

Norman France. *Mathematics 7 - 11*, Book 1 and Teacher's Book 1. London and Glasgow: Collins, 1966, 112 pp. each.

Recent developments in the field of elementary mathematics have dramatically refocussed attention on the purposes of mathematics education. Studies of current experimental programmes and of learning research seem to indicate that, when considering the "new math," it is essential to focus sharply on the purposes of teaching and the objectives to be gained for all children. Mathematics instruction, especially at the elementary level, should not be aimed directly or solely at producing future mathematicians; rather, it should form part of the general education — the all-encompassing intellectual development — of every child, regardless of his subsequent ambitions in life.

Mathematics 7 - 11 (the numbers refer to ages, equivalent to grades two to six) is a noteworthy example of the type of material which can be useful in developing a programme for both the general and the specific in mathematics education. It is the first in a series of four basic books which, in the words of the author:

maintains a reasonable balance between the mechanical and the reasoning aspects of mathematics. There is less emphasis than usual on computation. Practice is given only in those mechanical skills the pupil actually needs to consolidate his own discoveries at his particular stage. Such skills are not regarded as ends in themselves. (Teacher's Book, p. 7).

The series is intended as a teaching aid:

to help make the arithmetic lesson more enjoyable for the teacher and pupil, and more effective by providing an interesting course which removes much of the drudgery connected with routine mechanical methods. (*loc. cit.*)

It is clearly evident that Dr. France, formerly Chief Educational Psychologist to the Kent Education Committee and now Associate Professor of Education at McGill, believes the role of teacher is that of guide and not that of demonstrator.

Book 1, arranged in four main parts, deals with such topics as counting, measuring, weighing, capacity, timetables, times, shapes, directions, fractions, money. Provision is also made for practice and review. A cursory glance at the table of contents and at the attractive, imaginative illustrations would immediately suggest emphasis on the child's environment with the use of mathematics in the home, school and local community. The accompanying Teacher's Book contains suggestions abouts the aims, possible methods, and special teaching material required for each lesson.

Mathematics 7 - 11 Book 1 and Teacher's Book 1 should be of interest to all elementary teachers and important additions to all school mathematics libraries. Although the books were intended for British use, as is evident by the units on money and weight

and by the occasional reference to such terms as "petrol," "sweet shop," "head teacher" and "nought," there is much to recommend their use by Canadian educators. With their guided discovery approach and emphasis on environment and the more practical aspects of mathematics, these books could serve as valuable supplementary material to present programmes and might well be adopted as texts for certain units.

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John Farrell. *The Creative Teacher of Language*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill of Canada, 1965, 408 pp., \$4.75.

It is seldom that one comes across a handbook in methodology which presents a satisfying coverage of the topic. John Farrell M.A., an Associate Professor of English at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, has produced not simply a blue-print, but a whole houseful of ideas for teachers of English. Most texts of this nature tend either towards some special emphasis, neglecting other areas of the subject, or else toward a generality which leaves the callow student-teacher crying again, "Why don't you give us something we can use in the classroom?" Professor Farrell declares in his preface that his ". . . is a practical book. It is full of the concrete detail that young teachers need." He goes on to say that the "book will provide a middle course between the completely freewheeling creative classroom that all of us want, and the completely mechanical performance of unimaginative tasks for which most of us settle."

Farrell seems to be a "middle of the course" man himself, for he balances his belief that "Creativity is the bone and marrow of the child," with a wealth of eminently practical suggestions on how, as H. G. Wells puts it, to teach children "to laugh and reach out their hands amid the stars." But when it comes to the ubiquitous problems of mechanics, or organizing a composition Farrell recognizes that discipline at the beginning leads to surer craftsmanship later on. Pupils should learn by direct experience rather than by telling, he contends. "The spelling, the grammar, the punctuation, vocabulary-building all become important but adjuncts of the prime business at hand, writing." The skillful correlation of language skills with the creative writing program, Farrell has named the *Omnibus* approach, since each lesson is designed to do far more than teach only one skill. However, he warns of the practical difficulties for teachers either too wedded to the traditional compartmentalizing of the language arts, or lacking in ability to organize so eclectic a program.