reading tasks, in deciding whether or not a child is ready to begin formal reading, in knowing why a child is not making progress in reading, in formulating an estimate of how much progress he can expect him to make, and in determining methods through which a child has best probable opportunity to succeed. Specific help in materials and methodology can be expected from the psychologist or psychological examiner who has background in the teaching of reading.

References

1. Anderson, Harold L. and Gladys L. Anderson, *An Introduction to Projective Techniques*, Prentice-Hall, Inc., New York, 1951.
2. Bond, Guy L. and Eva B. Wagner, *Teaching the Child to Read* (Third Edition), Macmillan Company, New York, 1960.
3. Carter, Homer L. J. and Dorothy J. McGinnis, *Learning to Read*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1953.
4. Fernald, Grace M., *Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1943.
5. Harris, Albert J., *How to Increase Reading Ability* (Third Edition), Longmans, Green and Company, New York, 1950.
6. McCullough, Constance N., Ruth M. Strang, and Arthur Traxler, *Problems in the Improvement of Reading* (Third Edition), McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., New York, 1955.
7. Pennington, L. A., and I. A. Berg, *An Introduction to Clinical Psychology*, The Ronald Press, New York, 1954.
8. Robinson, Helen M., *Why Pupils Fail in Reading*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1946.
9. Terman, Lewis M. and Maude A. Merrill, *Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale*, Houghton-Mifflin Company, Boston, 1960.
10. Wechsler, David, *Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children*, The Psychological Corporation, New York, 1949.

Ruth C. Penty, psychologist for the Battle Creek Public Schools, is past president of the Western Michigan University Chapter of the International Reading Association. Dr. Penty has written many articles in the field of reading. One of her best-known publications is the book, *Reading Ability and High School Drop-Outs*, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1956.

Ten Second Reviews

By Blanche O. Bush

Western Michigan University

There you are, looking at yourself in the very pages before you—a clear picture drawn by an author who never saw you.

—A. L. Porterfield

Bibliotherapy, using reading to promote mental hygiene, is one of the prime responsibilities of a teacher at all grade levels. The greater the teacher's awareness of the dynamics of reading, the more successful she will be in helping students understand themselves and the world about them. Ideally the reader's self concept is enhanced through reading by gaining insight but if his self concept is threatened the clues exposed may be of value to the instructor in understanding the reader's motives, in recognizing his defenses, and in giving him support. Not all teachers are able to extend the scope of the reading program in this direction but regardless of goals and training, the teacher must foster mental health and recognize that reading is complex and involves the whole personality. Some interesting and helpful suggestions are included in these reviews.

Adams, Bess Porter, *About Books and Children. A Historical Survey of Children's Literature*. Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1953.

Good literature, whether for old or young readers, bears the mark of truth and integrity; it carries the reader along into genuine, if vicarious, experiences; it stirs his emotions, arouses his curiosity, stimulates his mind, and gives him a measuring stick for living.

Good literature, according to the author, recalls the past, reflects the present, and prognosticates the future. It is more than a mirror, for it reaches ahead of today and beckons one into tomorrow, offering the reader new growth in wisdom, insight, and understanding.

Carter, Homer L. J. and Dorothy J. McGinnis, *Teaching Individuals to Read*. D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1962.

This book is designed for in-service teachers and for students enrolled in reading methods courses. The three aspects of reading, identification, interpretation and evaluation of concepts,

and the importance of background and mental content in the reading process are emphasized. Reading is regarded as a thinking process and stresses integration rather than an accumulation of isolated basic skills. Through the life histories of seven children, the authors have focused attention upon the individual and have considered reading to be a part of the total development of the child. An over-all view of the teaching of reading from the kindergarten through high school is presented. The authors emphasize the sequential development of overlapping reading skills rather than limiting certain reading skills to a specific grade level. Practical suggestions are presented throughout the book for children whose interests and reading levels vary widely. Guided activities following the text of each chapter have been planned to stimulate critical study and to help the teacher have a better insight into the problems of his students. Through understanding the child, his wishes and desires and the different mechanisms he employs to obtain these goals, a background for bibliotherapy can be attained.

Emeruwa, Leatrice, "Bibliotherapy Via Library Club," *School Activities*, 29:145, (January) 1958, 145-146.

Using literature to gain insight into personal problems is not a new educational trick despite the fancy name "bibliotherapy." Bibliotherapy is a fruitful means by which teachers can help adolescents solve some of the emotionalities while developing good reading skills. The love of reading and the ability to do critical reading, as presented in the article, seem to be important corollaries.

Jones, Jessie Orton, "Books, Children and Religion." *Horn Book*, XXX, No. 1, (February) 1954, 17-26.

While respecting the individual tastes of young readers, the author shows how adults can direct them to books and to a better understanding of themselves and of the relationship they could have with the world and God.

Newell, Ethel, "At the North End of Pooh: A Study of Bibliotherapy." *Elementary English*, XXXVI, (January) 1957, 22-25.

"Pooh was too fat and bibliotherapy was prescribed as an aid in the crisis." Using this story to illustrate her point, the author

also presents these questions to introduce her concepts. Is there real help to be found in books for personal problems of children? What kind of help and how much? How sure? The best way to give our children what he needs most, as reported by the author, is to become better informed parents, teachers and librarians. In becoming informed we learn among many other things that children are individuals and have problems. Suggested criteria for judging a "first aid book" for an individual child with individual problems are: It must be well written. The purpose must not obscure the story, and it must be written subtly so that the author avoids sentimental moods which result in a book about children rather than for them.

Porterfield, Austin L., *Mirror Mirror—On Seeing Yourself in Books*. Leo Potishman Foundation, Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, 1957.

The author presents his objectives for books as fourfold: (1) To make it easier to read for self-insight and social understanding which abound in fiction and drama and to discover that serious reading can also be exciting, (2) to help the student and teacher in the social sciences find literary sources which are useful in illuminating sociological and psychological concepts, (3) to add to the ability of the student and the teacher in literary fields to make use of such concepts in literary analysis, and (4) to supply leads for the uses of literary sources by public speakers and study groups. All add up to bibliotherapy.

Shrodes, Caroline, "Bibliotherapy," *The Reading Teacher's Reader*, Oscar S. Causey, (ed.). The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1958, 285-290.

Bibliotherapy as reported by the author is made possible by the "shock of recognition" the reader experiences when he beholds himself, or those close to him, in a story or some other piece of literature. Vicarious experiences induced by reading include (1) identification, (2) catharsis, and (3) insight. The reader will abstract from his reading only what he is able to perceive and organize. Literature in its direct and concrete representation of life engages the emotions and enables the reader to re-live his own experiences. Success in helping students find coherence and value in their lives depends to some degree

on the teacher's awareness of all the facets of the student's personalities, talents, curiosities, skills and aspirations, and the ability of the teacher to assist the students to know "who they are," "what they may become," and "how they may relate to others."

Yashima, Taro, "On Making a Book for a Child." *Horn Book*, XXXI, (February) 1955, 21-25.

As a human being the author stated that she could not help imagining that children will grow up and face many sorts of struggles that may even bring them to despair at times. To help the children live through all their difficulties Mrs. Taro expressed a desire to give them something that would help them through these problems. As the world is wide and everything in it can be used to make books for children, the author suggested that the theme of a good book should be, "This earth is beautiful. Living is wonderful. Believe in human kindness."

