

# Bureau of Publications

TEACHERS COLLEGE, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



## BOOK NOTES

August, 1938

### AWARD

The newly founded Committee on Awards of the American Educational Research Association made this year its first selection of outstanding research studies. Of the five studies selected two are publications of the Bureau of Publications. The titles and citations are noted below.

#### *In the Field of Psychology of Learning*

BRENNER, BENJAMIN. Effect of Immediate and Delayed Praise and Blame upon Learning and Recall. Contributions to Education, No. 620. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934, 52 p.

This is an experimental study of the problem of motivation in the classroom. The subjects were 403 third-grade children, somewhat above average in intelligence. The experiment was carefully planned and conducted. In addition to reporting his own investigation, the author critically reviews previous researches and orients his problem with reference to the general problem of motivation. The author makes a significant contribution by his comments upon the divergence of the results of the various studies of motivation, including his own. He suggests that the explanation of the divergence of these results is to be found in the hypothesis in terms of which the problem has been formulated. Instead of attempting to obtain a general evaluation of fixed motivating categories such as praise or blame, reward or punishment, etc., we should study motivation in specific situations and seek to ascertain the conditions under which various motivating procedures are most effective. This suggestion has significant implications for future research.

#### *In the Field of Mental Hygiene*

JERSILD, ARTHUR T., and HOLMES, FRANCES B. Children's Fears. Child Development Monographs, No. 20. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1935. 356 P.

This study, from the Child Development Institute of Teachers College, is characterized by the variety of methods employed in collecting data: direct observation of children by parents and other adults, interviews with parents and teachers; interviews with children concerning their own fears; questionnaires to adults concerning childhood and present fears; observations of children in controlled experimental situations; case studies. The investigation is really a group of four studies, each of which serves as a check upon the others. The findings resulting from the various approaches to the problem "show a high degree of consistency in their major trends." Hence, altho the data are largely subjective, the dependability of the conclusions is probably high. Subjective methods and scholarliness are not necessarily incompatible. Altho the data do not afford a basis for a satisfactory explanation of how children's fears are acquired, the authors conclude that the process is not one of simple conditioning.

### WHAT IS A POET?

Is a poet an exotic flower? Must he write in a cave, live in an ivory tower, dwell alone, coming out into the light of day only to deliver a manuscript to his publisher? B. J. R. Stolper says the answer is NO—that poems may be written now as they were once, by groups and masses and choirs and choruses of people—that children especially naive, feeling vividly, may be made to write poems in concert and joyously chant them in concert as music of their own that they made. B. J. R. Stolper may be right. You might even glance over "The Group Poem—A Two-Day Unit in a New Sort of Verse" (a ninety-six page pamphlet) and see if he IS right.

### A MATHEMATICS YEARBOOK

The Yearbook of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics is this year devoted to a single topic, but a very important one—"The Nature of Proof" by DR. HAROLD P. FAWCETT. This study aims to help teachers to adapt geometry to the needs and purposes of modern life by providing plans for training pupils in critical and reflective thinking; training pupils in clear and unambiguous expression; transfer of training—habits of deductive thinking carried over into life situations; development of objective attitudes in dealing with non-mathematical problems.

### PARENTS AND TEACHERS

"Parent-Teacher Activities at Lincoln School," by EDITH ROSSBACH, is an account of the activities of a parent-teacher group in a progressive school. Written by a school parent, the pamphlet describes these activities from three points of reference—the child, the school, and the community.

### AUDIO-VISUAL AIDS

Rapidly increasing interest in audio-visual aids to instruction has prompted the publication of the handbook "Teaching with Motion Pictures." Prepared by MARY E. TOWNES of the Teachers College Library, this guide to sources of information and materials will be valuable to those who are interested in adding the rich resources of the educational film to their teaching materials. References are given for the educational film as a teaching aid, for the theatrical film as an educational force, and for the problems involved in making motion pictures in the school.