In Review

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or illegal because they advocate a created religion, "secular humanism," are entirely different questions. Even if there is merit in the criticism of textbooks, does that make them illegal? Rather, should it not indicate that improved standards and procedures for adopting textbooks be implemented?

Although solutions to this problem do not seem easy to come by, understanding and communication seem to be keys. Public schools have the responsibility of preparing students to live and grow in an imperfect world. They also have a duty to accomplish this in a manner which reflects tolerance for varying religious beliefs. It also seems incumbent on the believers of all religions to recognize the pluralistic nature of American society and thereby respect the public school's position of being non-religious. They shall avoid placing scientific and political elements into a religious context. If they are unwilling to do so, public schools must develop strategies for dealing with their demands. If the future is dependent on education, this is an issue which affects our future.

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The views expressed in this commentary do not necessarily reflect those of the Tennessee Reading Association, nor do they imply endorsement by the Association.

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Superstars (2nd edition)
Of Rock
Of Soul
Of Movies and TV
Of Sports
Of Country
Music Hall of Fame
Randal C. Hill
Steck-Vaughn, 1986
($3.84 each text)

The term "high-interest, low-vocabulary" has been thrust upon educators by publishers for years but, in reality, "low-interest, mediocre-vocabulary" has often been the case. Not so with the dramatic new Superstars series from Steck-Vaughn. Interest level is the selling point for this series. The selections are about individuals and groups known to most students. Randal Hill's writing is lively and includes much personal information about the stars. In this light, the author demonstrates that fame and success is rarely accomplished without much struggle and heartache. This point is made well without the appearance of lecturing students on what they can and should do to succeed.

The texts seem most suited as an instructional tool for capable middle school students and lower-achieving high school students. This is not, however, to say that typical high school students would not find the content interesting.

Each selection is followed with various types of comprehension exercises. These activities usually require the student to demonstrate recognition of something that occurred in a selection or determine the correct definition of a word as it was used in the selection. Albeit, these are not high level comprehension skills but they are suitable for the target audience. The teacher can readily compose essay or other type questions depending on goals and competence levels of students.

Superstars is just what the reading doctor ordered for reluctant teenage readers. The texts are interesting, relevant, and academically solid. Even competent, avid readers will enjoy them, but the greatest value will be with the students who need this type of material the most. Ordering information is available from Steck-Vaughn at 1-800-531-5015.

Word Wizardry (Level I, grades 2-6)
Flora C. Joy
Pat Harroll (Illustration)
Good Apple ($10.95)

Word Wizardry is an exciting and ingenious system for providing instruction in
There are numerous student directed activities described in detail. Also, the teacher can direct activities. For example, the materials lend themselves beautifully to a quiz show format where the teacher presents stimulus cards on an overhead and students compete to report correct answers.

The affective dimension concerning Word Wizardry is indeed strong, but that is not the major reason for using the system. The design is academically sound, based on careful analysis of what children need to know to become competent readers. The delivery system is both unique and appealing.

Word Wizardry is available from Good Apple at 800-435-7234. Flora Joy and Pat Harroll have also produced Level II (grades 4-12) in the Word Wizardry system. Level II appears to be equally well designed.