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Judging Children's Literature

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standing in the "attacks." This Tlingit voice showed a marked preference for intonations ranging in extent from a quarter- to a half-step on the musical scale. This uniformity existed regardless of *direction* (rising or falling); regardless of *use* (attack, release, or free); and regardless of the *form* (circumflex, inverted circumflex, etc.) in which the intonations occurred.

These conclusions regarding Tlingit⁵ (primitive) speech were compared with the conclusions of Merry⁶ who worked with highly trained speakers.

JUDGING CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

IVY C. HUSBAND

This study is the outgrowth of the work being done by the Institute of Character Research at the State University under Professor Edwin D. Starbuck. The Institute is publishing a series of guides to literature: lists of books which have a definite character value in and of themselves. These books are ranked, graded, and assigned "situations" indicating the type of situation and attitude toward it which will probably impress the reader.

The first problem attacked deals with the reliability of the grade placement of the books which have been judged. All placements were made on the basis of three or more critics' judgments and given a "best" or "preferred" grade as well as a range of grades. An empirical check up on books read by all the critics, all combinations of three readers against all other combinations gave a reliability coefficient of .97 with a P. E. est of less than half a grade. The range, which always includes at least one grade below and above the "preferred" grade will include practically all misplacements. However, the internal consistency of judgment as shown by the critics does not prove that the grade suggested is actually the correct grade. Perhaps they are all placing books too high or too low. This factor was checked up through the use of graded lists put out by various city school systems, libraries, and state departments.

Twenty odd lists were used. The average grade placement of half the lists vs. that of the other half gave a reliability coefficient of .927 for these lists. The Guide placements correlated with the

⁵ See Boas, Franz, Grammatical Notes on the Language of the Tlingit Indians, University of Pennsylvania, The University Museum, Anthropological Publications, Vol. VIII, No. 1.

⁶ Merry, G. N., Voice Inflection in Speech, Ph.D. thesis, Univ. of Iowa, 1921.

average placement by the lists gave a coefficient of .85 with a P. E. est. of less than one grade.

A second criterion utilized was that of the placement given books by the Winnetka study. This criterion gave a validity coefficient of .77 with a P. E. (est.) of less than one grade.

The second problem to be dealt with was that of the rating of books according to their value as a means for developing character. The fact that increased familiarity with the field gave a correspondingly better basis of judgment for books read toward the end of the project was taken care of through persistent and consistent comparisons of books which had been given the same rating at various stages of progress and through the weighting of the readers' judgments.

The empirical check of reliability for the critics gave us correlations of from .60 to .79 for one reader vs. the others upon the same book: three readers against any other three readers gave a reliability of from .80 to .92, the P. E. (est) being from .5 to .9 of a step.

Conclusions for Part I can be summarized as follows:

I. The similarity in grade placement shown by the critics is such that the range of grades given to each book will more than take care of any misplacement which may have been made.

II. The grading of the Guide is in harmony with that of graded lists and corresponds closely to that of the Winnetka study where grading was done upon the basis of reading ability of those who read the books.

III. The rating of books upon the sum of three counts, literary quality, educational fitness, and character value, shows a high degree of reliability.

Part two of this study is primarily concerned with the relation between the rating of books by the critics and the children's estimates as to their interest value. Two sets of books, one for the seventh grade and one for the eighth grade, were sent out to several schools and the children allowed to read them the only "requirement" being that they then make a report on the book, using a ballot which we supplied. In addition to answering several questions of a fairly leading nature they checked the interest value of the book upon a scale as follows:

- The most interesting book I have ever read.
- One of the most interesting books I have ever read.
- More interesting than the average book.
- A book of average interest.
- Less interesting than the average book.

- One of the least interesting books I have ever read.
 ————— The least interesting book I have ever read.

Later they compared all the books which they had read and arranged them in a descending order of interest: that is, ranked them on the basis of interest.

The results of this study which is still incomplete may be tentatively summarized as follows:

- I. All reliabilities for the children's estimates are over .95.
- II. Comparison of results as found by the seven point method and those of the ranking method gave a reliability of from .67 to .82.
- III. The estimates of the boys as compared with those of the girls gave coefficients varying from -.2 to .34.
- IV. Results seem to indicate that the books which were read last are rated slightly lower than those read earlier in the program. This is especially true when the books are ranked.
- V. There is a very slight relation between the number of times a book is read and its interest in the seventh grade but this relation is quite distinct in the eighth grade.
- VI. An inverse relation was found to exist between the rating in the Guide and interest ratings by children, except for the seven point scale placement by the eighth grade children.
- VII. "Interest" apparently depends mainly upon the presence or absence of exciting events in the book.

These findings are based upon the work of last year and the addition of this year's data may either strengthen or weaken the findings as they stand.

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF DIVISION

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Recent attempts to clarify the subject of long division point to the fact that it is difficult. All data considered, we may say that it is the hardest block in the elementary school curriculum. Long division is especially difficult for the fourth-grader. It is apparent that the multiplicity of skills accounts for much of the learning difficulty. Because there are no infallible rules to follow, long division approaches the problem solving situation. In a sense, every example in long division tends to become a distinct problem in itself.

By way of making an attempt to alleviate somewhat the teach-