Ten-Second Reviews

Betty L. Hagberg
TEN-SECOND REVIEWS

Betty L. Hagberg

I chose teaching because: children are the challenge and inspiration of today and are the hope, protectors, and champions of the future. Let the bankers take care of money, physicians take care of illness, lawyers take care of entanglements—important, yes all! But, transitory, all! Only parents and teachers can pass on a legacy that destines what the world of tomorrow will be.—Verna Dieckman Anderson


The author echoes an “Amen” to Kay Haugaard’s article in the October, 1973 issue of The Reading Teacher entitled “Comic Books, Conduits To Culture,” as she too thinks comic books wield a magnetic attraction for children. Alongi points out that comic book characters are illustrated in faddish styles, such as clogs, bikinis, and cutoff denim shorts. The text is overflowing with the use of slang phrases, and emotions are clearly revealed through facial expressions, punctuations, and floating symbols (dollar signs, food, and hearts). The stories in comic books are geared to themes to catch a child where he lives—in a dream world of “When I grow up . . .”


Mary Armstrong, a kindergarten teacher and former first grade teacher, shares her ideas on how she created excitement for reading among her very young students. The excitement began through the introduction of the children’s own stories and reading good literature to them. Some decoding skills were provided through instruction. The skills of reading and language were also accelerated by experience stories and creative writing. At the same time, each child was given an opportunity to choose and read books at his own pace for fun. The absence of assigned uncreative homework and the awarding of paperback books for each child’s own library made reading a pleasure for these students. The author suggests, “It’s not the only way; it just seems
more appropriate" to launch first graders into reading through fun-to-read library books.


The authors state that many so-called learning disability children suffer from immaturity or maturational lag. These children probably will not catch up, and their continued academic failure will add emotional problems to compound their basic learning problems. Problems which make up a learning disability are described as well as ways in which one can recognize the disabled learner. Parents are advised as to where they can get help and at the same time are warned that they themselves must always be the major source of help. The authors support segregated class placement for these students. Practical advice is given to parents and teachers as to what each can do to make learning disabled children more successful.


The author states that a variety of characteristics, primarily negative in nature, have been associated with learning disabilities. He indicates that a review of the empirical research which has compared learning disabled children with academically successful children shows little data to support these negative notions. Bryan protests that behaviors which discriminate groups do not appear to include simple perception and discrimination, hyperactivity, nor neurological deficits, and there is some question about the intelligence level of sampled children. Behaviors which do discriminate groups include ability to pay attention, difficulty with complex tasks, and tasks which make heavy demands on language skills and information organization. He is hopeful that professionals in the field will not become frozen in inappropriate stereotypes regarding learning disabled children, but will be sensitive to and supportive of research efforts on their behalf.


Bundy says that in most public schools excessive emphasis is
being placed on basic word recognition and simple comprehension skills in the teaching of reading to the exclusion of other important skills. He directs attention to the two kinds of "reading" a child learns: 1) The traditional "school skills" in textbooks and worksheets and 2) his own "outside world skills" which involve gaining meaning from music, television, movies, radio, comics, and other people. Bundy states that in order to make reading instruction more relevant to the needs of children, the traditional view of reading instruction needs to be greatly expanded to include the skills involved in dealing with mass media and modern communication techniques.


Some individuals find it very difficult to understand how a student with a learning impairment may perceive his or her world. Four demonstration techniques simulating receptive difficulties in the areas of visual, auditory and tactile discrimination and impairments in problem solving and concept formation have been developed and are described by the writer. He indicates that these techniques have been successfully used in workshops and inservice training sessions with students, teachers, and parents.


In all mathematics the subject matter is presented in written form. Recent research indicates that a student's success in mathematics is directly related to his ability to read and interpret written material. The arithmetic text is unlike others in format and style and requires different skills and techniques. Mathematical material is usually concise, abstract, and abounding in complex relationships. There are more ideas per line and per page than in any other writing. For a student to comprehend sentences and concepts he must surely be able to read. Pupils must interpret both words and mathematical symbols and signs. To read meaningfully in the subject requires both decoding and comprehension skills. The vocabulary is often techni-
cal and specific. Many new meanings need to be developed for familiar words. The authors cite seven questions students need to answer in solving story problems. Collier and Redmond advocate that practice with the use of these questions contributes to better reading and mathematical success for students.


Coy's purpose in this study was to investigate the predictive validity of the Bender Visual-Motor Gestalt Test as it relates to achievement in reading and math. Fifty-one third grade pupils' reading and math achievement test scores were separated into the top and bottom 27% and were then compared with the Bender Gestalt test scores. The author states that no significant differences were found for total Bender Gestalt test performance. The validity of using the Bender Gestalt test as a predictor of reading and math achievement for regular third grade pupils is questioned in this study.


Dauzat suggests twelve ways in which paraprofessionals can contribute to the reading program when they are closely guided and supervised by the reading teacher. He indicates that current practices in the use of paraprofessionals merely tap the surface of this potentially rich educational resource. The author points out that nowhere is the need for individualization of instruction more firmly established than in the reading program. Since neither time nor energy permits a single teacher to fulfill the educational needs of all students, the paraprofessional may serve to enhance the role of the professional educator. Twelve specific suggestions for paraprofessional job descriptions are set forth.

Dennison, Paul E., "Reading Programs Are Means—Not Ends!," The Reading Teacher, (October, 1974), 28:10-12.

Reading is more than a sum of its component skills. Mate-
rials and educators tend to simplify the reading process into a mere “decoding” of an objective message existing outside the reader. It must be recognized that reading is a part of the language acquisition process, an inherently subjective activity. Real reading is an experience, not just an activity. “How can ‘skills’ be taught as a means rather than as an end? According to the author, the answer lies in accepting several assumptions which he explicitly interprets. He again reminds his readers that the end is “the growing child.”


Dillner reviews four component behaviors of the affective domain: 1) attending, 2) receiving, 3) valuing, 4) evaluating. She indicates that the descriptions are not reflective of anything that good teachers have not already been doing for years, but she delineates them to emphasize to new or uninitiated teachers the need for behavioral objectives in the affective domain. Affective objectives concern feelings and emotions which are difficult to assess but which are extremely important. Therefore, they need to be made as concrete as possible. Dillner asserts that if teachers can identify the behaviors which reflect these important human characteristics and if they put them in terms of explicit objectives, they will more likely know how to motivate their students for cognitive learning.


Durkin’s article appears as the first in a series of five articles built around personal classroom observation and practical advice. Through her visitations to classrooms in the past 6 years, the author directs attention to two findings about classroom instruction. They are: 1) teachers were spending time in unnecessary and even erroneous instruction, and 2) such instruction was often the result of an unquestioning use of the basal reader, the workbooks, and the manuals accompanying them. Vivid examples are provided of non-essentials featured in published lessons and of incorrect instruction going on in classrooms. Both admonition and challenge are directed to authors, publishers, and teachers. Each must take their professional re-
sponsibilities more seriously, both in offering better materials and in making decisions regarding what will be taught, how it will be taught, and to whom it will be taught.


In this research study 64 inner city preschool children were taught to discriminate letters of the alphabet using either an errorless discrimination training (EDT) approach or the traditional reinforcement-extinction approach. For the EDT group the distinctive feature of the letter to be discriminated was highlighted in red. As the training progressed the red was gradually faded. Each group received ten training trials for each of the two different letter combinations presented. The results indicated that the EDT group made significantly fewer errors during training and on the post test as compared to the reinforcement-extinction group.


It is evident that special education has entered a new era of noncategorical approaches toward exceptional children since special education classes are being discontinued. The trend develops with serious questioning of traditional diagnostic labels and of grouping various types of exceptional children together for educational programs. The author explores the implications of previous educational experiences for learning disabled children.

Garry, V. V., “Competencies That Count Among Reading Specialists,” *Journal of Reading*, (May, 1974), 17:608-613.

Garry provides a list of task competencies that identifies the critical areas in which a reading specialist performs. The task competencies were developed following a research of the literature, interviews with reading authorities and reading advisors from the State Department of Education, and from graduate preparatory programs for reading specialization. This roster of
tasks supplies a basis for judgments affecting the revision and initiation of graduate reading programs.


The authors emphasize the need for parents and professionals to know more about the problem of hyperkinesis and then to decide how to act on their knowledge. They reiterate that the answer lies in significant research of the past and in that yet to be done. Glennon and Nason review research that has been helpful to parents and teachers as they try to define their children’s difficulties. The characteristics, educational management, and the medical management of hyperkinetic children are reviewed. The research in each of these areas is carefully summarized.


A group of inadequate readers was compared with a group of adequate readers on measures of saccadic eye movements. The authors discuss saccades as a possible contributing cause of reading problems rather than the traditional view that they are primarily or solely the result of reading experience. Nonreading as well as reading materials and activities were used. On all the materials the disabled readers tended to make more regressions and fewer forward fixations. Two subgroups involving microsequencing evolved from this heterogeneous group of inadequate readers. Griffen, Walton, and Ives discuss implications and procedures for saccadic diagnosis.


Hammill and Larsen present a review of studies using correlational statistical procedures to examine the relationship of reading to measures of auditory discrimination, memory, blending, and auditory-visual integration. The research reviewed sug-
gests that auditory skills are not sufficiently related to reading to be particularly useful for school practice. They indicate the direction future research must take to explore the relation of additional auditory variables to reading.


Research on reading a second language is directed by three questions: 1) should beginning reading be taught in the child’s first or second language, 2) what other factors in addition to an “inadequate grasp of language” account for reading disability when reading a second language, and, 3) what are the most effective methods for teaching reading as a second language? The research comparing the reading behavior of English and non-English speaking students is reported and discussed in each of these areas.


Henry offers this inquiry into affective thinking. He has done so with a sense of pioneering inside a realm of pedagogy that has not been much explored. He indicates that Piaget’s and Bruner’s learning theories have influenced many educators and reading specialists. But few responsible for reading in our schools have really examined these theories to see what they might yield for a method in teaching reading. The idea of concept development presented here has delineated and clarified for the teacher those logical strategies necessary in reading for concept development.


Johnston presents a unique and workable team-teaching situation between a cosmetology instructor and a reading teacher in a vocational classroom. Here, a practical procedure for reading in a content area is provided. Special educational problems arise in the science oriented portion of the cosmetology curriculum. She demonstrates how basic word attack and study
skills for science can be successfully taught to cosmetology stu-
dents provided the teaching procedures are directly related to
cosmetology. The author maintains that parallel strategies can
be adapted for other vocations.

Learning Magazine, “Motivating Today’s Students,” “Building Inde-
pendent Study Skills,” “Resolving Classroom Conflict,” “Develop-
ing Values in the Classroom,” Learning, 530 University Avenue,
Palo Alto, California.

Each Learning Handbook contains unique activities, games,
projects, and tested techniques. They present a wealth of down-
to-earth ideas and suggestions to make teaching and learning
more effective, interesting, and exciting. The activities range
from projects that can be done immediately and simply to more
extensive ideas and approaches. There are directions which are
easy to follow with photos, illustrations, and diagrams. The only
materials needed are things you can get inexpensively or free.

Lowe, A. J., and John Follman, “Comparison of the Dolch List With
Other Word Lists,” The Reading Teacher, (October, 1974),
28:40-44.

In this article, the authors do not question word lists, but
the use made of them. The Dolch list is composed of words
from speaking vocabularies and materials including basal read-
ners. The Kucera listing, a sampling of adult material, the Car-
roll list from school materials used in grades three through nine,
the lists of words by Otto, Johnson, Murphy, Taylor, and Harris
were found to be in high agreement with the other lists. The
purpose of Lowe and Follman’s study was to determine the
rankings of the first 150 Dolch words in four other ranked lists
and three word list studies of basal readers. It was hypothesized
that all or most of the 150 words would be included in all other
lists and the correlations of the rankings would be high. The re-
results of the study are set forth and the authors conclude that
“the first 150 words of the Dolch list may still be used without
reservation or limitation.”

Lund, Paul A., and John M. Ivanoff, “Correspondence of Self-Concept
Measures With Levels of Reading Achievement,” Journal of Read-
ing Behavior, (July, 1974), VI:159-165.

Lund’s and Ivanoff’s investigation utilizes 227 incoming col-
leage freshmen to determine differences in measured self-concept among college freshmen grouped by demonstrated reading ability, sex, and enrollment in a reading skills program. The study indicated significant difference in measured self-concept between various groups. The greatest difference appeared between those who did and those who did not enroll in a reading skills course.


This yearbook gives an overview of important educational trends and developments in the past year. Both analysis and factual summaries of education news of the year's top stories is provided in 29 topical articles. Forty-nine tables present the statistics of education in the U.S. today and a survey of trends influencing American schools. The yearbook also offers a 33-page annotated bibliography of recent books, films and tests, including a detailed survey of criterion-referenced tests.


Four practitioners in the field of reading prepared and present a very useful extension of the IRA Reading Aid Series, *Reading Tests For The Secondary Grades: A Review and Evaluation* (Blanton and others, 1972). The publication aids secondary teachers in locating appropriate tests for classroom use. The guide includes four kinds of tests: 1) survey tests, 2) analytical tests, 3) diagnostic tests, 4) special tests. This concise guide is comprehensive and easy to read.


McConkie and Rayner (1974) made an earlier study in which reading strategies of college students were manipulated through the use of payoff conditions. This study is a repetition and extension of the McConkie and Rayner research. The influ-
ence of four variables on reading speed and test performance was investigated: existence of a payoff structure, the form of the payoff structure, type of payoff, and presence or absence of feedback. The existence of a payoff structure had little effect alone, but the form of the structure produced noticeable changes in reading rate. Feedback on performance appears to produce substantial reading strategy changes in students.


Reading strategies of several groups of college students were manipulated by using payoff structures which stressed retention vs. speed. The influence of four variables on test performance and reading speed were studied: 1) existence of a payoff, 2) type of payoff, 3) explicitness of payoff instruction, and 4) presence or absence of questions after each selection. There were considerable variations in rate under these conditions but not in test performance. The article also points out the usefulness of payoff systems for the study of reading strategies.


The study group defines two general areas as the most pressing problems of literacy at the present time. They are: 1) "Imparting basic literacy to those who most need it" and 2) "Raising language comprehension in the entire population." Certain general recommendations to the National Institute of Education follow the brief analysis of the two problems. Also included are specific suggestions and strategies for implementing the general recommendations of the report.


Putnam emphasizes that one of the most useful study skills a secondary student needs is the ability to read a section or chapter in a text and to express the main ideas in concise state-
ments or in a good study outline. The author also indicates that the process is most effectively taught when using students' own textbooks because it then has direct application.


Can reading be taught in the content areas? Russell relates his experiences and explores what he considers an untenable position. He presents a case for support of a qualified reading specialist directing a staff trained and competent in reading disabilities. He explains certain vital functions for the administrator, the reading specialist, and the reading line staff. He emphasizes that, if organized properly, they can realistically deal with the reading crisis.


This publication presents an evaluation of instructional materials in English, spelling, handwriting and literature adopted in California in 1974. It includes detailed evaluations of 121 sets and systems of elementary textbooks and audiovisual materials. The evaluations utilize the EPIE format and were written by teachers in San Mateo County.


This article reports one phase of an ongoing longitudinal project designed to identify the students who may develop dyslexia. The present study is based on the second year follow-up of an original population of 497 white male kindergarten children administered a developmental and neuropsychological test battery in 1970, and an evaluation of the predictive accuracy of these tests to the criterion reading level at the end of first grade in 1972. The results of the analysis revealed that over 90% of both the high risk and low risk students were correctly classified. The results show initial support for the predictive utility of preschool tests.

No one questions the importance of reading as the basics for educational growth. However, the question as to its relative importance to all public groupings with respect to other educational goals has been studied in Maryland at the state and local levels. The data reveal that this goal is always rated the most important or second most important of all educational goals. The authors recommend that the "mastery of reading skills" should underlie all early education programs, with remedial and developmental reading centers designed to support the classroom teacher.


This study represents a synthesis of the research of Bernstein, Bruner, Gesell, McGraw, Piaget, and Werner to discuss theoretically the process of co-ordination and the integration of two separate skilled motor acts to form a new skilled motor act. Although the co-ordination process has been substantiated by infancy research, evidence has been offered to show that the process can be constant throughout the life span to senescence and also across the intellectual and social-emotional aspects of development. The author has presented a practical longitudinal process model showing the steps involved in co-ordination from the first attempts at skill integration to the acquisition of final exquisitely refined motor acts.


The authors describe a stations approach to middle school reading instruction. They delineate several advantages of this approach emphasizing that the stations approach provides the framework which can facilitate students' understanding and awareness of the logic or "why" behind instruction and practice.

Vandever, Thomas R., and Donald D. Neville, "Modality Aptitude and

After modality aptitude for 282 second graders was determined, 72 children were selected who learned significantly more or fewer words when they were presented in one method (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) than in the other two. Six categories of students resulted: visual strength, visual weakness, auditory strength, auditory weakness, kinesthetic strength, and kinesthetic weakness. Visual strength and weakness students were placed in classes in which visual methods were used to teach. The same procedures were used for those with auditory and kinesthetic strengths and weaknesses. At the end of six weeks of instruction, analysis revealed that students taught to strengths did no better than those taught to weakness. In view of the results of this study, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that modality does not form a reasonable grouping procedure. Time spent in identifying students having a modality strength might be better spent in instruction.


This issue contains 369 reports of reading research published between July 1, 1972, and June 30, 1973. The research studies are categorized into 6 main areas.


The author dedicates his book to the reportedly five million hyperactive children in this country. In the text he gives a description of the main characteristics of the hyperkinetic child and suggests practical methods of treatment. Wender discusses medication for such children, which he favors if prescribed by a qualified physician. However, he points out that medication should be supported by understanding and by correct handling. The book is informative and easy to read. Parents and teachers who have mistakenly labeled their child hyperactive may learn that their fears have been exaggerated.

Williamson, Leon E., and Freda Young, “The IRI and RMI Diag-

The results of this descriptive study of 30 intermediate grade students support the research by Biemiller and Weber in 1970. Their results indicated that reading errors are powerful cues to use in diagnosing reading performance. The subjects' performances demonstrated that reading behavior is different when reading at the instructional and frustrational levels as defined by IRI (Informal Reading Inventory) and analyzed by RMI (Reading Miscues Inventory) concepts. When reading at the frustrational level, subjects tended to adhere more closely to the sound and symbol materials of the text than when reading at their instructional level. When reading at their instructional level, subjects were less apt to make as many miscues having high sound and symbol similarities. A miscue at the instructional level was more likely to fit the grammatical and semantic structure of the whole. A miscue at the frustrational level tended to fit only the sentence or phrase in which it occurred. Therefore, high sound and symbol similarity are not positive indicators of good comprehension. The RMI concepts are very powerful for analyzing oral reading errors made within the boundary set by IRI concepts. The concepts in these two techniques should be synthesized.


Reading teachers have proclaimed with some success the motto, “Every teacher a teacher of reading.” Ziebel suggests that perhaps it is now time for a motto for reading teachers, such as, “Every special reading teacher partly a guidance counselor.” Reading teachers must not overlook the emotional disability of the student. The student's low self-esteem, fears, doubts and depressions are often a major factor in keeping the pupil a retarded reader. Ziebel strongly advocates that additional training in counseling techniques can be of considerable help to the reading teacher in achieving the desired goal of making each of the students an effective reader.