

Reviews

expressed are truly seminal or merely glib.

On the whole, over four hundred and twenty pages are too many to read for such small returns, nearly four hundred too many, in fact.

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Stephen N. Judy.
EXPLORATIONS IN THE
TEACHING OF SECONDARY
ENGLISH.

New York:

Dodd, Mead & Company, 1974.
273 pp. \$6.95.

I always approach "methods" books skeptically. "What can a methods book do for an experienced teacher who is still teaching (not sitting in an office writing books) and who has taught in different cities, in different socioeconomic areas, and in different types of schools from the most traditional to the most free?" I was surprised at this one. Not only was I writing "Yes" and "True" in the margins instead of my usual cryptic notes, but I was actually using the suggestions in my own classes.

Judy makes two points in his prefatory remarks: 1. the book is designed for those who want to find their own method; 2. the book is a starting point for experimentation, not a program. He states that the only "truly effective method must evolve from within." (p. x) Although this appears to be a truism and obvious, how often does the method grow from within and how often is method imposed? Most often the latter is true.

Judy's book is so important because it gives alternatives; it is a starting point for experimentation. He is not trying to sell one product but rather has produced a consumers' guide. It is up to the teacher to experiment and find out what is right for his school and himself. First of all the teacher must think. At the end of Chapter One Judy includes a series of controversial statements about the

teaching of English. He instructs his readers:

As a form of a pre-test, write down your own reactions to each of these statements... Save your notes and use them as a bookmark. When you have finished working through EXPLORATIONS IN THE TEACHING OF SECONDARY ENGLISH, come back and take this test again to see if and how your own thoughts on the teaching of English have changed. (p. 15)

Once the teacher is thinking critically, the students must next be considered. Judy quotes Gary Cavanagh who replaces the question "How can the teacher best teach?" with the question "How can the student best learn?" (p. 149) Having started the process of critical thinking and self evaluation, Judy does not then leave his reader saying "So what do I do now?" but rather provides suggestions, possible answers. If teachers are not satisfied that enough details are included here, reference is made to the source documents and an extensive bibliography is included at the end of the book.

Judy foresees problems of traditional schools and constrictive curriculum but is able to offer a suggestion even in these circumstances, notably "An Experience-Centered Approach in a Traditional Framework". (p. 143) He foresees parental problems, "the society that canonizes reading is equally afraid of print and literate people. The same parents who are withdrawing their support from the schools because of failures to teach basic reading skills are increasingly trying to play the role of censor for the English teacher. . . . The English teacher who tries to get more lively, contemporary literature into his class often does so at the risk of losing his job." (p. 116) Finally he stresses survival, "Working Over The System (Before It Works You Over)." (p. 246) Sometimes it is difficult for a creative, enthusiastic teacher to survive in the face of petty obstructions.

Judy warns the teacher not to let the system conquer and gives a "three-step procedure for analyzing any situation, a procedure that should help to sort out the variables and lead you toward successive approximations of the ideal." (p. 250)

Stephen Judy's book is not only thought provoking but leads a teacher into action.

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**R. Wigle, P. Dowling and
P. Jennings.**

**MATHEMATICAL
PURSUITS ONE.**

Toronto:

Macmillan of Canada, 1973.

356 pp. \$6.95.

For many years certain established texts were used in the high schools of each province. Then came the "new" mathematics and a plethora of texts with "modern" or "new" in the title and sometimes little else than a chapter on set theory to justify the title. Teachers can hardly be blamed if they look with a jaundiced eye on any new text book. Nevertheless, here is one which justifies its existence.

The authors tell us that this text is to be student-oriented, accompanying the student along the path of his own mathematical experience, speaking to him at his own level, encouraging innovation, and stimulating inquiry into different mathematical phenomena.

Let us consider first those chapters in which the aims of the authors are, in great part, realized. The first three sections of the opening chapter on coordinates and relations use the discovery approach and are excellent. "Angles and Polygons" (Chap. 3) continues the "learning by doing" approach. "Areas and Volumes" (Ch. 8) bids fair to use the student-oriented exploratory method even if it slips a little at the volume of a prism. "Similar Figures" fulfills the promise of the preface. There is a novel introduction of vectors via translations in Ch. 10, but examples from our everyday scienti-

fic environment are in short supply. "Presenting Data" is worthwhile with an excellent variety of examples and the section on the misuse of statistics is most commendable. The final chapter on "Probability" stimulates the student to draw his own conclusions through experiencing many thought-provoking examples.

On the minus side, the so-called review of fractions, decimals and percentage is nothing more than a test of the student's mastery of the basics of these topics and is an anomaly in a text of this type. The presentation of ratio and proportion reverts to the "definition-example-exercise" method which is not in character with the avowed aims of the text. Surds are not "explored," the writers seem to assume that a gentle hint and one example gives mastery of a concept in this area.

In conclusion, one should mention that answers to all exercises in a chapter are given at the end of the chapter. This is a commendable feature in a student-oriented text. Further, review exercises and answers are provided at the end of the book.

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**Miriam Freedman and
Teri Perl.**

**A SOURCEBOOK FOR
SUBSTITUTES AND
OTHER TEACHERS.**

Don Mills:

Addison Wesley, 1974.

160 pp. \$6.00.

It's dawn and the telephone is ringing. Suddenly we are in front of a new class. There are no lesson plans, or we can't find them. The class is getting noisy. This is the start of a day that often seems endlessly long and chaotic.

These lines from the preface describe a real situation for substitute teachers. For these tense moments which any substitute must face, the authors, Freedman and Perl (once substitutes themselves),