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Ronald Cramer

Harold Cafone

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Main Ideas and Important Details

by Ronald Cramer
Harold Cafone

That one of the ultimate goals of teaching is to develop critical readers is never challenged. However, it often seems that critical reading is left to the upper grade teachers to develop. Therefore the two latest volumes in the IRA Reading Aids series are most welcome: *Critical Reading Develops Early* by Lee, Bingham, and Woelfel and *Teaching Critical Reading at the Primary Level* by Stauffer and Cramer. The former offers suggestions as to how preschool and primary teachers can "... help the child develop an attitude of evaluation of ideas in the course of his early listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities." The latter book develops the rationale for a Directed Reading Thinking Activity and then gives illustrations of this activity in first and third grade classes.

More and more attention is being focused on adult literacy as a national problem. Evidence of this is seen in the 1960 census which indicates that 23 million American adults never went beyond elementary school. The IRA has recognized and met the need for information in this area by publishing the 11th book in their Perspectives Series, *Strategies for Adult Basic Education*. The book consists of a series of papers edited by J. Mangano, which surveys programs methods and materials in this area.

Another volume in the Slow Learner Series, edited by Kephart, has recently come to our attention. *Reading and Learning Disabilities* by Kaluger and Kolson focuses the diagnosis and correction of reading problems. The beginning chapters draw from other disciplines to deal with the learning process as well as the reading process.

Couple the above volume with *Reading Disabilities, Selections of Identification and Treatment*, a book of readings by Harold Newman. The unique aspect of Mr. Newman's book of readings is the inclusion of lesson plans in the appendix. Some seventy (70) pages of specific techniques to aid the poor reader, originally published by the New York City Board of Education cover a variety of topics, including reading lessons for the functional non-reader and social studies skills lesson plans.

IRA's new Target Series was developed with an idea toward getting the results of research into the hands of educators concerned with reading difficulties. Four books in the series have already been published and are directed toward the teacher, the reading specialist, the principal and other administrators. The books provide specific information relevant to the responsibilities each of these groups has in the treatment of reading difficulties.

The Center for Applied Linguistics has published its fourth book in their Urban Language Series and it's a very important book indeed. *Teaching Black Children to Read* is a book of readings, edited by J. Baratz and R. Shuy, dealing with the failure of public schools to teach black children to read. However, the authors point out "It (the book) is, however, not concerned with remediation; rather its focus is on literacy . . . Not remediation but how to teach reading is the issue here." Anyone who reads this book carefully will be impressed with the wealth of linguistic information on dialect divergence. A serious reader might also be depressed when he discovers how very seldom and inadequately the authors of the various papers actually address themselves to their major concern various papers actually address themselves to their major concern — how to teach reading to black children. Goodman's paper, "Dialect Barriers to Reading Comprehension," is a notable exception.

The IRA has recently published its thirteenth volume of the proceedings of their annual conference. There is much hardly worth your attention, but you will find certain sections extremely worthwhile. A unique format makes it particularly intriguing. Every major topic includes a general statement followed in each instance by a pro and con opinion on the topic. You will find, for instance, some very thoughtful arguments for and against Linguistic Approaches

to Reading, ITA, Basal Reader Programs, Programmed Instruction, Research in Reading, Speed Reading, and so on. Another book of Readings on Reading has recently been compiled by Alfred Benter, John Dlabal and Leonard Kise and published by the International Textbook Company, of Scranton, Pennsylvania. The authors have selected some outstanding articles and have organized the major sections to cover most of the traditional as well as some recent issues and concerns in reading instruction.