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## Main Ideas and Important Details

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# Main Ideas and Important Details

by Ronald L. Cramer  
Harold Cafone

A most interesting and useful two volume set of readings has recently been published jointly by The Open University Press (England) and the General Learning Press (U.S.A.) These books of readings are a part of a multi-media course on reading development designed for The Open University in England. The first volume, edited by Amelia Meinik and John Merritt, introduces the reader to a broad overview of the nature and role of reading and is designed to answer such questions as: What is Reading? What is the present state of reading? What needs to be done? This volume is entitled *Reading Today and Tomorrow*. Melnick's and Merritt's second volume, *The Reading Curriculum*, directs itself to such questions as: What is to be taught? How is reading competence developed? How can the teacher evaluate reading proficiency and the reading curriculum?

As these two books were designed for a foundations course in the teaching of reading, beginning teachers will find a wealth of information dealing with both important theoretical considerations and practical applications for the teaching of reading.

Readers whose primary concern lies with early childhood education would do well to read Sylvia Krown's *Threes and Fours Go to School*, Prentice Hall, New Jersey, 1974. Written at the request of the Ministry of Education in Israel, this book describes the educational philosophy, curriculum, and compensatory methods used in a two year study of disadvantaged nursery school children. While the American teacher will note some differences in the setting of the school, most of what is described can be meaningful to those concerned with the emotional and intellectual growth

of "... children whose original drives, curiosity and capacities are the same as all children's, but whose development has been hampered by life circumstances." *Teaching Reading as Concept Development: Emphasis on Affective Thinking* by George H. Henry (International Reading Association) bridges the gap that so commonly exists between those who teach reading and those who use reading as a basis for literature appreciation. Identifying a common method of reading as an analysis of single works, Henry builds a case for teaching reading as synthesis, and he does so in manner that makes this book a very practical one for both English and reading teachers. The reader is given examples that explain the instructional process Henry is writing about.

Another IRA publication of more than just passing interest is *Perspectives in Reading* No. 18, *Reading in The Middle School*, edited by Gerald Duffy. This monograph offers articles of interest in four major areas: (1) Unique characteristics of middle schools and their preadolescent student body, (2) organizational problems of middle school programs, (3) teaching reading in the middle school, and (4) a single article on the future of reading programs.

Books of readings continue to proliferate and they have become an important source of reading, even in this era of information retrieval centers. Ruddell, Ahern, Hartson, and Taylor have come up with interesting samplings of articles on a variety of topics. *Resources in Reading-Language Instruction* speaks briefly through a rather diverse group of writers on such traditional topics as diagnosis, psycholinguistics, and instructional programs. However, one will also find

rarely treated topics related to the teaching of reading such as those dealing with educational change, and instructional implications from other disciplines. This book will be a useful addition to the reading teacher's collection.

(Dr. Ronald L. Cramer and Dr. Harold Cafone are on the staff of Oakland University.)

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