

# A·C·E·R

## NEWSLETTER

Edited by John King

### ACER Tests of Basic Skills

These tests are constructed to assess literacy and numeracy skills that most students are expected to have mastered by the end of Year 6. The connotation that has been given to the word 'basic' is important. Basic skills, for the purposes of the tests, are defined not merely as rudimentary survival skills but as major areas of learning that are central to the school curriculum.

These tests for use with Years 3 and 6, and developed by ACER for the NSW Basic Skills Testing Program, broke new ground in the analysis and reporting of test performances. A variety of innovative tasks were designed to be realistic and interesting to students. In keeping with current curriculum emphases contexts are provided for the tests in the form of specially prepared stimulus material.

The five basic skills assessed are

- Reading
- Language (knowledge of conventions of written English)
- Number
- Measurement
- Space.

For each aspect of the tests, a set of skill levels is defined. These skill levels provide a picture of increasing achievement in each area of learning.



• Jeannette Harrison

### Aspects of Numeracy

Number, measurement and space are the three curriculum strands covered in the numeracy tests.

Number includes face value, place value, base 10 system, skills in the four basic processes, an understanding of percentages, fractions and decimals and a facility with problems involving money. An important skill running through the number strand is the ability to estimate and approximate. Students at all levels are encouraged to think about what a reasonable answer would be and to anticipate answers to questions.

Estimation and approximation skills play an important role in the ability to measure with understanding. Through the Measurement component students are exposed to items covering length, area, volume, mass, temperature and time. The measurement test items cover only Year 6 students.

The Space questions have been designed to assess students' spatial skills using two dimensional representations of three dimensional shapes. Students are required to visualise the outlines of three-dimensional objects; to picture what objects would look like from different viewpoints, rotated about an axis, or reflected in a mirror; and to visualise states of blocks from two dimensional drawings. Space questions are constructed for Year 6 students only.

Jeannette Harrison, author of a new ACER publication, *Understanding Children: Towards Responsive Relationships* is concerned with helping early childhood workers to develop effective and age-appropriate strategies for nurturing and guiding the behaviour of young children.

*Understanding Children* is designed to be used in a number of ways. It can be read by the individual parent or early childhood worker; used as a program for staff in kindergartens and childcare centres; or used as a course text for Child Care Studies' students. It would also be appropriate for Year 12 students taking courses such as Human Development and Society.

For more information about *Understanding Children* see 'New from ACER' in this issue.

Further information about parent education resources and leadership skills courses is available from Joanna Goldsworthy, Parent Education Consultant, ACER on (03) 819 1400, or outside Melbourne Freecall 008 338 402.

### Aspects of Literacy

The ACER Tests of Basic Skills in Reading are based on a view of reading as an on-going developmental process. Through this process students are able to carry out increasingly demanding reading tasks to construct meaning from text. The tests are designed to assess reading skills over a wide range of the developmental continuum.

The Year 3 test includes questions to assess early reading skills in matching words to pictures and completing sentences. Both the Year 3 and Year 6 tests contain questions to assess skills in locating information, drawing together multiple clues in text, and inferring meaning. Some of the questions on the Year 6 test are designed to assess relatively sophisticated reading skills and to challenge the better readers.

The Language test (available for Year 6 only) assesses knowledge of conventions by asking students to identify errors in other student's writing. The samples were constructed from actual student scripts.

### Reporting Students' Achievement

The report system pictorially displays a student's level of achievement in each aspect of the tests describing the kinds of knowledge, understanding and skill associated with that level. A set of skill levels or 'bands' is defined. Through the use of Individual Student Record Charts referred to as DIAMAPS, teachers can analyse those questions answered correctly or incorrectly to assist in the diagnosis of an individual's strengths and weaknesses.

### How to purchase

The components and prices of the *ACER Tests of Basic Skills* are mentioned in the 'New from ACER' section of this newsletter.

### Australian Education Directory

The Directory is a comprehensive up-to-date who's who of Australian education. For each organisation it lists key personnel, and contacts in departments and divisions, along with street and postal addresses, telephone and facsimile numbers.

Cat. No. 500AN Price: \$35.00  
(plus freight/handling charges)





## Senior Secondary Schooling and Retention

One of the most dramatic changes in secondary schooling in the last decade has been the increase in the numbers of students staying on to complete their secondary education. Year 12 no longer represents an homogenous group of students requiring an academic preparation for university, so that the senior secondary curriculum of the past and the way in which it is presented have had to be redefined and redesigned.

### The challenges to teachers arising from increased student retention

The Australian Council for Educational Research was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Education to document the ways in which teachers are responding to the challenges they face today in the senior school. Teachers and administrators in government and non-government schools in three states were surveyed; they were asked to share their opinions and experiences of increased student retention and its educational implications. Members of the research team visited some of these schools to gather more detailed information from teachers, students and administrators. Diversity was found to be the definitive characteristic of both the problems of increased retention and their resolution – diversity in the senior school population, in curriculum development, in teaching styles, and in approaches to learning.

## OECD Paper on Integration

Dr Jo Jenkinson, Research Fellow, has been invited by the Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, to contribute to a series of papers for publication on the integration of disabled students into mainstream education. Dr Jenkinson's paper will cover integration of students with severe or multiple disabilities. Following preparation of the papers, the authors will meet in Europe later in 1991 to prepare a thematic synthesis to be included in the publication.

### ACER Parent Education Catalogue 1990-91

**NOW AVAILABLE**

**Contact Joanna Goldsworthy**  
**Telephone:**  
**(03) 819 1400;**  
**outside Melbourne**  
**Freecall 008 338 402**

## Guidelines to be published

The wealth of material collected by the research team has been assembled into fourteen booklets, each dealing with a different aspect of senior secondary schooling. The content of the booklets mainly comprises direct quotations from people in schools, often as statements of problems and solutions to retention issues. The advantage of this approach – having the opinions and experiences of teachers and students presented directly in the text, in their own words – is that it makes the material more readily accessible than the texts of many research or professional development publications.

At the back of each booklet is a set of guidelines to assist the use of the material in school-based discussion and professional development. It must be stressed that they are guidelines, not prescriptions, because there is no one correct way to resolve the problems and challenges of increased student retention. Each set of guidelines contains summaries of key issues and a list of key questions for school-focused discussion.

The published material will be available in April 1991 from ACER and will be an excellent guide for professional development officers, curriculum coordinators, student/teacher welfare coordinators and heads of subjects. Further information is available from the project directors – ACER's Margaret Batten and Graeme Withers. For information about the release of the publication contact John King at ACER.

## Parent Help Program for Victoria

The November issue of *news and information* focused on teenagers and parents. It reviewed the innovative *Kids Skills* by Thelma Paull, available for sale through ACER. *Kids Skills* is a resource for discussion group leaders who work with young people aged between nine and fifteen years. The newsletter also introduced readers to the newly established Adolescent/Parent Mediation Centres in Melbourne. These centres operate in all states of Australia and are part of a Commonwealth Government initiative to 'stem the tide' of youth homelessness by providing teenagers and parents with an opportunity to resolve conflicts through mediation.

The database of information on Parent Help Programs in Victoria continues to develop. Information on how this data can be accessed by professionals will be available by June 1991.

The Parent Help Program is a Community Service Victoria initiative and as such carries information local to Victoria. Those interested in receiving this tri-annual newsletter (in Victoria or in other parts of Australia) may contact Carole Finnigan, Parent Help Program news and information, ACER, PO Box 210, Hawthorn Vic 3122.

## Mathematical Problem-Solving Profiles

During the 1980s the emphasis on problem-solving as the core of any school mathematics program has become the basic theme of mathematical curriculum renovations in the UK, Europe, North and South America and Australia.

The Collis-Romberg Mathematical Problem-Solving Profiles, to be published by ACER and available for purchase later this year, will assist teachers in accurately determining a student's progress through a range of mathematical problem-solving skills. The information provided by the Profiles also includes advice on further teacher strategies for students based on their performance.

The Profiles are designed to measure a student's performance on five aspects of mathematics which form a foundation for problem-solving. These topics are: numbers and numeration, relationships, geometry, measurement, and statistics. The measures obtained on these topics are interpreted using both the SOLO Taxonomy and the number of correct responses to reflect different levels of judgement and reasoning.

The Profiles will be divided into two categories, Junior (upper primary students) and Senior (secondary students).

If you would like to register your name for further information about the Collis-Romberg Mathematical Problem-Solving Profiles contact John King or Judy Eppinger, Consultant Services Division, ACER.

## ACER Leadership Skills Courses in Parent Education

ACER will run leadership skills courses in parenting programs throughout 1991. Courses are designed to acquaint participants with the content of the program, experiential exercises, group dynamics and group facilitation skills. All courses are held in Melbourne. For enrolments and further information, please contact Joanna Goldsworthy, ACER, (03) 819 1400 or outside Melbourne Freecall 008 338 402, any weekday except Wednesday.

Courses in the first half year are:

- Parenting Today (2 days), 9 & 10 April 1991. Ailsa Drent, the author of this new program, will conduct the training.
- Early Childhood STEP (3 days), 17, 18 & 19 April 1991.
- General group leadership skills (3 days), 26, 27 and 28 June 1991.

## Sunrise Notes

Sunrise Notes is the quarterly information bulletin of the ACER Sunrise Project. The first four editions (1990) are available for a cost of \$10.00.

The subscription rate for 1991 is \$20.00. Details about the Sunrise Notes are available from the Sunrise Project Director, Liddy Nevile at ACER.



## SIGI PLUS

### A Computer-assisted Career Guidance System

Articles on topics such as 'What Technology Can Do for Guidance', or 'The Computer: Guidance Tool of the Future', started appearing in books and journals in the early 1970s. Several people were experimenting with computers to aid the process of career guidance by the mid-1960s in the USA, and the first conference of these innovators was held over 20 years ago. Several ambitious projects were set up, but almost all of them failed to get beyond the pilot stage, usually because of their tendency to require resources well beyond the initial estimates. For this reason, considering what might be feasible for Australia, ACER decided to build on one of the American projects that managed to survive beyond the pilot stage to evolve into a very comprehensive and advanced system.

SIGI PLUS (System of Interactive Guidance and Information, Plus) has been adapted by ACER for the Australian market. This innovative program was developed at the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, New Jersey. SIGI PLUS was first released in the USA in 1985 with versions to run on a number of microcomputers and one minicomputer. The origins of this system go back more than 15 years when work first began on its mainframe predecessor, SIGI.

### SIGI PLUS at a Glance

SIGI PLUS is a comprehensive, interactive software program for career guidance and information. It covers all the major aspects of career decision making and planning through a carefully constructed system of separate but interrelated sections. SIGI PLUS has nine sections with special features which can be accessed in any order and any number of times:

1. Introduction
2. Self Assessment
3. Search
4. Information
5. Skills
6. Preparing
7. Coping
8. Deciding
9. Next Steps

### Special Features

SIGI PLUS is presented in colour, making it attractive and easy to use. This state-of-the-art interactive software program provides the user with:

- a large database containing relevant up-to-date Australian information
- instant feedback and printouts at appropriate stages
- a unique layering concept which allows users to get as much detail as they require
- specific pathways through the system based question and answer sequences
- the facility to store summary data to re-enter the program at a later stage.

The SIGI PLUS database will be updated regularly which will ensure that users have access to current information.

### SIGI PLUS Components

The SIGI PLUS package contains software diskettes (for IBM PC, PC/XT, PC/AT, PS/2 Model 30 and highly compatible microcomputers), *Counsellor's Manual*, *User's Guide and Guide to Further Resources*, *Installation Manual*, *Directory of Occupations*, System Reference Card, an extra 50 *User's Guide and Guide to Further Resources*.

### Further Information and Free Demonstration Disk

Information about pricing structures, qualifications and demonstration workshops is available from ACER. A free demonstration disk is available on request. Please state size of disk (5¼ or 3½) when requesting your free demonstration disk – telephone Consultant Services Division, (03) 819 1400, fax (03) 819 5502.

### School Equity Policies, Programs and Practices

This study involves non-government non-systemic schools throughout Australia and has been commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training. The aim of the study is to collect information about policies, programs, and practices which promote equity of opportunity for students with particular educational needs. In particular, details will be sought in two areas:

- programs and practices which recognise educational disadvantage experienced by specific groups such as girls, Aborigines, students with physical/intellectual/emotional disabilities, and students from non-English speaking backgrounds;
- programs and practices which address equity concerns for the whole school such as geographic isolation, student retention, the improvement of literacy standards, and pastoral care.

The study will be undertaken in two stages. The first stage, now completed, was undertaken in October and November of 1990, with 240 schools across Australia completing a survey questionnaire describing relevant policies, programs and practices in their schools.

The second stage of the study will be undertaken from February to April 1991. Based on the results of the first stage, a small sample of schools will be asked to participate in detailed studies of specific programs.

The final report will identify the range and nature of equity policies, programs and practices in non-government non-systemic schools across states, levels of schooling and types of school. Where possible, evidence concerning the effectiveness of programs will be included.

For further information contact Project Staff, Mark Griffin or Margaret Batten at ACER.



### New Face at ACER

Daiva Verbyla has joined the ACER staff and is working in the Consultant Services Division as consultant psychologist.

Daiva has had extensive experience with the Victorian Ministry of Education as an educational psychologist and secondary teacher. Her recent role at a school support centre included educational and psychological assessment as well as counselling and staff development. Daiva is presently working in a part time capacity and can be contacted on any Thursday or Friday or every alternate Wednesday at ACER: (03) 819 1400.

### The Australian Language Certificates

Following the successful 1990 pilot study of The Australian Language Certificates in Chinese, French, German, Italian, Japanese and Modern Greek, the project will continue and expand in 1991. The Australian Bicentennial Multicultural Foundation is again supporting the project and in addition a grant from the Australia-Indonesia Institute will assist in undertaking a pilot study in Indonesian.

The purpose of the Certificates is to acknowledge individual success in learning another language and to enhance the status of language learning in schools. The certificates are open to Australian and New Zealand students who are usually in their second year of learning another language, have a minimum of 80 hours of language instruction and are in Years 8 to 10. Participating students undertake a listening and reading task and are awarded a certificate which includes the levels achieved and a description of the types of tasks typical of students at that level.

Secondary schools will receive a leaflet, which includes additional information and a registration form, with this newsletter. The closing date for registration is Friday 19 April 1991.

For further details about the project contact Dr Susan Zammit at ACER: (03) 819 1400, Fax (03) 819 5502.



## Conferences

### The Australian Council for Educational Research in conjunction with The Victorian Philosophy for Children Association

FIRST NATIONAL CONFERENCE

*Philosophy for Children and The Teaching of Thinking* (12-16 July 1991, The University of Melbourne)

Philosophy for Children has become part of the Australian educational landscape, involving more than eighty schools and hundreds of teachers and students from every state and territory. This conference is the first to be held on a national scale. It will provide a unique opportunity for educators, professional philosophers and members of the general public to come together as a community of inquiry, and explore issues relating to philosophy for children and the teaching of thinking.

*Themes which will structure the conference will include:*

- Critical and Creative Thinking: The Strengthening of Judgement
- The Classroom as a Community of Inquiry
- Philosophy for Children and the Transference of Skills
- Philosophy in Early Childhood
- Philosophy, Science and the Environment.

*Key-note speakers*

Professor Matthew Lipman (Director of the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children and Founder of Philosophy for Children).

Mr Phillip Adams (member of the Centre's Advisory Board).

Further details may be obtained from the Centre of Philosophy for Children, ACER, (03) 819 1400 or by completing the conference brochure included with this newsletter.

### Assessment in the Mathematical Sciences

(20-24 November 1991, Geelong, Victoria)

This conference planned by the *Australian Council for Educational Research* will be particularly relevant for primary and secondary teachers involved in assessment of mathematics and science. It seeks to encourage researchers and practitioners in resolving assessment concerns relating to education in the mathematical sciences, and to foster more systematic exchange of information about innovative assessment strategies, both through interaction at the conference and through publication of the conference proceedings.

Information is available from the Development and Training Division at ACER, (03) 819 1400.

### National Conference on Children and Emotional and Behavioural Problems

(3-6 October 1991, University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane)

This has been planned by ACER in conjunction with the Fred and Eleanor Schonell Special Education Research Centre, University of Queensland.

The conference with the theme *Family, School and Community* will provide an opportunity for those working with children with emotional and/or behaviour disorders in regular or special schools, in the family, or in the wider community to meet with colleagues from other parts of Australia.

*Registration of Interest*

For further details register your name and address with Development and Training Division, ACER PO Box 210, Hawthorn Victoria 3122. Telephone: (03) 819 1400; Fax: (03) 819 5502.

### The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Australian Perspectives

(17-20 October 1991, Sydney)

A conference for those interested professionally or personally in the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) has been planned by ACER in conjunction with the Institute for Type Development, Australia.

The purposes of the conference are:

- to provide an opportunity for practitioners to learn about contemporary Australian research on application of the MBTI
- to share experience and expertise with Australian and international colleagues who use the MBTI or other measures based on Jung's theory
- to encourage responsible use and development of the MBTI in Australia and
- to disseminate information to a wider audience through the publication of conference proceedings.

For registration of interest contact Conference on MBTI: Australian Perspectives, Development and Training Division, ACER, PO Box 210, Hawthorn Victoria 3122. Telephone: (03) 819 1400; Fax: (03) 819 5502.

### Logo and Mathematics Education

(1-5 April 1991, Cairns, Queensland)

The Sunrise Project at ACER is host for the fifth international Logo and Mathematics Education (LME5) conference.

For further information and registration booklets, contact the conference convenor, Liddy Nevile at ACER, or email: liddy.otto.bf.rmit.OZ.AU

## Research Information for Teachers

ACER and many other educational research organisations throughout the world have as one of their main aims the dissemination of results of research in various forms to suit the needs of different groups of people.

The Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER), the New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) and the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales (NFER) cooperate to provide summaries of specific research for teachers in an easily readable and attractive format. The key features are that the items are brief (typically 3000-4000 words), appropriately illustrated, focus on what schools or teachers can do to take action from the findings, are in loose leaf format to pass around to other teachers, and permit copying for onward dissemination to colleagues.

ACER and NZCER disseminate information to Australian schools in *set: research information for teachers*. Since 1979 approximately 30 items summarising research have been published each year for teachers in both Australia and New Zealand. *set:* has proven popular in both countries.

### Best of set Collections

*Best of set* collections on several subjects have been produced to bring back into print the items that have 'stood the test of time'. *Best of set* collections also allow topic focused issues in addition to the regular subscription series, which suits teachers who want the best research on certain crucial issues brought together. The *Best of set: Reading, Assessment, and Discipline* have been published and are available from ACER Customer Services.

### Professional Development Material

In the current situation where many school systems have devolved responsibility for professional development of teachers to the school level, principals and teachers have available to them, in the form of *set*, a continuing supply of top quality resource material for seminars, workshops and personal reference. A wealth of material previously published in *set* and thoroughly indexed, can be obtained even by schools which have not previously subscribed.

### Subscriptions

ACER would like to encourage all schools to take out at least one subscription to *set* so that teachers can tap into the productivity of specialist research organisations such as ACER, NZCER, NFER and also the efforts of tertiary education institution based researchers who work on topics relevant to schools.

*set*, published twice a year (May and October), offers a smorgasbord of material for all levels and subjects.

For further information or ideas for contributions contact the Australian editor of *set*, Peter Jeffery at ACER.



# NEW FROM A·C·E·R

## Subject Choice in Senior Secondary School

The subjects chosen by students in the senior secondary years are widely considered to be important in shaping educational and occupational futures and differences in the subjects chosen are often seen as involving issues of equity between social groups. A new report by three ACER staff members, John Ainley, Warren Jones and K. K. Navaratnam describes patterns of subject choice by students in Years 11 and 12 and explores the relationship of those patterns to a range of personal, social, and school characteristics. The report is entitled *Subject Choice in Senior Secondary School* and has been published by the Australian Government Publishing Service.

For further information about the study contact John Ainley at ACER.

## Overseas Publications

### NFER – Nelson

*Working with Parents: A Whole-School Approach* edited by John Bastiani completes a series of three accounts linked by the generic title Parents and Teachers.

The NFER-Nelson *Books for Education 1990/91 Catalogue* is available from ACER on request.

### New Zealand Council for Educational Research

*Readability by Computer. Assessing the Difficulty of Reading Materials: The Noun Frequency Method* by W. Elley and A. Cedric Croft.

NZCER has now extended the usefulness of the readability publication by making available a computerised version of the noun frequency method of estimating readability.

### Scottish Council for Research in Education

*Using Questionnaires in Small-Scale Research: A teacher's guide* by Pamela Munn and Eric Drever. The second of SCRE's teacher/researcher guides, this provides practical and sensible advice, based on research expertise, for teachers looking for reliable results without waste of time or effort. The reader is guided through the pros and cons of using questionnaires; sampling; drafting and administering the questionnaire itself; analysing data; and interpreting and presenting the results. The booklet will be useful not only to teachers but also to anyone engaged in evaluative and investigative work.

All overseas publications are available by the special order system through ACER Customer Services. Full details about titles are available on request.

## Mathematics Topic Pre-Tests

### PERCENTAGES AND INTEGERS

*New Zealand Council for Educational Research 1990*

These pre-tests are designed as screening devices to help teachers find the gaps in students' prior knowledge of percentages and integers before further development of the topic. Once gaps have been identified, teachers should better be able to provide a program that suits the needs of individual students.

Special features of the packages are:

- *self-diagnosing answer sheets* which are carbon backed
- *worksheets* (set of photocopy masters) linked to specific objectives that are designed to remediate common errors
- *class diagnosis record sheet* (photocopy from Teacher's Manual) which is completed following pretesting revealing the pattern of individual and class strengths and weaknesses through each item linked with specific objectives
- *post-test* (photocopy from Teacher's Manual) parallel in content and difficulty to the pre-test and may be used as a follow up measure.

*Mathematics Topic Pre-Tests – Percentages and Integers* are suitable for students from Year 6 to Year 9 levels.

	Cat. No.	Price
<i>Percentages</i>		
Pre-tests (per 20 – reusable)	100DQ	3.90
Answer Sheets (per 20 – expendable)	600DQ	3.90
Worksheets masters per packet	601DQ	3.40
Teacher's Manual (includes Post-test and Class Diagnosis Record Sheet)	500DQ	3.40
Specimen Set (including sample of 2 work-sheets)	000DQ	4.40
<i>Integers</i>		
Pre-tests (per 20 – reusable)	100DW	3.90
Answer Sheets (per 20 – expendable)	600DW	3.90
Worksheets masters per packet	601DW	3.40
Teacher's Manual (includes Post-test and Class Diagnosis Record Sheet)	500DW	3.40
Specimen Set (including sample of 2 worksheets)	000DW	4.40

## Becoming Better Parents (Third Edition)

*Maurice Balson*

(ACER, 1991)

Since it was published in 1981, *Becoming Better Parents* has sold over 25 000 copies. Now reprinted in an updated edition, it includes a valuable new chapter on common behaviour problems and an expanded section on adolescence and adolescent suicide.

Instead of a bewildering array of advice on different surface behaviours, *Becoming Better Parents* offers parents an understanding of the motivation underlying all their child's behaviour.

The skills to which parents are introduced arise naturally out of this interpretation of behaviour, along with the recognition that mutual respect underlies all satisfying and effective human relationships. Parents learn to encourage the development of self-esteem; to replace punishment with natural or social consequences that teach self discipline; to offer choices that encourage personal responsibility; to improve negotiation and problem-solving skills, and to make decisions as a family.

Cat. No. 046BK Price \$14.95

## Diagnostic Mathematics Profile Tests (Whole Numbers)

*Brian Doig et al*

(ACER OCTOBER 1990)

The Diagnostic Mathematics Profiles have been designed to provide diagnostic information about students in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

These tests have been carefully developed to assess students from Year 3 to Junior Secondary in whole number computation.

The main feature of Diagnostic Mathematics Profiles is the DIAMAP – a visual map of a student's performance for each of the four mathematical topics. The DIAMAP links student responses to specific objectives in such a way that it is immediately obvious which objectives have been mastered and which have not. These objectives also provide a guide to further planning of instruction for that student.

Manual

Cat. No. 500CX Price \$12.95

Test Package (30 each addition, subtraction, multiplication and division)

Cat. No. 990CX Price \$35.00



## ACER Tests of Basic Skills

### YEAR 3 AND YEAR 6

These tests are constructed to assess literacy and numeracy skills over a wide range of the developmental continuum. The *ACER Tests of Basic Skills* test major areas of learning that have a central role in the school curriculum.

The *Aspects of Literacy* test at Year 3 level includes questions to assess early reading skills in matching words to pictures and completing sentences. Both the Year 3 and Year 6 tests contain questions to assess skills in locating information, drawing together multiple clues in text, and inferring meaning. The Year 6 *Aspects of Literacy* test includes language items which assess knowledge of conventions by asking students to identify errors in other students' writing.

A feature of these tests is the use of stimulus material – *News Today* (Year 6) and *Young Aussie* (Year 3) – in providing passages that will be inherently interesting to children of each level.

The *Aspects of Numeracy* tests cover number at both Year 3 and 6 levels with measurement and space items for Year 6 only. The *Big X Spring Sale* stimulus material provides realistic contexts for test questions and emphasises the relevance of mathematics and language learning to everyday activities for the Year 6 level. The Year 3 test material is provided in a highly illustrated expendable format.

The separate *Teacher's Manual* for each level clearly explains the background and administration of the tests as well as how to gain the maximum information from them. Skill based descriptions of how to use the Individual Student Record Charts (DIAMAPS) are fully set out to enable teachers to carefully study students' strengths and weaknesses. Photocopy masters of the DIAMAP and Group Analysis Charts are provided in the *Teacher's Manual*.

Further assistance is available from ACER Consultant Services Division or Customer Services.

### Year 3 Blue Series

	Cat. No.	Price
<i>Aspects of Literacy</i>		
Test Booklets (per 10 – expendable)	100EC	\$12.95
Young Aussie (per 10 – reusable)	101EC	7.95
<i>Aspects of Numeracy</i>		
Test Booklets (per 10 – expendable)	102EC	9.95
Teacher's Manual – Year 3 Blue Series (including photocopy masters of student and class record sheets)	500EC	29.95
Specimen Set Year 3 Blue Series (1 of each above)	000EC	33.00

### Year 6 Blue Series

	Cat. No.	Price
<i>Aspects of Literacy</i>		
Test Booklets (per 10 – expendable)	100EA	\$12.95
News Today (per 10 – reusable)	101EA	7.95
<i>Aspects of Numeracy</i>		
Test Booklets (per 10 – expendable)	102EA	9.95
Big X Spring Sale Catalogue (per 10 – reusable)	103EA	7.95
Teacher's Manual – Year 6 Blue Series (including photocopy masters of student and class record sheets)	500EA	29.95
Specimen Set Year 6 Blue Series (1 of each above)	000EA	34.00

## Values Education in Australian Schools

### AUSTRALIAN EDUCATION

#### REVIEW No. 32

Brian Hill

This in-depth study of values education in this country, interprets 'values' as a spectrum embracing not only religion and morals, but multiculturalism, aesthetics, and relational as well as intellectual values in the curriculum. It argues for a negotiated charter of democratic values to become the explicit framework within which the school's policy and curriculum, both formal and informal, are worked out. To this end, the book includes specific discussion of the following areas:

- the meanings of 'moral', and their implications for moral education
- whether religious studies contribute to values education
- how to get beyond platitudes in multicultural education policy
- implications across the curriculum of taking values education seriously, e.g., in relation to basic skills, liberal studies, vocational preparation, personal and community education
- the relative fitness of state and non-state schools to meet the challenge of values education
- what can and should be done to improve the performance of schools in respect to values education
- the role of professionals, students and the sponsoring community in affirming or amending the curriculum to encourage information autonomy and moral responsibility in students, as they develop their own abilities, interests and lifestyles.

Cat. No. 060BK Price \$24.95

**1991 PRICE LIST  
NOW AVAILABLE  
Telephone: (03) 819 1400;  
Fax: (03) 819 5502**

## Teachers' Professional Development

*Edited by Phillip Hughes*

The first in a series on teachers and teaching, this book is a result of the ACER program of research on teachers.

Professor Phillip Hughes' introductory chapter discusses the challenges ahead in relation to teachers' historical place in the scheme of education in Australia, and provides an overview of the issues subsequently discussed by eight respected educators and researchers. Chapters are devoted to Commonwealth and State government policy and responsibilities to teachers, teacher evaluation, professional development needs as identified by teachers, reflection as a basis for teacher development, the concept of intelligibility of teacher thinking, and the role of distance education for teachers. Each of these chapters is supported by a detailed list of referees, and a general guide to further reading is supplied.

The contributing authors have presented the most recent and comprehensive picture of what is happening in this field and have identified the issues that are important for the future.

Cat. No. 059BK Price \$24.95

## Australian Teachers' Careers

*Edited by Rupert Maclean and Phillip McKenzie*

*Australian Teachers' Careers* provides more recent information on the career patterns and promotion of Australian school teachers than is currently available elsewhere. It also examines important related matters, such as:

- career restructuring proposals advanced by employing authorities and teachers' organisations in recent years;
- the special career-related problems of women teachers, teachers in rural areas and in non-government schools; and
- the impact of the ageing of the teaching profession on teachers' careers.

The specially commissioned chapters have been written by leading researchers, teacher educators, teacher unionists, and educational administrators.

Cat. No. 055BK Price \$32.95

## Bibliography of Education Theses

This bibliography of theses accepted during 1988 lists 368 higher degree theses in education that were accepted at Australian universities and colleges during 1988. This is the eleventh in a series of annual volumes covering education theses accepted from 1978 through to 1988.

The *Bibliography of Education Theses in Australia* is also available on standing order through the ACER Customer Services.

Cat. No. 021BK Price \$35.00



## Exploring Reading: Empowering Readers with Special Needs

*Philip Builder*

*Exploring Reading* focuses on the affective aspects of children's learning, based on everyday experience with special-needs children in normal classrooms. The author presents a view of these learners in the widest sense, including their responses to their environments at school and at home, and of the dynamics of the literacy-learning processes; how to view them and what to look for. The author believes that immediate results can be achieved if people understand the motivation of these children, and can make realistic changes to their learning environments.

The first part of this book provides background understanding to enable the teacher to organise and empower children to learn. It begins with Cambourne's model of speech acquisition and its implications for teaching and learning, and explores parental beliefs and attitudes, to highlight factors that need to be addressed if the child is to be helped to become a responsible and independent learner.

The second part of the book introduces BRAT (Builder Reading Assessment Technique), a framework that simplifies the assessment of reading, allowing the teacher to focus upon reading strategies rather than 'reading ability'. It provides a measure of how a child reads, but it is a teaching rather than a testing tool.

In his Foreword Max Kemp, University of Canberra states: 'Throughout, this book 'lives' because it has the rare quality of being a testimony of an author who is theorist, researcher and teacher. More, it represents the work of a teacher who understands that there are no boundaries to how teachers and parents can, together, change the course of children's literacy learning for the better.'

*Cat. No. 056BK Price \$39.95*

## The New Explorers: A Psychodynamic Approach to Parenting in a Changing Society

*Ruth Schmidt Neven, Full Circle  
Publications Co-operative, 1990*

In the psychodynamic approach, importance is given to an individual's emotional, or inner, life and how this affects outer relationships.

Parenting is not seen as a specific attitude or set of skills which can be learned, but as a process of reflecting on, understanding, and continuing to develop an individual relationship that is satisfying to both child and parent. In a psychodynamic approach, parents are encouraged to 'find their own voice', or individual way, to parent their children, based on understanding the 'emotional milestones' of development.

*Cat. No. 054BK Price \$24.95*

## Understanding Children: Towards Responsive Relationships

*Jeannette Harrison*

(ACER, 1991)

*Understanding Children* is a new, Australian book designed for use by trained or untrained people caring for young children. It is intended for use in childcare and family daycare centres, toddlers' groups and kindergartens.

Throughout the book, topics presented are accompanied by practical exercises. The focus is always on what the parent or caregiver can *do* to apply the principles and skills in a variety of situations. The theoretical framework combines a knowledge of social and emotional development in early childhood with an Adlerian understanding of children's behaviour and of democratic relationships.

The final section of the book applies the same psychological principles to adult relationships, and is concerned with caring for the carers and with providing educative and supportive programs for parents. The aim is to empower caregivers with effective strategies that will prevent stress and encourage a positive enjoyment in caregiving.

*Cat. No. 052BK Price \$24.95*

## Talk Sense to Yourself A PROGRAM FOR CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS NOW WITH DUPLICATING MASTERS TO COMPLEMENT THE PROGRAM

*Jeffrey Wragg*

A set of duplicating masters has been provided so that target students or groups can be given program material as part of their *Talk Sense to Yourself* program.

Key exercises or miniposters have been included or enlarged so that program participants can work on the exercises or build up a folder of material as part of their course.

Counsellors and teachers have a considerable degree of flexibility in deciding which exercises or retraining units will be suitable to use with specific children and adolescents. Exercises are numbered and follow the same sequence as that used in the book. Extensions of the original material give program participants the opportunity to spend more time on specific tasks. Suggestions or comments have been added to exercises where appropriate.

The duplicating masters are cross-referenced to the *Talk Sense to Yourself* text to provide a full explanation of the teaching and implementation of the skill or exercise.

*Talk Sense to Yourself* program

*Cat. No. 295BK Price \$19.95*

*Talk Sense to Yourself* masters

*Cat. No. 600DZ Price \$29.95*

## Parenting Today

*Ailsa Drent*

(ACER, 1990)

The program is unique in its aim to enhance cooperation between home and school in raising children. It has much to offer parents who would like more control, and more effective parenting skills.

There are seven sessions:

1. Positive relations pay dividends
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The program can be delivered to parents of children of all ages. Agencies other than schools can run the program without the optional seventh session.

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*Cat. No. 501DH Price \$36.95*

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*Cat. No. 500DH Price \$12.95*

Note: A leadership skills course in Parenting Today will be conducted in Melbourne by the author on 9 and 10 April 1991. The author is an educational psychologist working in a school support centre. For enrolments and information, contact Joanna Goldsworthy (03) 819 1400.

## Tackling That Test

### EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT TAKING TESTS AND EXAMS

*Graeme Withers*

*Tackling That Test* is aimed at increasing student self-esteem and confidence particularly in regard to test-taking in relatively new or unknown situations. The major direction of the text is to emphasise that the material is about taking, rather than passing tests and exams. This book is extremely useful when read and used by parents in supporting their children before tests and examinations.

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