

**Delores H. Lipscomb, Judith I. Martin, Alice J. Robinson.
THE MATURE STUDENTS' GUIDE TO READING
AND COMPOSITION.**

Willowdale, Ontario:

Science Research Associates (Canada) Limited, 1975.

280 pp. \$6.85.

**Delores H. Lipscomb, Judith I. Martin, Alice J. Robinson,
and Charles Franklin.**

COMMUNICATION: A GUIDE TO COMPOSITION AND READING.

Willowdale, Ontario:

Science Research Associates (Canada) Limited, 1975.

196 pp. \$6.85.

Designed to develop reading, writing, and "survival" skills, *The Mature Students' Guide* is intended for poor readers or non-readers from grade seven to adult. In 107 lessons, students are taken from initial recognition of vowels and consonants to reading skills at the 4th grade level as measured by standardized tests. The goal of making mature non-readers into writers of "a single paragraph expository theme" within the scope of one text seems an over-ambitious project for any teacher. Unfortunately no data are available on evaluation of the program or on the amount of time needed for students to complete the text successfully. Basic literacy educators will be pleased to find grammar taught by illustration of patterns and positions rather than by rules and definitions, and will recognize the use of controlled writing exercises as an attempt to build confidence along with skills.

Communication: A Guide to Composition and Reading assumes a fourth grade reading level and may be used as a follow-up to *The Mature Students' Guide*. This text, intended for "inadequate" readers and writers in the junior-senior high school or college, has difficulty in selecting topics appropriate for this extended audience with its wider range of interests and experiences. Many topics, such as leases, labor contracts, résumés, and mortgages, are excellent for the mature audience but irrelevant to the junior high adolescent. Worthy of special note, the graphics are strikingly sharp and interesting.

A major strength of the combined program is its structure and organization. *The Mature Students' Guide*, for example, includes a review of past lessons in each chapter, uses a middle chapter as a cumulative review of the first chapters or as a diagnostic pre-test before initial instruction, and concentrates its last chapter on the transfer of skills to real life situations. The manuals contain clearly-stated objectives for each lesson, step-by-step procedures for achieving the objectives, and helpful suggestions for supplemental activities.

Both texts seem appropriate for use in refresher courses for mature students or for basic literacy courses of the night-school variety, but only in the hands of able teachers. Other uses suggested for the program are to be questioned, particularly in the case of bilingual students, because the authors tend to rely on the students' intuitive manipulation of the language.

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Michael A. Gilbert.
HOW TO WIN AN ARGUMENT.
Toronto: McGraw-Hill, 1979.
173 pp. \$5.98.

Courses in reasoning or critical thinking are beginning to appear in departments of educational foundations and in high school English and social studies; and these are, of course, the cousins of the philosophy department's non-symbolic, or informal, logic courses, which traditionally examine the logical structure of arguments and the common forms of error or fallacy within poor arguments. Among the new texts for a general readership, and not a bad one at that, is Michael Gilbert's *How to Win an Argument*. Says Gilbert: "...when I... began teaching I was shocked to learn that very few people really knew how to listen and respond to an argument. Finally I had a mission: to make the world more critical..."

To this end, he sections the book into "The Art of Argument," "The Ways of Argument," and "The Arguments." The first part of this triad seeks to explain the nature of argument and how one ought to engage in it. Centrally, it is an attempt to *persuade* by the giving of reasons; crucial is one's attitude and certain rules of thumb. One must be aggressive, though not obnoxious, and heed a range of admonishments such as "Always know what you are arguing about," "Always attack the reasons for a conclusion, not the conclusion itself" and so on.

In the second part of the book, "The Ways of Argument," Gilbert takes the reader through a series of fallacies, or improper ways of arguing. He imagines conversations between the fictitious character "Our Hero" and a coterie of adversaries who would lead him astray in arguments. Through dialogues and commentary on them, Gilbert shows how and when arguments fail. Readers are instructed on the manoeuvres that "Our Hero" should have made and are given further rules of thumb on the basis of which to deal with similar problems.

Part Three consists of seven extended arguments. In each case two different characters argue with one another on topics such as the legalization of marijuana, homosexuality, equal rights, marriage and so on. Alongside each of