



Dewey Chambers

People

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News clipping about "Folk and other Tales from the Mother Lode" book, edited by Dewey Chambers

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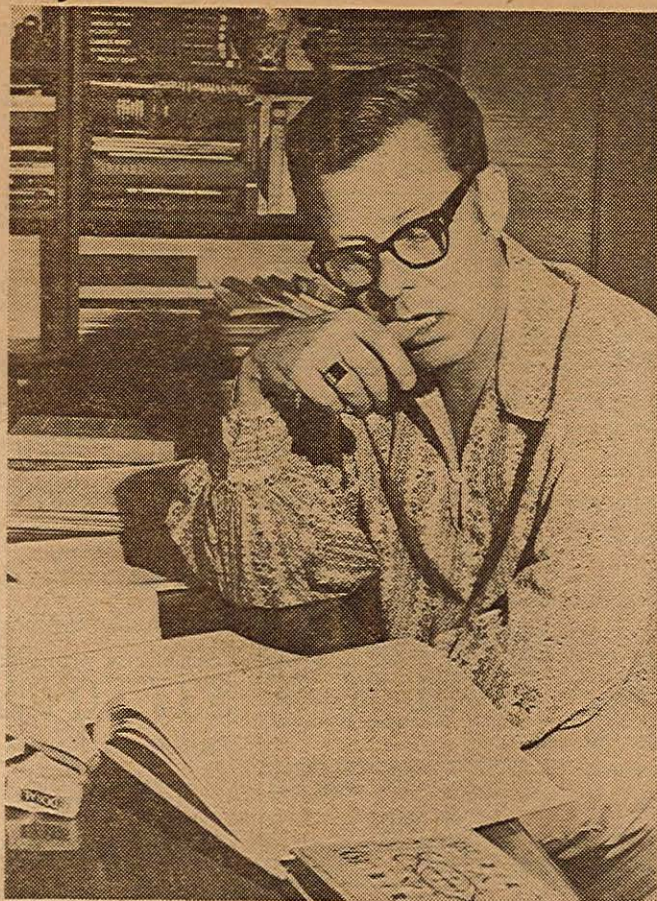
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2 New Books by UOP Educational Prof

By HELEN FLYNN
Of the Record Staff

A nationally recognized authority on children's literature and storytelling, Dr. Dewey Chambers, University of the Pacific professor of education, is in the enviable position of having two new books on the market with a publisher's order for his next by 1972.

Chambers, who made national headlines in 1966 by blasting Walt Disney's adaptations of children's classics for



DR. DEWEY CHAMBERS, SUCCESSFUL AUTHOR

the screens — he accused the producer of remolding famed stories to his own commercial ideas — now has comments on helping children appreciate literature.

His new books are textbooks aimed primarily for teachers to help further creativity in their pupils as well as an appreciation for literature, but they are sprinkled with Chambers' inimitable viewpoints on everything from picking an actor for a fourth grade play to Nancy Drew.

In "Children's Literature in the Curriculum," Chambers reminds his fellow teachers that "if we are teaching children to read so that they will become readers of books, not just those who can read, we, as teachers, need to be concerned about what they read and the quality of literature they read."

But he warns that foundations for literary tastes must be provided in the grade schools — he calls elementary grades "the cornerstone in the edifice of literary appreciation" — and "the attitudes toward the art of literature start in the young child. It is difficult to change it in adolescence or during adulthood."

Chambers points out what a job raising the level of taste in literature — a "personal thing" — can be; because "children sometimes seem to prefer 'the junk.'"

"There is a reason why Nancy Drew and Judy Bolton have lasted as long as they have. The series books, the toy books that squeek, the gimmick books . . . do have appeal. Their appeal is closely related to that of the comics.

"Of course these books aren't books at all . . . they are toys. Many times the series books are read for group reasons. Reading them becomes

the accepted, stylish thing to do in many middle grade classrooms social climate."

Chambers wonders if "the

slavish dependence on the Newbery (Medal Book) list for quality was a result of little knowledge of children's literature. "Many Newbery award winning books are too advanced for sixth graders and besides many of these books are thought to be deadly dull by children."

He doesn't mean, Chambers explains, to belittle the award but to point out that "to conclude that these are the only

excellent books for children is very wrong."

In the other book recently published, "Storytelling and Creative Drama," Chambers, who has long taught that storytelling must be dramatic and exciting, offers suggestions to grade school teachers on creating drama in their classrooms.

Chambers advises teachers to select "youngsters who will do well" in the first little dramatic scene because the first one must be successful to serve as an example for other

creative dramas. Then, as the children become more adept, other little actors can be found.

Chambers' new book, which he is now in the process of writing, will be called "The Language Arts: A Pragmatic Approach."