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MAIN IDEAS AND IMPORTANT DETAILS

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At the recent IRA Convention in Anaheim, California, one could not help but be awed by the plethora of materials, programs, kits, gadgets and equipment offered for sale by the exhibitors. Teachers were scurrying about snatching free literature, pleading for free copies, and lugging huge shopping bags full of loot back to their hotel rooms. The scene was sometimes amusing but more often sad and depressing. One cannot help but be impressed with the vigor and the sincerity with which teachers seek new tools to make their teaching more effective. On the other hand it saddens one to realize that teachers are still looking outward for salvation when they ought to be looking inward. The dynamics which will revolutionize teaching effectiveness are not to be found in the outward world. When real change comes in the teaching profession it will not be in the form of new materials and programs or innovative methods and equipment. Rather, significant change will only come when teachers start

looking inwards — when teachers realize that they are in charge of their own destiny.

Why are we regaling you with this little homily? Just to remind you and ourselves that this column only serves a useful purpose to those teachers who are thoughtful enough to strive for that ability to look inward to their own resources, talents, humor, inventiveness, genius, persistence, love, generosity, and intelligence, in order to become more effective teachers. Sorry to say that snatching literature from exhibitors tables at Conventions doesn't make it.

Teachers who have used Informal Reading Inventories in their work will enjoy reading, "Dilemmas in Informal Assessments," by Frank Guszak, *Elementary English*, May, 1970. While Guszak's discussion doesn't provide any answers to the difficulties he describes, he does manage to cogently outline the problems teachers face. Knowing clearly the nature of the problem we face in diagnosis will certainly make us more cautious

and modest about the application of traditional techniques and hopefully open out minds to the possibility of devising better diagnostic instruments and methods.

Teaching Reading As A Language Experience, by Mary Anne Hall, is a handy paperback for the teacher who wants to try the Language Experience Approach to reading instruction. The book is concise and precise and does a good job of explaining the procedures for developing reading experiences drawn from childrens language. Also included are thoughtful applications of language experience techniques for the disadvantaged. The book may be obtained from the Charles Merrill Co., 1300 Alum Creek Drive, Columbus, Ohio 43216. Cost is \$1.95. Incidentally, you may find these other publications by Merrill worth adding to your professional collection:

1. **Locating and Correcting Reading Difficulties**—Eldon Ekwall
2. **Handbook in Corrective Reading — Basic Tasks** — Ruth Gallant
3. **Phonics for the Teaching of Reading** — Marion Hull

A new edition of the Johnson, Sickles, and Sayers Anthology of Children's Literature has just been

published by Houghton-Mifflin. A format similar to that used in earlier editions has been employed but portions of newer books and newer artists illustrations are included. Poems by modern poets help to up-date the anthology. This anthology may be considered a valuable aid but it includes few pieces of literature created by blacks even though quality selection could have been made.

Only Connect: Readings on Children's Literature is an excellent collection of essays about children and their literature. The book is published by Oxford University Press and is edited by Egoff, Stubbs and Ashley. This is a volume that teachers who are seriously interested in children's literature will find stimulating and exciting.

Ever think you'd like to write children's books? If you have ever given the idea serious thought, you should read Eleanor Cameron's book **The Green and Burning Tree: On the Writing and Enjoyment of Children's Books**. The author talks about the craft of writing including how she formed her literary taste and style and expertly explores the worlds of fantasy that authors like Andersen, C.S. Lewis and Lewis Carroll have created. Her best known book is **The Wonderful flight to the Mushroom Planet**.