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Reviews and Abstracts

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TIDYMAN, WILLARD F. *The teaching of spelling*. (School monograph series.) Yonkers-on-Hudson, N. Y.: World Book Company, 1919. 178 pp.

The literature giving accounts of educational research which is appearing in increasing volume in our educational periodicals and in miscellaneous publications is making the demand for well-organized summaries a pressing one. An attempt to meet this matter has been made in the case of spelling by Dr. W. F. Tidyman in his recent monograph on the teaching of spelling. He states that his purpose is "to bring together from all sources the more reliable and pertinent facts of the teaching of spelling and to present them in their relation to the practical problem which the teacher has to face every day in the classroom." Aside from the fact that teachers and superintendents generally do not have access to the original sources, it is very difficult task to translate the results of research into guiding principles and rules for schoolroom practice. Therefore, the writer of this monograph has rendered distinctive service in bringing together some of the more reliable and pertinent facts in the field of spelling.

The table of contents is a good index of the topics treated:

CHAPTER

- I. The Selection and Classification of Words
- II. Preliminary Testing for Word Difficulty
- III. The Psychological Basis of Spelling
- IV. The Presentation of Words
- V. Independent Study and Reviews
- VI. The Prevention and Treatment of Errors
- VII. Testing
- VIII. The Measurement of Spelling Efficiency
- IX. Factors Affecting Spelling Efficiency

APPENDIX

- A. Spelling Plans
- B. Minimum Word List

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Spelling Material
The Psychology of Spelling
The Pedagogy of Spelling
Scales and Standards Tests
Factors Affecting Spelling Efficiency
General Studies—Summaries, Discussions, etc.

One of the most valuable features of the book is the bibliography. In addition to being classified under the headings given above, there are help-

ful subdivisions. For example, under the general heading of spelling material, the sources are grouped under the following sub-topics:

Word lists, difficult words, common misspellings, classes of errors, grading, grouping, homonyms.

Under the pedagogy of spelling we find the following subdivisions:

Syllabification and diacritical marks, meaning, divisions, method of presentation, spelling plans, the value of rules, transfer, class study versus independent study, spelling consciousness, correction or errors.

Such a grouping of references for particular topics will be very helpful to anyone who wishes to consult the original sources.

A net total of 114 sources is mentioned. Only a very limited number of unpublished theses are included. It is probably too much to expect of a writer to include in such a summary such sources but there is a considerable accumulation of unpublished reports some of which are very valuable. For the most part, they have not been listed and extensive and persistent correspondence would be required to unearth them. In comparison with some other bibliographies on spelling, it appears that sources in the general field of psychological research have not been completely canvassed. This shortcoming is, however, offset by the inclusion of a number of references from foreign publications.

The style of the book is simple and teachers will find it readable. Few direct citations to sources are made and interwoven with the summary of the results of research is much of the writer's pedagogical theories and beliefs in this field. Use is made of paragraph side headings in italics as well as frequent centered headings. This makes it easy to locate in the chapter the discussion of even minor topics. At the end of each chapter there is a summary consisting of numbered statements which are in the form of principles and rules for the teaching of spelling.

Students in the field of education will be disappointed that the writer has not given specific citations to the sources on which his principles and rules are based. However, this omission will not be missed by the general reader. In general, the writer does not discuss in a critical way the accounts of research which he uses. However, a critical comparison of analyses would not be in keeping with his announced purpose. The book will meet a real need and Dr. Tidyman is to be commended upon his effort.

W. S. M.

LYON, LEVERETT S. *A survey of commercial education in the public high schools of the United States.* (Supplementary Educational Monographs, V. 3, no. 5, 1919.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 62 pp.

Commercial education in high schools has been slow to accept scientific procedure in its reorganization. Developing as it did immediately out of the practices of business colleges, commercial education has been more or less formal and routine in character. One of the first steps in a progressive modification of traditional practices is a thorough-going study of existing practices, together with a careful analysis and evaluation of these practices in the light of modern social needs.

Mr. Lyon's monograph reports the results of a careful investigation of the practices in the commercial departments of one hundred thirty-six high schools in different sections of the country. Among the problems which were studied are the following: the percentage of students in commercial courses, the length of commercial courses, the kinds of subjects included in these courses, and the English requirements. Special consideration is given to the "social-business" subjects. The fact is emphasized that there is genuine need for agencies through which much-needed text and reference material can be organized and published. In a final chapter entitled "Plans and Policies in Secondary Commercial Work," Mr. Lyon points out the need for a study of the purposes of high school commercial courses in "modern functionalized society." In addition, he shows the need of scientific surveys and investigations to secure the facts on which to base radical changes in current practices.

Although Mr. Lyon's study is by no means exhaustive, it represents the most comprehensive and scientific investigation of its kind which has been made in the field of commercial education. It should be read by superintendents, high school principals, and all teachers of commercial education.

W. S. G.

HOBSON, ELSIE GARLAND. *Educational legislation and administration in the state of New York from 1777 to 1850*. (Supplementary educational monographs, v. 3, no. 1, 1918.) Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 267 pp.

In this monograph, Miss Hobson has analyzed and summarized the educational legislation of the state of New York from 1777 to 1850 in terms that are intelligible to the average reader. The following topics receive considerable emphasis in her discussions: formative influences; dual system of school control; education under regents; the common school system; special legislation for cities; support of education; and education of special classes. The appendix contains complete lists of titles of the legislative acts with exact references to the sources where each may be found; abstracts of the charters of colleges, academies, and other types of institutions; abstracts of legislation concerning school lands and funds; common school acts and other similar data.

Miss Hobson has investigated a field in which much research work is necessary. It is obvious that an exact knowledge of educational legislation during the early periods of our history is necessary, if we are to understand the evolution of the various public school systems. It is also evident that this type of educational history will supply facts for interpreting and modifying present school practice. Furthermore, it will aid greatly in throwing light on our social, religious, economic and political history. From various points of view, therefore, this monograph is a valuable contribution to the history of American education.

W. S. G.

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