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Organising and Integrating the First School Day / Joy Taylor, 1983, Unwin, London

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BOOK REVIEWS

Organising and Integrating the First School Day

Joy Taylor, 1983, Unwin, London

This new edition presents an easy to read, logical, step by step description of how an integrated programme can be introduced to children, not only in the Infant School, but also in the Lower Primary. It has been written, not from experience alone, but many of the ideas are supported by reference to recently published research.

The importance of structure in teaching has been highlighted, whether it be a traditional or progressive approach; and the author indicates there is a place for both. The fact that there is no blueprint for successful organisation, no single, foolproof system guaranteed to work with every teacher, every child and in every school, is recognised. It is the skill of the individual teacher that outweighs all else in determining the successes of his/her organisation.

All organisational aspects necessary for good classroom management, such as physical organisation of the classroom, grouping, use and accessibility of apparatus, discipline and control, training the children and ideas for appropriate assignments and evaluation have been adequately discussed. Sequential steps for the transition from a differentiated programme to an integrated programme makes the task appear manageable. Likely difficulties have been anticipated with suggestions for overcoming them and the reassurance that all aspects of this structure will not necessarily proceed as planned due to so many variables.

Little appears in this book that would be totally unfamiliar to the majority of teachers, but, because of all the skills necessary in organisation, managerial skills tend to be presented as random thoughts. There is often uncertainty and lack of clear direction; but Joy Taylor integrates all these skills, giving specific guidance in a precise, practical way.

With the emphasis on children learning through activity, there are more and more organisational pressures, particularly in the lower school. To help inexperienced or pre-trained teachers cope with the structure necessary to ensure good classroom management, (and hence maximise learning by the children) this book is a valuable guide, using concise explanations and

meaningful terminology for basic ideas on which to build. Even the experienced teacher - who perhaps finds the integrated day unfamiliar - will be enlightened after reading this book.

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