

The Slide Rule, A Self-Instructional Programmed Manual, Saxon & Englander, 1966

Despite the title, this text is not a programmed learning, or programmed instruction, manual in the strict sense of the terms. It does present the information in small units, and it is self-paced, but there is no particular feedback regarding the student's answers. Nor does the student's success or lack thereof in mastering material determine the path of his study. The correct answers for section quizzes and chapter tests are provided so the student can determine whether his answers were right or wrong, but no discussion is offered concerning those answers or the errors that may have led to incorrect answers.

In the Introduction, the authors explain that their book "...has been designed for the person interested in truly mastering the slide rule, whether he be a junior high school student or a post-doctoral research fellow; whether he be delivery boy or chairman of the board. It presupposes intelligence and a willingness to study on the part of the reader... nothing more." The introduction further states that the text should be used in a program of self-study, but it has been developed as a school text book which could accompany the teaching of a specific subject such as Physics, Mathematics of Investment, etc.

The text adequately covers the logarithmic basis of slide rule construction and use. Problems included at the end of sections or chapters in the text are purely numerical in nature.

While no specific rules or manufacturers are explicitly recommended, photos of the Dietzgen 1734 Microglide Decimal Trig Log Log rule are repeatedly used throughout the text. No other rule is represented in any way. The scale set discussed in the text includes all those contained on the 1734.

Four appendices are included, entitled, "Rapid Approximation Technique", "Special Scales and Slide Rules", "Some Essentials of Trigonometry", and "Formulas, Equivalent, and Conversion Factors". The appendix on special scale and rules includes discussion of vector scales, hyperbolic trig function scales, and circular slide rules. The text would have benefited from a more extensive index than the roughly 2 ½ pages provided.

This book uses a serif-style typeface such as Courier (think typewriter; remember this is 1966). While the text is legible, it does give the pages an unnecessarily 'busy' appearance and is a little distracting.