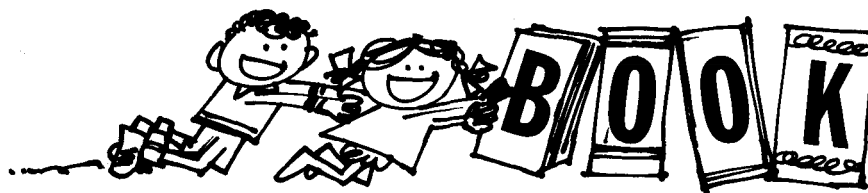


**Book Review Editor  
Marie Campbell**



child to select from a number of alternative words.

The suggested apparatus and teaching materials are rather "usual", but that is a good point in that they are readily available for the interested teacher. The materials for Level 1 include such everyday items as photographs and coloured slides, line drawings, stick figures, scrap books, picture books, models, glove puppets, and doll furniture such as stairs and see-saws (stairs to teach concepts such as "up" and "down").

For Level 2 there are games, such as "Give Me" games whereby the child is asked to hand over to the teacher a designated object, thus testing the child's knowledge of that word. Another is the "viewer box", with the child selecting one picture from two or three. If the selection is correct, the reward involves seeing the result on a screen — seen only with the right answer, by the teacher operating a slide projector that shows the object on the screen. Making the screen light up is an important means of reward-reinforcement for many children.

Several other games are outlined, and they are clearly suitable for the purpose for which they are presented. One criticism would be that not enough games are outlined. The author makes it clear that there are great individual differences, and also that one game will appeal to one child where another game is of little interest: thus with reference to a "Drop Box" whereby a miniature chair or some other object could be "dropped" out of sight by operating a lever (with the teacher's co-operation), we learn that "one particular child would not work for anything else at this level". The book would have been strengthened by briefly outlining some of the other games that would be suitable for work with such children.

The activities are rather more advanced at Level 3, for now the child is developing relationships and putting words together more meaningfully. Thus there are imaginary conversations with a puppet, and stories relating to humans and various objects. The words already used at Levels 1 and 2 are now brought together more meaningfully, stimulating the child to enter into experiences with actual things and events. After the child has a mental grasp it is much more likely that progress with the "real" world will be more rapid.

Although the programme as outlined in this book is rather light in actual examples, illustrations, and specific techniques, yet it is a very good guide for the discerning teacher who is prepared to take its principles to heart and to build on them. This criticism is somewhat answered (but not entirely) by the inclusion (at Appendix D) of a series of plans for making apparatus. The appendices also include other helpful material, such as a series of word frequency lists — a very useful addition. The point is well made that such children as those having Down's Syndrome want to talk about the same things as "normal" children, but their progress is slower and they use language less often.

The book recommends a structured step-by-step comprehension approach to speech development; it recognizes that the development of an appropriate vocabulary is important; it emphasises that the training programme should take advantage of language environment in both formal and informal ways; and it urges the need for systematic record-keeping and evaluation.

The author himself tells us, "Broadly speaking, we have found that the programme works best with Down's children but we have had success with children whose mental handicap was due to unknown causes. What we are sure is that a systematic *structured* approach, provided it is used with sensitivity and imagination, is more likely to be effective than a vaguely 'stimulating' environment."

Those results are based on six years of research, and the methods advocated could no doubt be effective in many similar cases. The book is certainly recommended.

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## **COMMUNITY HEALTH IN AUSTRALIA**

**edited by R. Walpole 215 pages,  
Penguin, Ringwood, Vic., 1979,  
\$3.95 (recommended)  
215 pages**

This is a disappointing, confused and confusing book. Neither its subject nor its intended audience is at all clear and with 16 contributing authors there is much scope for repetition. There are chapters on liberty and the health of the community, health and ill health in Australian homes, where healing starts, the general practitioner and community health, community medicine: little sister or big brother, primary care at the crossroads, community health, evaluating community health care, community health services in action, geriatrics in community health, alcohol and other drugs in the community, the future of community health, the practice of preventive medicine, alcohol abuse: a case for community intervention, counselling in health care, determination of policy in community health.

The semantic confusion with which this book is riddled begins with its title. Health is, correctly speaking, an attribute of the human individual — either subjectively experienced or objectively ascribed. (Culture can influence both the subjective and objective perception of health). 'Community health' most legitimately, therefore, refers to the health of individuals as members of communities. On this basis we might expect a book on 'Community health in Australia' to deal systematically with those influences on health that operate through our collective life. A reader expecting such a treatment will be disappointed with this book. Although many authors attempt to deal with social influences on health they do so in a fragmentary way. Alcohol and tobacco, for example, are hunted down as health demons operating in the social undergrowth. Estimates are cited on the costs of boozing to 'the community' (you and me), while there is surprisingly little sympathy for the boozers (i.e. for *their* health). The marked post-war rise in

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alcohol consumption in Australia is documented but is not interpreted in the light of other historic shifts in alcohol consumption e.g. the marked decline in Britain from the early eighteenth century and Australia from the early nineteenth century to the historic low in the 1930's and 40's.

The role of capitalist marketing techniques, especially advertising, in encouraging health-damaging consumption receives frequent mention but readily available contrary evidence such as high tobacco, alcohol and sugar consumption in state socialist societies is ignored. An adequate account of how our social life influences our health via consumption and activity patterns is not really approached by this book. Incredibly enough there is no discussion of how participation in the productive life of the community might influence health. (Neither 'work' nor 'occupation' are indexed.) Quite apart from direct hazards to health in the workplace there are such questions as how routinised, bureaucratised work (and the schooling that prepares for it) might affect the development of one's capacity for self-

management. If one's job has few intrinsic rewards is it so irrational to see consumption as the best thing going — even if the immediate gratification carried a long term risk to health.

There is no adequate discussion of how ecological disruption could affect the future health of the Australian community.

A second possible meaning of 'community health' and the one that appears to be mainly intended is as an abbreviation for 'community health services'. Here we are talking about how we collectively and intentionally manage our health (mainly ill-health) problems. More particularly we are talking about the kinds of health services outside hospitals that were encouraged by the Whitlam government's 'Community Health Program'. Even in this field the book is very patchy and provides neither a clear positive description of primary care and domiciliary support services in Australia nor a very useful normative analysis of the main policy choices in these areas. Nor are there very adequate accounts of the more technical issues in this area. Neither 'effectiveness' nor 'efficiency' are defined or indexed. There is talk of routine

'evaluation' but the importance of careful ad hoc experiments (controlled trials) in determining whether or not a service actually works (i.e. favourably affects outcomes) is not discussed.

There is throughout a good deal of semantic corruption.

There are 'medical consumers' (do they eat doctors?) and, incredibly enough, 'health consumers' (just how does one consume health?)

For all the talk of 'community' there is almost none of democracy. (Is that a coincidence?). The possible roles of existing democratic institutions such as local government and trade unions in increasing the democratic accountability of our health services is scarcely considered.

Despite the noble sentiments frequently expressed in it I doubt if there are many who would benefit from reading this book.

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## A WELFARE JOURNAL CAN'T AFFORD HANDOUTS

— a desperate memo about subscriptions from the Business Manager



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