

INFORMATION PROCESSING BY YOUNG CHILDREN: PIAGET'S THEORY OF INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT APPLIED TO RADIO AND TELEVISION/ by Hertha Sturm and Sabine org. Munchen: K.G. Saur, 1981. 91pp. DM24. ISBN 3-598-20204-0. Copy supplied by James Bennett Group.

This book would have been very useful when I was asked at the LAA conference in 1979, having just given a paper on 'Libraries, education and the future', for my view of Piaget's model of the development of intelligence in relation to modern educational and mass media. Unfortunately my Dip Ed memories of Piaget were less than distinct, and in any case I could not recall any studies specifically linking Piaget and media. This book now fills that gap in my knowledge, at least.

A group of Swiss researchers set out to study the effects of media on children, using Piaget's theory as a framework. They wanted to find out whether the external stimuli of radio and television presentations cause development as reported by Piaget, and in particular:

— what types of learning contents are appropriate to the particular developmental stage of the child?

— which forms of presentation are most likely to guide the child to desired learning goals?

Three versions of a story — a television version with pictorially presented task solutions, a second version in which the same visual presentation was verbally described, and a radio version with the same script as the second television version — were presented to groups of 5-7 year old children. A control group was presented with an oral explanation of the tasks by an experimenter. The children were then asked to re-play the story, thus avoiding verbal difficulties, and the extent to which the form of presentation influenced the solution of the tasks was studied.

The researchers found that if the radio and television versions of a story contain the same verbal component, the television presentation facilitates the children's solution of a problem more effectively than the radio presentation. A comparison of the effects of the two television versions of the story showed that detail verbal description, rather than interfering with the understanding of pictorial material, can enhance the process. On the other hand, some tasks may be more suited to verbal explanation than to pictures. A comparison of the performance of the children according to age showed that the younger children benefitted from verbal instructions as well as pictures, contrary to the notion that verbal comprehension develops later than comprehension of pictures.

These findings shed some light on young children's understanding of radio and television and thus have significance for media practitioners. The researchers do not claim that they have found generally valid answers, and urge that much more research is needed. However, much has been written about the effects of media on children, for good or ill, with very little empirical evidence to support these opinions. This study is an interesting and useful contribution to our knowledge of how educational media can be used to promote learning. *John Cook*

The University of New South Wales
School of Librarianship

CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

In response to requests from librarians, applications will be accepted for enrolment as miscellaneous students in the elective subjects in the Diploma in Information Management program in Session 2. Titles and descriptions of elective subjects are published in the Handbook of the Faculty of Professional Studies and are available on request from the School along with timetable (Phone (02) 662 2637).

Depending on demand, the elective subjects listed below may also be offered as separate continuing education courses out of normal working hours. Inquiries should be addressed to subject co-ordinators as shown below:

Information needs in the health sciences
and Literature of
the health sciences

(Mr Connie Wilson (02) 662 2906).

Development of bibliographic formats and standards

(Mr Michael Middleton (02) 662 3775).

Participative management and staff development

(Ms Ida Vicent (02) 662 2906).

Prof Melvin Weinstock
Head of School

A MEETING to discuss the formation of a union to cover library staff in the private sector will be held on Wednesday, 4 August on the 4th Floor, 34 Liverpool Street, Sydney (below Harbour/Day Streets) at 5.30 pm.

Libraries in the private sector belong to the only expanding area of library employment and on the whole are award free. All persons employed in these special libraries are urged to attend this meeting and join with their colleagues to start the process of securing industrial coverage and protection.

Judith Hill
Industrial Officer

TOYS AND GAMES IN LIBRARIES/ Jill Hewitt. London: The Library Association, 1981. 85pp. 5.75. ISBN 0 85365 963 X. Copy supplied by The James Bennett Group.

Highly oriented towards the development and current political situation of toy libraries in Britain, Hewitt's book was based on her master's thesis. The ground work shows in chapter headings such as 'Toy Library Pioneers', 'Toy libraries in other countries' and an appended list of 'Toy Library Association contacts in countries other than Britain'.

It doesn't claim to be a definitive work and in terms of the theory and practice of toy libraries, nothing much new appears. However, it may be useful to the librarian who is establishing a library since it brings together research from helpful journal articles and some sound arguments for the adoption of various practices. There are two solid chapters on practical problems and solutions and how others have done it well which have general application.

Slim with small print, *Toys and Games in the Library* is expensive at 5.75. Have a look at it before you buy, you may already have the information from other sources.

Rosemary Moon

LETTERS

Sporting information

The Standing Committee on Recreation (SCOR) of the Recreation Ministers' Council has recently been considering the development of international standard sporting facilities for Australia. A consistently expressed need has been for up-to-date information required for the design, construction and management of such facilities.

On behalf of SCOR I am surveying Australian and overseas resources and services in this area. A request for information was sent to relevant libraries in Australia on 9 June. If there are any libraries which did not receive the request, I would appreciate it if they would contact me.

Alan Bundy
Chief Librarian
Footscray Institute of Technology
PO Box 64 Footscray Vic 3011

BIBLION On-Line Catalogue System

The Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, offers for sale the BIBLION on-line public-access catalogue system and associated computer facilities, consisting of an IBM System/34 138Kb computer with a 128Mb disk drive, a 1.2Mb diskette drive, a 5256 printer and 7 × 5251 terminals.

The system is currently operational and linked to the Australian Bibliographic Network, with facilities for local MARC-based on-line cataloguing input and retrieval. Price negotiable around \$70,000. Full details from E.J. Wainwright, University Librarian, University of Adelaide, GPO Box 498, Adelaide 5001, to whom any offer should be made in writing not later than 31 August 1982.

GREAT BARRIER REEF MARINE PARK AUTHORITY

Expressions of interest in performing bibliographic indexing work

The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority invites expressions of interest from people and organisations able to undertake indexing for the Authority's bibliographic database, REEF.

REEF has been developed in conjunction with CSIRO and is intended to be an indexed, machine-readable bibliography of all types of published material, in all subject areas relevant to the Great Barrier Reef. The Authority will be considering contracts for the indexing of retrospective material including scholarly and popular journals, theses, Hansard reports, maps and audio-visual materials.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the librarian at the address or telephone number below.

PO Box 1379 Townsville Qld 4810
Telephone: (077) 71 2191
Telex: GBRMPA 47332