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## BROWSING WITH BILL

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An International Reading Association book in its Perspectives in Reading Series that was reviewed for this column because of its current topic is *Reading and Career Education* by Duane M. Nielson and Howard F. Hjelm, I.R.A., Newark, Delaware, 1975.

In Michigan the 77th Legislature passed Public Act 97, the Career Education Act, which was signed by Governor Milliken and in part states: "Beginning with the 1975-76 school year each local agency 'shall have' a comprehensive career education program . . ." As you can see we are mandated to a comprehensive K-12 career education program infused into our curricula. But what does career education have to do with teaching reading to our students? *Reading and Career Education* is an adequate book which attempts to answer this question.

It is a good book to read for those of us confused about career education and teaching. The book tries to answer with some degree of success such questions as: "Why am I being mandated to teach career education?", "Why do it at all?" and "How do I effectively teach career education while trying to teach everything else in my already too busy curriculum?" Why read this book? Because career education is upon us, alive and growing, whether we accept it or not.

*Reading and Career Education* is a compilation of short articles from many of the experts in the field of career education. The articles in this book are based on many of the papers presented at a Perspectives in Reading Conference which focused on reading and career education. It was held as a pre-session to the IRA's 1974 annual convention in New Orleans. There are four major sections in this 115-page book.

Section one is by far the most interesting and informative part of the book. This section deals with why career education is necessary and with the history of

career training and education. A working definition of what career education is is developed in this section and remains consistent throughout the book. It goes something like this, "The process of career education is relating educational goals to **life goals**. The goals reflect concerns about attitudes, knowledge, and skill of children, youth, and adults as they venture into social, educational, and career encounters." The emphasis in career education is on reducing the difficulties which occur when students encounter reality. In section one the idea is presented that the fundamental career skill in our society is the ability to read. The rest of this book supports the marriage of career education and the ability to read. The basic premise is that the concept of career education is a perfect medium for bringing about this integrated total approach to teaching and learning.

Several viewpoints concerning reading requirements for career education are presented in section two. This section is interesting but not terribly informative. Most of the information presented here is of the nature that most of you who read this journal would already know. Studies are presented that discuss the reading levels at which adults need to perform in order to function adequately in various types of jobs and factors in determining estimates of skills levels required for entry into various careers. The article in section two that I found most interesting was about assessment of adult reading competence on a national level and some of the information that the tests have already provided, such as, "Given a series of newspaper help wanted advertisements, only 56 percent of the adult sample tested were able to match correctly personnel qualifications to job requirements". These results produced an estimated 52 million adults who were not able to perform this task!

Section three is probably the weakest



one in the book. In section three various writers discuss the innovative career education programs with which each is associated. All of these career education programs mentioned were supported by the U.S. Office of Education and were considered exemplars of comprehensive career education programs. Most of these articles report observations about their various career education projects. The observations are interesting but not of much use in setting up your own model. Of course, one has to remember these programs mentioned are "first generation" comprehensive programs and not a final product based on years of development.

Section four is a summary and comments article by Theodore L. Harris. He tries to put all of these articles in proper perspective. Dr. Harris does an adequate job. He keeps on mentioning two recurring themes: 1) career education attempts to make educational experiences meaningful and 2) reading as a basic communication tool in career education.

A final IRA publication that will be reviewed for this winter issue is in its Reading Aids Series and is a 73-page monograph entitled, *Attitudes and Reading* by J. Estill Alexander and Ronald C. Filler. Most of the IRA monographs are excellent sources of specific information for us because they are not very difficult to read. They are short in length and usually do a fine job of discussing the specific topic in which we are interested. Usually the monographs contain summaries of the research that has been done in the specific areas which make our job of gathering information about the area in question much, much easier. *Attitudes and Reading* is no exception to my concept of what a good monograph attempts to do.

In this monograph the authors state that, "attitudes will be considered to consist of a system of feelings related to reading which causes the learner to approach or avoid a reading situation." This monograph will help teachers on "how to" focus on positive attitude development and maintenance in their students. There are three major purposes to this monograph: 1) to identify variables that correlate with attitude formation and maintenance; 2) to provide suggestions for assessing attitudes more consciously and objectively; and 3) to sug-

gest teacher and parent behaviors, instructional strategies, and organizational patterns which may lead some learners to more positive attitudes toward reading.

As Ivan Quandt of Temple University wrote in the forward:

*The authors of this text have reviewed the research related to reading attitudes and have carefully explained its implications; they have presented in detail the various tools and techniques available for assessing attitudes; they have given extensive explanations and examples of teaching strategies for building and maintaining healthy reading attitudes; and they have supplied a checklist which deserves to be on every teacher's desk. By putting all of these components into this one publication, the authors have made a significant contribution to the teaching of reading.*

I couldn't agree more. The authors have done this, and I will try to elaborate on some of their statements and suggestions.

Some of the variables that the authors looked at concerning attitude development and maintenance were: achievement, self-concept, parents and the home environment, the teacher and classroom atmosphere, instructional practices and special programs, sex, test intelligence, socioeconomic status, and student interests. Valid generalizations were difficult to make concerning these areas because of limited studies and contradictory findings. For example, there is not always a positive correlation between high achievement and favorable attitudes. Certain instructional practices and special programs can, but do not necessarily, lead to improved attitudes. The belief that girls have more favorable attitudes toward reading than boys is not warranted by research. Also the generalizations that more intelligent students have more positive attitudes, and that students from lower socioeconomic classes have more negative attitudes than those from higher socioeconomic classes are not borne out by the research.

The second section discusses scales and techniques for measuring attitudes. All of the types of techniques are discussed, including observation, interviewing, questionnaires, incomplete sentences, pairing, summated rating scales, and the semantic differential. One of the more exciting scales for measuring attitudes is the **Heatherington Attitude Scale**. The



scale requires that statements or questions be read to the respondent (an entire class can be done at one time), that the respondent choose one of five answer responses, and that numerical values of 1 to 5 be given to the responses. By grouping the items, the questions are considered diagnostic. Specific areas of a child's reading environment toward which he may feel positively (a high numerical score) or negatively (a low numerical score) can be ascertained. The authors maintain that caution should be used in interpreting any measure of reading attitudes. Responses of a student may indicate how s/he is "supposed" to feel rather than how s/he actually feels. Any measuring of attitudes, the authors feel, should be of a longitudinal nature rather than a one-shot design before major programmatic decisions are made.

The final major section concerns developing and maintaining positive attitudes. This section presents suggestions which will assist the teacher in accomplishing this goal. Attention is given to the importance of self-concept, teacher attitudes and behaviors, selected instructional practices and classroom organizational patterns, and ways of working with parents. The ideas presented are common, tried-and-true suggestions that do not require unusual or difficult preparations on the part of teachers. For example, a simple suggestion for improving reading attitude is to provide opportunities to read. For many of our students the last opportunity they have for reading is in the school setting, **not** when they leave the building. The authors recognize this and suggest that teachers provide a specified time in which everyone in the school has an opportunity to read - teachers, principal, secretaries, and custodian. The U.S.S.R. method (Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading) is used in which interruptions less than emergency situations are not tolerated. When a student with a poor attitude sees the importance placed on providing time for everyone to read, s/he may be motivated to read, too.

The monograph ends by providing a checklist for teachers to see if they really are doing the things necessary to improve reading attitudes. This checklist is an excellent little device to measure if we are touching all the bases.

Two appendixes are also given. One is an annotated listing of attitude assess-

ment instruments which would be helpful to the teacher who wishes to construct an instrument for his own use. Appendix two is a listing of studies of student interests. The studies listed will provide the teacher with background information relative to student interest.

The final book reviewed is *Dyslexia in the Classroom* by Dale R. Jordan, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, Columbus, Ohio, 1972. Even though this book is not of a very recent copyright date it is an excellent book for the classroom teacher to read and use. This book is not an attempt to set the experts straight regarding perceptual disability (dyslexia). Instead, this book is designed for the general classroom teacher who has neither the time nor the background to be a learning disabilities professional. Mr. Jordan's purpose is to show simple guidelines for identifying specific perceptual difficulties followed by various procedures and activities that the classroom teacher can easily use to help children with these difficulties.

I see great importance for this type of book. Most experts in the field of education agree that somewhere between 10 and 15 percent of the school age population suffers to some degree in the ability to handle language symbols correctly, in spite of average or above intelligence. Because Dyslexia is primarily the inability for the person to sort out the sensory impressions (symbols that represent spoken language) satisfactorily, the overriding concern for teachers is what can be done to help these people become independent, literate individuals. As with any unusual situation one has to learn to identify what the problem really is. Problem identification has to come before the solving aspect can take place. Because one can't always run to a learning disabilities expert, the classroom teacher has to be able to identify and take the proper corrective action when she suspects a perceptual problem. By utilizing this book, the classroom practitioner can make a trustworthy diagnosis using the instruments and techniques presented.

The first section of this book deals with identifying visual dyslexia, auditory dyslexia and dysgraphia (the inability to cope with handwriting) in the classroom. Mr. Jordan provides three tests, tells how to use them, and explains what to look for in identifying these problems. He is



very thorough in his approach and the tests and directions are written with a minimum of technical jargon that makes for easy understanding. Also in this section is a very complete checklist of the behaviors and symptoms that describe these three perceptual difficulties.

In the second major section are the techniques and procedures for correcting the problems these dyslexics have. A cardinal truth regarding perceptual impairment is that the learning of skills must be highly structured. The learning tasks presented to the child must be with controlled stimulus factors. If the dyslexic child is to be helped, the teacher must follow three principles: 1) simplicity of task to be done, 2) repetition of the task, and 3) step-by-step progression into higher skill areas. The author follows these rules when offering very specific suggestions and techniques for remediating the child's problems. By using the suggestions given, any teacher can provide effective training for the student. A secondary benefit that should take place because of effective teaching methods is a lessening of frustration for both teacher and pupil; hence an improvement in the classroom climate, i.e., discipline problems.

Obviously the classroom teacher is not capable of handling all learning disability problems in his/her classroom. There is a section in this book designed to give teachers a trustworthy basis for referring students who are unable to function within the classroom to the learning disabilities expert. The checklists of behavioral symptoms given in this section enable the teacher to make professional statements regarding a child's behavior at school.

*Dyslexia in the Classroom* is mainly for elementary teachers because of the high rate of success for discovering dyslexia early. With each passing year the success rate is diminished until by the time the child is in high school the percentage of successful treatment is extremely low. Many of our colleagues can't agree that such a thing called dyslexia even exists, but for lack of a better label and the fact that some students never learn to read, write, or spell functionally, no matter what methods of instruction we use, this terrible perceptual problem does exist. In his book, Mr. Jordan gives the avenue for correcting these problems.



A study of classroom teachers teaching reading by Frank Guszak revealed that in a 60-minute reading period, the children actually read for only 1 minute. Children become better readers by reading. Don't forget to provide plenty of time for children to read.