Rhode Island College
Digital Commons @ RIC

Faculty Publications | Faculty Books and Publications

1-1-1976

Commentary on the Necessary Immortality of Reading Teachers

Elizabeth H. Rowell
Rhode Island College, erowell@ric.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.ric.edu/facultypublications

Part of the Educational Assessment, Evaluation, and Research Commons

Recommended Citation
Rowell, Elizabeth H., "Commentary on the Necessary Immortality of Reading Teachers" (1976). *Faculty Publications.* Paper 204.
http://digitalcommons.ric.edu/facultypublications/204

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Books and Publications at Digital Commons @ RIC. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ RIC. For more information, please contact hbenaicha@ric.edu, andrewjasondavis@gmail.com.

Commentary: On the Necessary Immorality of Reading Teachers
Author(s): E. H. Rowell
Source: *The Reading Teacher*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (Dec., 1976), pp. 244-245
Published by: International Reading Association
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/20194244
Accessed: 18/02/2011 12:14

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=ira.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

International Reading Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Reading Teacher*.

http://www.jstor.org

COMMENTARY

On the necessary immorality of reading teachers

E. H. Rowell

Too often reading teachers are cast out into the real world of reading problems with only ideas for diagnosis and remediation, or perhaps a few for motivation. One essential preparation is frequently missing from teacher education: the awakening of an awareness of aspects of morality that are crucial on the job but are often overlooked in teacher training classes.

A reading teacher should believe strongly in immorality. One who is worthy of the proud title of Reading Teacher should be capable of sinking to the lowest depths of depravity to accomplish her aims. Morality should *never* get in the way of good teaching.

A dedicated reading teacher should take lessons from the most ancient profession and learn to fall "in love" at sight with all of her charges, disregarding the extent or nature of their disabilities. She should be a mistress of the art of deceit and should be able without a twitch to look at the least appealing child under her care and convincingly say, "Joseph, I know the book is hard (a preprimer) but I think if you really try and I help you, you CAN read it"—or after a five-minute monotonous recitation on "My trip to the Seven/Eleven store with my brother" be able without a quiver to say, "How exciting—just wait until I get it all down for a wonderful story that you can read."

Ms. Reading Teacher should have the quick fingers of the nimble pickpocket or the sly cunning of the most daring espionage agent as she secretly steals ideas from cronies, adapts them to her own use, and boldly passes them on. She should be as adept as the most proficient cardshark as she slyly stacks the deck so her discouraged darlings can get the thrill that comes from winning a phonics or sight word game.

She should be a mistress of

disguises so that she can put on a false front of self-composure and assurance when dealing with irate parents or hyperactive children and she should be a two-faced creature with the ability to size up her principal and superintendent and present an acceptable facade as she learns to go underground to accomplish her aims for her charges.

A dedicated reading person should be able to grovel convincingly and be a mistress of the art of shedding crocodile tears when begging for additional supplies or trying to con a manufacturer out of free materials. She should adopt the brash glib of the carny hooker to convince her students of the fascinating treats in store when they finally get to open the star studded pages of the preprimer or HILD books and she should know how to use her womanly wiles to flirtatiously wind the custodian around her perfume reeking finger as he comes helplessly at the mercy of her beck and call to carry books, build carrels, and help make the room say "Reading is GREAT."

In short, a dedicated reading teacher should have as her guiding light the theme, "All is fair in love, in war, and in teaching reading."

Rowell, an assistant professor at Rhode Island College, teaches undergraduate and graduate reading courses.

VISITING OTHER COUNCILS

Each national affiliate or country having IRA councils is appointing an individual to serve as Visitation Coordinator for travellers from other areas. The coordinator will arrange visits to schools and other educational institutions.

A list of the Visitation Coordinators appears in the 1976-77 IRA Directory, in the section on Affiliates. (Your local council has a copy).

READING PROGRESS LINKED TO PRINCIPALS

In the Los Angeles city schools, a study of twenty elementary schools with a large number of minority and lower socioeconomic level students indicated that significant reading progress is linked to leadership from a school administrator. The study, done by Rand Corporation, found that principals showed a definite ability to recognize successful learning approaches by classroom teachers in their schools and encourage these in the reading program.

Certain practices were found important in the reading achievement of Black students, including a high level of parent-teacher contact, frequent informal teacher consultations on specific reading programs, and teacher flexibility in adapting instructional approaches for students. The study commented that the importance of fluency in the English language can "swamp more subtle factors" in reading such as program content and classroom atmosphere.

Adapted from brief note in *Education U.S.A.*, August 23, 1976, vol. 18, no. 52, pp. 290.