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MAIN IDEAS AND IMPORTANT DETAILS

by Hal Cafone and Ronald Cramer

Any teacher assigning youngsters to write might be interested in *Writing as a Process of Discovery* by E. Jenkinson and D. Seybold (Indiana University Press, 1970). All of us are aware of the importance of an instructional framework when we teach and the need for careful assignments. The authors have developed a series of steps to help students understand what they are to do when they are assigned to write on any topic — a kind of Directed Writing Activity.

As long as pre-service training of teachers consists of at most a single course in language arts, there will be a need for school systems like New York City to publish guides for beginning teachers of reading. Three such guides for grades 1-4, 5-8 and 9-12 can be obtained for \$2.00 each from the Board of Education of the City of New York, 110 Livingston Street, Brooklyn, New York 11201. All of the guides give basic directions to the teacher on such topics as assessment for instruction, teaching the skills, familiarity with reading materials and their use, organizing classes for instruction, pupils with special problems, and evaluating the reading program.

Summerhill by A. S. Neil has stirred up controversy ever since its publication. Teachers involved in the sometimes heated discussions around this book might find *Summerhill: For and Against* (Hart Publishing Company) stimulating. While on one hand John Culkin, a Jesuit priest, describes Summerhill as "a holy place," Max Rafferty, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction, writes, "I would as soon enroll a child of mine in a brothel as in Summerhill." Between these extremes, the careful reader will find gradations of pro and con Summerhill explored in a variety of ways.

Two important books of readings have recently come from the International Reading Association. Both explore the problems of the "disadvantaged" in learning to read. *Reading Goals for the Disadvantaged* (J. Allen Figurel, editor) has a broad spectrum of articles ranging in topic from primary programs for bilingual children to reading instruction for adult literacy. While this book of readings has articles related to language, it does not give this element as much prominence as does *Reading for the Disadvantaged, Problem of Linguistically Different Learners* (Thomas Horn, editor). Interdisciplinary in its approach, this publication in parts I and II "Backgrounds" and "Language," set the scene socially, psychologically, and linguistically for understanding the disadvantaged youngster. Part III then follows with recommendations for teachers from preschool through high school.

Language Art: an Ideabook by Mary Yanaga George (Chandler Publishing Co., 1970) draws upon her teaching experience to describe ideas she found useful with her school youngsters. New teachers will find interesting ideas they might adapt to fit the youngsters in their classes. More experienced teachers will find familiar techniques, for the most part, but they might enjoy the "pseudo-diary" of a teacher at work.

The National Council of Teachers of English has just published an excellent series of articles entitled *Explorations in Children's Writing* edited by Eldonna Evertts. It consists of a series of papers collected for institutes on Elementary English topped off with "Pot-Pourri on Writing," an interesting dialogue of questions ranging from a comparison of approaches to children's writing in British and American

schools to assignments of children's writing.

Flora Arnstein's book, *Children Write Poetry: A Creative Approach* (Dover Publications) is somewhat different in scope and purpose. This book is filled with examples of children's writing with narrative material explaining how the teacher functions in guiding young poets to write or dictate as Edna (age 9) did when she said,

I feel "poemy" today.

I have poems all over.

And I don't feel like going home.

As indicated in the foreword, Flora Arnstein "... knows the way into the inner spirit of childhood where lies unexpressed beauty; and she knows how to entice that dormant power into attractive self-expression."

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THE CONCEPT OF PERFORMANCE CONTRACTING

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needs themselves. Then the local staff should outline their own performance objectives in the critical skill areas; these specific objectives should then be translated into the specific guarantees of the proposed contract.

One final caution: performance contracting as a concept is only an administrative device, a systems vehicle for obtaining certain predetermined goals. It is not operant conditioning per se, nor differential staffing or contingency management. It could be all of these kinds of things, but not necessarily. Rewarding chil-

dren with candy is *not* unique to performance contracting. The contract itself is whatever is agreed to between the school district and the contractor. At this level of discussion, then, the idea of performance contracting cannot be argued in terms of any kind of pedagogy, but only in terms of its being a viable alternative for producing agreed upon results for children.

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