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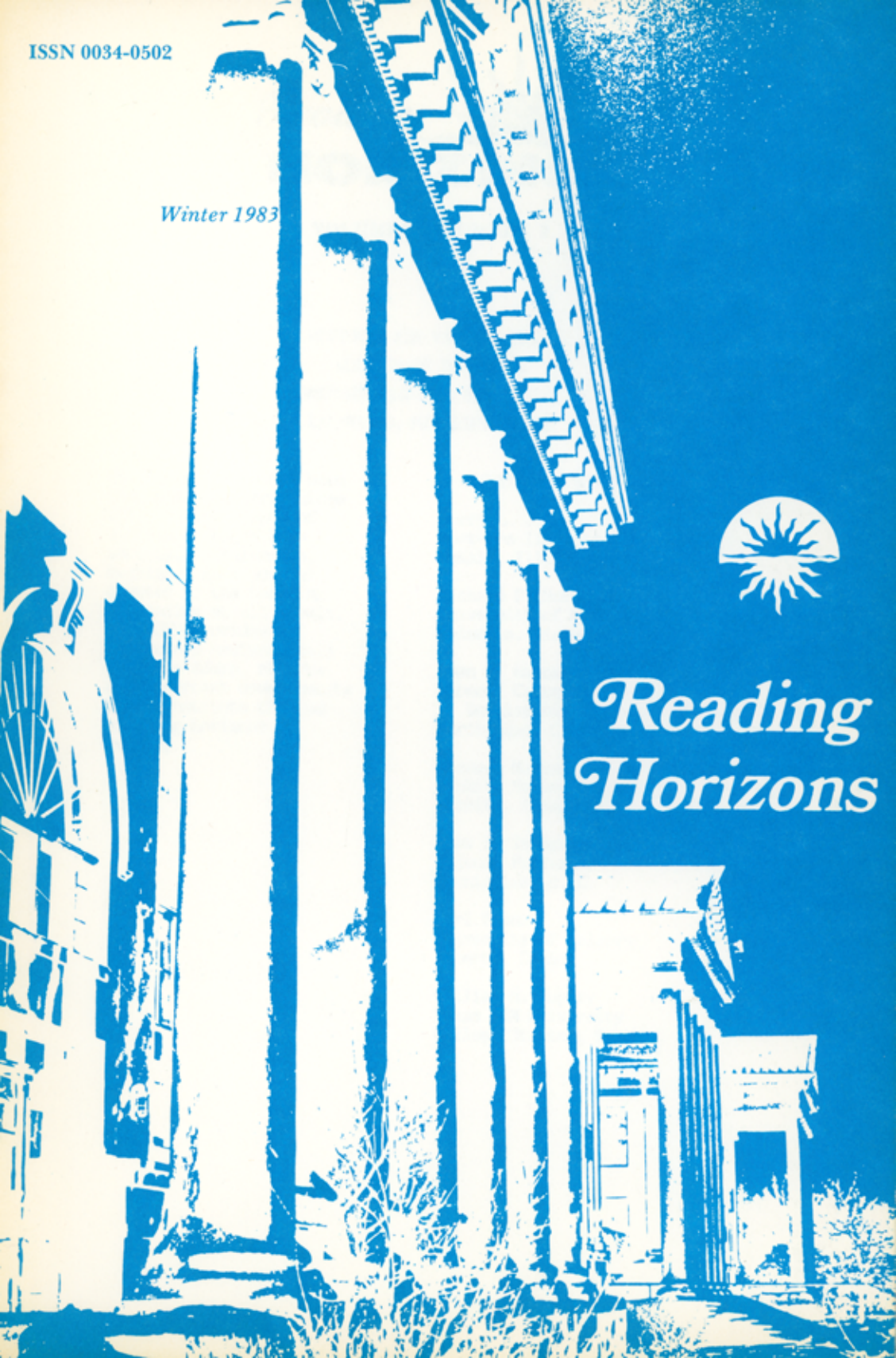


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READING HORIZONS has been published quarterly since 1960, on the campus of Western Michigan University, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. As a journal devoted to the teaching of reading at all levels, HORIZONS provides all interested professionals with the ideas, reports, and important developments that constitute the ever widening horizons of reading.

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DIAGNOSTIC-PRESCRIPTIVE READING INSTRUCTION WHAT? WHY? HOW?

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Thirty eager faces — thirty individuals with unique needs, backgrounds, learning styles, interests, and experiences — thirty students who need reading instruction. Reading is an area of major instructional emphasis in elementary and middle school classrooms. However, because there is no one best method to teach reading, no best material, or no special "tricks" which eradicate these individual student differences, the classroom teacher must decide how to provide the best possible reading instruction to meet a multitude of needs. Some school districts have suggested that classroom teachers implement diagnostic-prescriptive reading instruction. Inservice sessions, workshops, and materials have been used to disseminate information about the idea, which is designed to assist teachers in better meeting various student needs in reading. Nevertheless, many basic questions remain, namely:

- What is diagnostic-prescriptive reading instruction?
- Why should it be implemented?
- How can the classroom teacher use diagnostic-prescriptive reading instruction with a class of thirty students?

These questions are the focus of this article.

WHAT?

The term "diagnosis" is one that has been used in the medical field and related areas for many years. It refers to the determination of the nature of a disease or problem through careful examination and study. Analogous to this is the adaptation of the concept by educators during the latter half of this century to the idea of diagnosing students in a school setting in order to ascertain their strengths and weaknesses in various academic areas.

Another term borrowed by educators from medicine is "prescription", which is a specific direction recommended following a careful diagnosis. When applied to a school setting this term indicates that a concerted effort is being made to provide instruction to students based on their identified educational needs.

These terms have been joined to form a relatively new concept in the teaching of reading, the idea that individual strengths and weaknesses of students are identified and appropriate instruction is given, based on the findings. For implementing this concept successfully, a faculty must be committed to the idea of meeting

individual student needs and the principal must assume a major leadership role. The principal must become involved in the reading program in an active way to set a positive tone for change. Additionally, the following components are necessary:

1. A scope and sequence of reading skills

An awareness of a hierarchy of skills is necessary to the implementation of a diagnostic-prescriptive program. Identifying the reading skills to be taught at each level, from kindergarten through the highest level in the school, and arranging these skills in the order in which they are to be introduced is essential. Although there is no one correct scope and sequence, a hierarchy of reading skills does provide a framework for sequential skill development. Teachers must recognize that each student may not progress through this hierarchy in exactly the same order; however, this framework serves as an organization of the skills.

2. Procedures to facilitate continuous diagnosis of each student.

Another essential component of a diagnostic-prescriptive reading program entails gathering diagnostic information from a variety of sources. This does not imply that teachers must spend an inordinate amount of time administering tests to their students, but they must continuously assess student progress, or lack of it, through on-going informal procedures.

3. A variety of materials and teaching techniques for prescriptive instruction.

In a diagnostic-prescriptive program, students are diagnosed and instruction provided based upon the information gained. Instruction may occur in small groups, as well as through one-to-one instruction. The uniqueness of student needs and learning styles necessitates the use of a wide variety of materials and teaching techniques in order to instruct each student based on his/her needs. A lack of commercial materials does not preclude the use of diagnostic-prescriptive instruction as the teacher may use old textbooks, newspapers, brochures, catalogs, and a variety of different teacher-made materials. The use of many materials adds variety to the instructional process and serves to help students realize that they can read many different types of printed materials. Teachers should remember that materials do not teach students to read—they serve as reinforcers following instruction.

4. The use of guided or directed reading lesson procedures.

Diagnostic-prescriptive instruction is intended to meet the needs of individual students. This does not mean that the student is tested on a particular skill, assigned a workbook or exercise to develop the skill, and tested again at some later date. Instruction of this type is considered a "plug-in approach", not diagnostic-prescriptive instruction. In order to avoid the "plug-in approach", instruction should follow a guided or directed reading format. This procedure requires direct teacher instruction and provides students with opportunities to apply the skills as they are taught.

5. Methods for keeping records on each student.

An important aspect of diagnostic-prescriptive instruction is the development of a procedure for keeping records on each student's progress. This entails recording information about each student's strengths and weaknesses as these are identified, and as the type of prescriptive instruction is provided. Because this detailed information is virtually impossible to remember, some convenient record, such as a classroom and individual checksheets or skill cards, must be used. Additional teacher time may be required, but the records enhance effective teaching and serve to assist in improving instruction.¹

WHY?

One only has to look at a classroom full of students to answer this question. In examining any classroom, teachers recognize that no two students are exactly alike in their reading development. Several students may be approximately on the same reading level, but each of these students has different skill needs and interests. The teacher is responsible for identifying these individual skill needs and interests so that appropriate instruction can be provided for each student.

Because of the intricacies of the reading process, readers react to print in different ways based on their abilities and experiences. As teachers become aware of the complex nature of reading, and realize that it is not a step-by-step procedure developed exactly the same way by all students; they see that each student has a different learning style which dictates variety in the teaching process. For example, a traditional three-group organizational plan using one set of materials will not be successful in teaching all students to read. All students will not "fit" into three permanent groups. Various skill needs, interests, as well as reading levels necessitate the use of different grouping patterns and flexible group membership. Some instruction might be provided to one large group, other instruction may require three or four groups, while other reading instruction must be more individualized. As needs are met through the flexible grouping format, teachers also accept the fact that all students are not interested in reading the same things. Thus, to accommodate student differences as they relate to the chosen books and attempt to assist students as they read, teachers must see the need to provide a more diagnostic-prescriptive type of instruction. Because of the complex nature of reading, the need for diagnostic-prescriptive instruction is clearly evident.

The use of medical analogy may further clarify the need for diagnostic-prescriptive reading instruction. When one visits a physician for a checkup or perhaps for treatment of some specific problem, the physician examines the patient carefully, using various methods to obtain as much information as possible. Thorough examinations may indicate a need for further in-depth testing. After obtaining the results of these tests and using the information gathered initially, a prescription is developed for treating the patient. This prescription may result in a cure, or changes and/or

modifications may be required. Carefully recorded data is kept so that the physician can recall the specific problems, the date of the diagnosis, the prescription provided, and the results of the prescription. Now compare this situation to the provision of reading instruction in the classroom.

When the school year begins, the teacher encounters a new group of students. Only superficial information is known about their reading ability. They may all be the same age and in the same grade level, but their similarity ends here. The teacher, as does the physician, must determine the specific needs of each student, using a variety of diagnostic procedures including questioning, observation, and testing. After this information is obtained, appropriate instruction can be provided as needed in group or individual situations. Careful records must be kept so that the teacher will be aware of the students' progress, and can share this information with other teachers, parents, and administrative personnel.

Of course, teachers are not physicians and teaching reading is not quite the same as treating for flu. However, the necessity of using an organized procedure in obtaining diagnostic information and then prescribing appropriate instruction is essential. The teacher is dealing with a very complex learning process, which is more difficult to define than a temperature of 101° F. Furthermore, there are no "miracle drugs" that the teacher can prescribe to ensure reading success. A systematic approach in providing reading instruction is imperative. Teacher and student time is precious. The effective use of diagnostic information prevents the reteaching of skills already mastered or the teaching of skills that students are not ready to learn.

Another aspect of diagnostic-prescriptive reading instruction involves accountability. Parents are concerned about the reading abilities of their children. The public demands to know why so many students leave secondary schools with reading and writing deficiencies. Is there a national problem? Some information available to educators indicates that students are actually reading better today than in years past.² Teachers must provide positive information like this to the public. With effective diagnostic-prescriptive instruction, teachers can report specific strengths and weaknesses of individual students. Documentation of this type is essential!

Every student has specific needs. In order for students to reach their potential in reading, teachers must respond to these specific needs. One effective way of doing this is through the use of diagnostic, prescriptive reading instruction.

HOW?

In implementing effective reading instruction, there are some basic premises which should concern classroom teachers. These involve the role of teachers in implementing an effective program of diagnostic-prescriptive work, and some of the basic functions that teachers must assume. These include:

- Familiarity with student's reading abilities
- Continuous diagnostic assessment
- Analysis of each student's reading performance

- Exhibiting leadership in the classroom
- Providing prescriptive instruction

In order to become familiar with and analyze students' reading abilities, careful diagnosis within the classroom must occur. Diagnosis is the foundation for planning the daily as well as the long-range instructional program for classroom reading, and should not be separated from prescriptive teaching even on a daily basis. However, formal diagnosis is not required every day, since much information is obtained from prescriptive teaching through observation and student work.

Continuous diagnosis allows for day-to-day adjustments which encourage teachers to tailor instruction to individual progress and problems. Failure to diagnose consistently results in a diminishing quality of instruction, and frequently leads to changes in instruction that disrupt the continuity of the learning process. Continuous diagnosis prevents reading problems from becoming severe enough to cause anxiety for both student and teacher. Gradual changes in the prescription can be made to keep instruction focused on specific needs.

Although most classroom teachers want to implement careful diagnostic procedures, they frequently feel that there is not enough time to diagnose students effectively. This is often a result of viewing diagnosis as requiring the administration of many tests. This is not the case. Systematic diagnosis relies upon many different types of diagnostic procedures, and once begun, teachers will actually save time because classroom instruction becomes more efficient.

One of the teacher's primary diagnostic tools is observation, which can be either formal or informal. This procedure permits the teacher to gather information during the entire school day, especially during the periods of prescriptive reading instruction. Clues to a student's successes and failures in reading are easily observed during these periods. Other valuable diagnostic tools for the classroom teacher are the informal reading inventory, attitude and interest inventories, word recognition inventories, centers and workbooks, group reading inventory, cloze procedure, and criterion-referenced tests.

Prescriptive reading instruction, part two of the diagnostic-prescriptive process, uses the wealth of information provided by diagnosis to make instructional adjustments. Prescriptive instruction in reading skills must follow the school's scope of sequences skills, so that these skills are not taught randomly or in isolation but in some organized manner. The diagnostic information helps the teacher with this instruction by indicating what skills the student knows, which are unknown, as well as the reading level of the students. Using diagnostic information, the teacher may organize different skills groups as well as achievement groups based on the reading levels of the students.

In planning for prescriptive instruction the teacher must first organize any available diagnostic information. This is when class profile cards or some type of record keeping procedure is helpful. Teachers may note that they have a wealth of information

to ensure that appropriate instruction is provided. Otherwise, the student may receive two or more entirely different types of instruction which are not compatible. For diagnostic-prescriptive instruction to function successfully on a school wide or district wide basis, teachers must work together for the improvement of reading instruction for all students.

Diagnostic-prescriptive reading instruction is based on the belief that each student is an individual with unique needs. As a result of each student having these individual strengths and weaknesses in reading, a diagnostic-prescriptive reading program is essential if reading instruction is to meet the individual student needs.

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HOW STUDENTS MAKE BOOK CHOICES

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An important goal of reading instruction is to bring students and books together in such a way that students will choose reading as a recreational activity. For students to become independent readers, they need to know how to choose and respond to literature. For teachers to develop situations in which students can respond to books and analyze their choices, they need to know what factors influence students' selection of books for personal reading.

Literature regarding criteria that influence young people's book selection is limited. When Maxwell (1979) asked sixth grade students why they decided to read a particular book, she found that these factors were important: 1) recommendation of a friend, 2) the length of the book (they checked the number of pages), 3) the print, 4) the cover, 5) the title, 6) chapter titles, and 7) the content of the first page. Ross (1978) found similar considerations in her survey of middle school students, but they added the following reasons: 1) easy to read, 2) contemporary setting, 3) main character of own age and sex, 4) a book they had heard of before, 5) paperback, 6) topic of personal interest, and 7) immediate action without "dull" introductory chapters.

In an effort to learn the extent and variety of factors that influence students' book selection, the study reported here was undertaken. The researchers also questioned students regarding what they liked to read about, what authors they liked, and books they had recently read and enjoyed.

A total of 688 fifth through eighth grade students enrolled in public schools in two small cities in Nebraska and California responded to a questionnaire. Numbers of respondents from both sexes were fairly evenly distributed across four grades.

Results of the Survey

The following results are reported item by item from the questionnaire:

Item 1: Would you be more likely to read a book...if a teacher recommended it to you?...if a friend recommended it to you?

A majority of the students (69%) indicated that they relied more upon the friend's recommendation. Of the 31% who chose a teacher recommendation, half of them were in fifth grade. There

appeared to be a steady increase through the grades with regard to the influence of peer suggestion. Boys showed a slightly greater tendency to favor the recommendation by a teacher; whereas, girls were inclined toward peer recommendation.

Item 2: Which would you be more likely to choose to read?...
a hardback book...a paperback book.

Paperbacks were preferred by a majority of the subjects (65%). Among the grades, eighth graders registered the highest preference for paperback books; fifth graders, the lowest. Girls (61%) favored paperbacks by a fairly wide margin compared to boys in the survey.

Item 3: Have you ever read a book after seeing a movie or
TV show based on it?

The media appeared to have a substantial influence on choice of reading material with 77% of the subjects indicating a positive response. There was very little difference among the grades on this item. However, girls (56%) responded "yes" slightly more frequently than boys. The strong positive response by the total group was reflected in the book titles listed in the final item on the survey.

Item 4: Do you ever read a book more than once?

A strong majority of the students (80%) answered positively. Fifth graders responded "yes" only slightly more often than other grades. Eighth graders had the greatest number of negative responses. Girls (57%) indicated a few more rereadings than boys.

Item 5: Do you ever buy books with your spending money?

Fifty-eight percent of the subjects answered that they had purchased books with their spending money. There was little difference among the grades with regard to this behavior. Girls (58%) exceeded boys somewhat in book purchasing.

Item 6: Do you ever read more than one book by the same
author? Name one or two of these authors.

A large majority of the subjects (85%) responded positively. All four grades were very consistent in their responses to this item. Once again, girls edged the boys in positive responses. Students listed 186 different authors whose books they favored. A summary of these authors according to frequency of mention by the subjects appears in Table 1.

Table 1
Authors Named in the Survey

Judy Blume	207	E. B. White	16	Franklin Dixon	11
Beverly Cleary	92	C. S. Lewis	15	Wilson Rawls	10
Laura Ingalls Wilder	23	Agatha Christie	12	Carolyn Keene	8
S. E. Hinton	20	Alfred Hitchcock	12	Madeleine L'Engle	7
Charles Schultz	18	George Lucas	12	Ronald Dahl	7
				Robert C. O'Brien	7

Item 7: Number in order from 1 to 6 how important the items below are to you when you choose a book to read...thickness...if book has pictures...what it says on the first page of the book...the size of print...the picture on the cover...what it says on the jacket or back cover.

The subjects indicated the following as most important: "What it says on the book jacket or on the back cover" (53%), "how thick the book is" (15%), "what it says on the first page of the book" (12%), "the picture on the cover" (8%), "the size of the print" (7%), and "if the book has pictures" (5%). A similar pattern emerged in the ratings of those factors that were second most influential in the choice of reading material: "what it says on the first page" (25%), "how thick the book is" (20%), "the picture on the cover" (18%), "what it says on the book jacket or on the back cover" (14%), "the size of the print" (12%), and "if the book has pictures" (10%).

Item 8: Check the sentence that best describes you: ...I mostly read only books that I have to read because they are required by the teacher...I check books out of the library to read at home in my spare time... I have several books of my own at home that I enjoy reading in my spare time.

Only 14% of the subjects responded that they read only required books. Of these responses, more than one-half were given by eighth graders. Boys (73%) also indicated this behavior by a wide margin over the girls. Forty-five percent of the students indicated that the library was the primary source of their reading material. There was very little difference among the grades on this item. Of the respondents who selected this category, the majority were girls (60%). Forty-one percent of the subjects selected the third statement. Fifth graders (35%) responded that they read personally owned books most frequently. More girls (55%) than boys indicated that this item was descriptive of their behavior.

Item 9: What do you like to read about?

"Mysteries" were listed substantially more than any other type of story, named by nearly one-third of the respondents. Other popular topics included: animals, humor/comedy, adventure, love stories, sports, science fiction, and "kids my age"/teenagers. "Fiction" as a type of book was cited often. There was also a rather wide representation of nonfiction topics listed by the subjects, including: ballet, jazz, roller skating, conservation, computers and electronics, crafts, cooking, marine biology, motorcycles, and how-to-draw, among others.

Item 10: List the titles of three books you have read lately or that have been read to you that you really liked.

The subjects listed a total of 978 different book titles. A listing of titles named 12 times or more appears below:

Table 2

Books Enjoyed by Fifth-Eighth Grade Students

Where the Red Fern Grows 46

Star Wars

17

Forever	35	Hi Fella	16
That Was Then, This is Now	35	Blubber	15
Are You There, God?		Charlotte's Web	14
It's Me, Margaret	33	From the Mixed-Up Files of	
A Wrinkle in Time	33	Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler	14
The Amityville Horror	26	Black Stallion books	13
"Little House" books	25	A Christmas Carol	13
Tales of a Fourth Grade		My Side of the Mountain	12
Nothing	23	The Outsiders	12
It's Not the End of the		The Empire Strikes Back	12
World	22		
Peanuts books	18		

Among the other titles, media influence was apparent. Subject and title lists included "The Dukes of Hazzard," "The Incredible Hulk," "Mork and Mindy," "Superman," "The Love Bug," "Battlestar Gallactica," and "Star Trek," among others. Titles published in the adult market were also popular, including: Shogun, Wifey, Alien, Mommie Dearest, The Shining, and If Life Is a Bowl of Cherries, What Am I Doing in the Pits?

Conclusions

According to the responses of the subjects in the study reported here, there are apparently some fairly definite factors that fifth through eighth grade students consider when they are choosing books for personal reading. They rely more upon peer recommendation than teacher suggestion and tend to select paperback instead of hardback books. Movies and television seem to prompt students to read books, and they may buy books with their spending money. They have a strong tendency to reread books and to read more than one book by the same author. Factors such as the description of a book on the book jacket or back cover and the content of the first page apparently weigh heavily in the decisions to read or not to read a book. The thickness of the book and the picture on the cover seem to influence the choice to a lesser degree, and the print size and number of illustrations are least important. Fifth through eighth grade students appear to have an extensive range of reading interests, both fiction and non-fiction, and choose from a wide variety of literature, written for both children and adults.

Findings from a study such as this one offer implications for teachers who wish to develop recreational reading habits in and out of their classrooms. Students need to be provided with opportunities to share what they have been reading with others. These need not be formal book reporting times. Instead, they can be brief moments of giving a summary statement and making a recommendation. In order to capitalize on the media influences, teachers might draw the attention of the students to a movie or TV special based on a children's or young adult book. Copies of the adapted book could be made available in the classroom or school library. A discussion comparing or contrasting the book with the media presentation would be an excellent critical reading activity to follow the viewing and reading. Students themselves might write book jacket blurbs and synopses for back covers so they can learn

how useful such information can be in telling about a book. They should also be made aware of various popular authors and their contributions. Further, continued exposure to the ever-growing body of nonfiction literature is vital as the interests of students change and their need for information expands.

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TEACHING THE FUNCTIONALLY ILLITERATE ADULT: A PRIMER

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Although many recent articles on teaching reading to adult basic education students have discussed both the general process of teaching and the application of specific methodology, few have described either the concepts or the series of methods based on those concepts that a beginning instructor of adults in basic education reading programs needs to understand and use (Park, 1981; O'Malley and Haase, 1981; Karnes, Ginn and Maddox, 1980; Schneiderman, 1977; O'Donnell, 1973; Heitzman and Putnam, 1972; Becker, 1970). The methods which an instructor ought to use are based on three concepts:

1. There are differences in the way adults learn and the ways young people learn. Adults learn more slowly than young people—but more accurately. They are more sensitive to unfavorable criticism and have more need to see progress in their learning. Effects of aging, such as weakened eyesight and hearing, can make it more difficult for them to learn. Adults' ingrained habits and attitudes may inhibit their learning, but they may learn more quickly if instruction is based on their past experiences. Adults expect to be treated with dignity rather than being patronized. (Haase, Robinson and Beach, 1979; Haase and Robinson, 1979; Whitbourne and Weinstein, 1979; and Zahn, 1967)
2. Functionally illiterate adults usually have gaps in their learning beyond their inability to read. Many have attended school only intermittently. Others worked only on subjects which interested them during their years in school. Still others experienced failure early and learned only when risk of failure was minimal. (O'Malley and Haase, 1981)
3. Each adult requires an individualized reading program which will enable her/him to be responsible for her/his progress and to select materials s/he finds interesting (Mocker, 1975). Group exercises can be used as an interlude in the routine of individualized learning and can contribute significantly to such activities as word recognition and map reading.

METHODS

The Nature of the Student

Methods for teaching adults to read should differ from those used with younger people. Most adult basic education students are motivated to learn and have come to reading programs at personal risk, willing to expose their deficiencies so that these deficiencies may be remedied. Others are motivated because the job training program in which they are enrolled requires attendance in a remedial program. Still others, less motivated, come because they are receiving a stipend to attend school or because the program is located in a warm building during a cold winter.

Personality patterns of functionally illiterate adults are similar to those of literate adults. The characteristics that separate them from literate adults are their fear of schooling, their apparent inability to learn to read, and their inability to learn from print. Most have not been successful, and experience anxiety in classrooms. These adults have found testing a humiliating event and would prefer to ignore that which would confirm what they already know about themselves: that they are stupid, witless and without promise. Rather than lose their dignity, most will come to class infrequently or drop out.

Implications for the new teacher of functionally illiterate adults are:

1. The students in the program are adults with extensive experience and, therefore, should be treated with respect.
2. Most adults are motivated by pressures external to the program; thus, they require understanding and direction.
3. Schooling has been a negative experience for most functionally illiterate adults; therefore, they do well where there is an atmosphere of expectation without excessive pressure and competition.

Initial Testing

Functionally illiterate adults who come back to learn to read must be tested before receiving instruction, because the instructor must determine what gaps there are in adults' reading knowledge if s/he is to help them. Adults are interested in learning what they need to know without wasting time. If the teacher finds specific gaps in adults' reading knowledge s/he can help the adult know what her/his specific problems are and how they can be solved, thus encouraging adults to remain in the program.

Initial testing begins with an interview, in which the instructor begins to know and understand the adult and the types of learning problems s/he has. At the interview, the instructor may ask about the adult's personal characteristics, schooling history, and her/his reasons for wanting to read or to read better, the types of reading s/he generally avoids or seeks, her/his general interests, and what s/he believes are her/his reading deficiencies.

After the interview, the instructor should administer tests

individually to each adult in a friendly non-threatening, non-judgmental manner. Placing the adult at the appropriate testing level reduces the frustration, embarrassment and discouragement of adults who are given the CAT, IOWA, or SAT at too high a level as well as the umbrage some adults take when given tests at too low a reading level. Adults can be effectively placed in appropriate testing levels using the following method for ascertaining a student's ability to take a reading test with a minimum of frustration. In this process, the instructor presents the adult with a graded word list. If the adult is unable to read the list aloud, s/he is assigned immediately to an instructional situation. If the adult can read the list, s/he is presented with a series of graded passages that have readability and which correlate with the individual reading tests of an achievement test series. If the adult can barely read the passages or reads with difficulty, s/he may be assigned to CAT Level 2. If the adult can read the passages but had difficulty with comprehension, s/he is assigned to CAT Level 3. More difficult passages are provided to adults who show ease in oral reading and degree of comprehension. From performance on these passages, the adult is assigned to CAT Levels 3, 4, or 5.

As the adult reads aloud, the instructor listens carefully. Some obvious warning signs of frustration are: pausing for a long time before reading a word; missing one out of every three words; not remembering most of what was read; and, not being able to answer comprehension questions by searching for the answers in the text. Additional factors in making judgments concerning an adult's place in the testing program are: speed of reading, phrasing, hesitations, pronunciation (although this may be misleading if the adult speaks a dialect), ability to locate answers in a passage, ability to answer comprehension questions from memory, level of anxiety, and signs of organic impairments such as vision, hearing and perceptual problems as well as speech irregularities. Practice in testing and judging adults will increase the accuracy of an instructor in placing adults at appropriate levels of testing. If one test does not provide clear information on a particular skill, the instructor should give the adult a second short test which examines the skill in question. It is better to take time to check than to assume competence.

Implications for the new instructor are:

1. Functionally illiterate adults have gaps in their reading knowledge which require identification.
2. Tests are administered individually in a friendly way and non-threatening manner.
3. Maintaining the dignity of the adult throughout the testing process ensures that the adult will return to and remain in the program.
4. Observing the reading behavior of adults while they are being tested is crucial to making good judgments.
5. Retesting of specific skill areas may be necessary if test results are not clear.

Diagnosis

The instructor should diagnose the adult's abilities when all relevant information has been collected, including a list of the adult's personal characteristics, the test results, and judgments about the adult's motivation, anxiety, and self-concept.

To analyze the test results, the instructor—

1. Compares the vocabulary and comprehension scores to see if the adult's problems are a result of knowledge or vocabulary or of comprehension skills.
2. Analyzes the adult's working speed, the number of items completed, her/his perception of the adult's anxiety level, and whether a small number of items were completed accurately, or whether a large number were completed with minimal accuracy in order to judge whether the adult is slow and accurate or fast and inaccurate. Later the instructor may have to question the adult about her/his thinking process while s/he took the test.
3. Checks again to see if the errors were made as the material increases with difficulty or if the errors were clumped or scattered. These error patterns might denote adults who never mastered the concept of main idea but who can make inferences. Where the errors are and how they form a pattern will provide information concerning the adult's major reading deficiencies.

Robinson (1973) has provided a sequence in which an adult must acquire reading skills. It includes skills in pre-reading, perception, word-recognition, comprehension, understanding content skills and reference. Since failure on any particular skill usually promises failure in subsequent areas, the instructor must diagnose the point in the sequence at which the adult must begin learning. After analyzing the adult's test results and considering the point in the skills-sequence at which the adult should be placed, the instructor compares the personal characteristics of the adult with the test results and the sequence of skills. The instructor begins to ask such questions as: Does this information correspond to what the adult believes are her/his problems? With this error pattern, what kind of material can be given to this adult? Is the adult highly motivated to produce a lot of work? Is the adult easily confused or bored? How much time does the adult have to devote to learning? The answers to such questions to the next step—prescription.

Prescription

In order to prescribe the correct mixture of sequences in learning for each adult, the instructor must synthesize all the information s/he has collected on the adult and her/his knowledge of learning materials available for adults (and of reading material available to the particular adult at her/his work place). Most instructors of adult learners believe every kind of written material is good at some time for some person.

Typical materials used in learning centers for adults are: Random House's Criterion Reading; Be a Better Reader, Basic Skills

Edition; I.D.E.A. Power for Reading Comprehension from Prentice Hall; Readers Digests' New Reading Skill Builders; SRA reading series; Scholastic Magazine's GO, Reading in the Content Areas; New Practice Readers and Vocabulary published by McGraw Hill; Sullivan Associates' Programmed Reading for Adults; Croft Inc.'s Skill Pack in Reading Comprehension; Stech-Vaughn Co.'s Reading Improvement Activities, Just for Fun Series; GED Test Series by Contemporary Books; GED Program and Skill Power Series by Cambridge Book Co.; and Barnell Loft's Multiple Skill Series, Specific Skills Series and Supportive Reading Skills.

In addition to reading materials, the instructor must prescribe modes of instruction to fit the needs of the adult learner. Some adults function well at computer terminals or on programmed instruction alone. Others require intense group experience. Some may need a combination of these methods. Other adults require more instructor attention and still others may need both attention and a great amount of encouragement.

After diagnosing the adult needs and planning her/his program, the instructor should explain to her/him, methodically yet congenially, her/his deficiencies (one skill at a time), and ask if each aspect of the diagnosis is correct. This will help the adult to maintain her/his dignity and to feel supported. The instructor should then explain the skill and show the adult what pages in the materials will provide practice in this skill. The instructor should show the adult everything s/he writes in front of her/him, to build trust and confidence. This also helps the adult to keep track of her/his own progress. The adult may then work on her/his own with the instructor nearby to answer questions or periodically check on progress. If the initial prescription is not effective, the instructor should give the adult new material along with the reasons for change.

During this time of individualized instruction, the instructor should be aware that adults will act as students and may become dependent on the instructor. Some will bait the instructor, others will feign knowledge for fear of appearing stupid, and still others will never do what is required for success in learning. Adults will come when it is convenient and if they believe they are making progress. If they feel frustration or failure, they will seldom tell anyone, but will simply drop out of the program (Seaman, 1971).

Implications for the new instructor include:

1. Diagnosis and prescription are extremely important in teaching adults to read or to enhance their reading skills.
2. Test results must be analyzed carefully so that the specific reading problems may be revealed.
3. The instructor needs to have a knowledge and understanding of the sequence of reading skills.
4. The instructor must compare the personal characteristics of the adults with the test results.
5. All reading materials are good for something at sometime for an adult reader.

6. The instructor needs to have a knowledge and understanding of the instructional strategies.
7. The instructor must combine the adult's test results and personal characteristics with information about the sequence of reading skills and instructional strategies in order to create a learning prescription for an individual adult.
8. Everything the instructor does with the adult should be explained to that adult.

A successful adult-basic-education program will recognize the differences between younger students and adults, provide a setting in which adults' dignity is not threatened, carefully diagnose each adult's needs and capabilities, and prescribe and carefully implement a program to meet each adult's needs within that person's capacities.

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FACTS AND FICTION ABOUT LANGUAGE 'SKILLS'

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A quick glance through most curriculum guides and some textbooks will give the distinct impression that the language arts are composed of a set of "skills" (Otto & Chester, 1976). More implicit is the assumption that if these "skills" are mastered, then the art of language will have been achieved. And while some may not want to surrender this notion, the way out of the dilemma is not clear. What are "skills"? What purpose do they serve? Which are the language arts "skills"? What is the theoretical and research-based evidence on "skills"?

This article addresses the above questions, in order to determine what is fact and what is fiction about language "skills."

What are "skills"?

There are lists after lists
Of skill after skill.
To confuse any mind
Or make it most ill.
They have to be useful—
How could they be wrong?
For I read them all day
And half the night long.
If a kid ever masters
These skills I have read
He'll be either a robot,
Or else he'll be dead.

Roberts (1974, 75)

Teachers typically use the word "skills" in a generic sense: they speak about study skills, vocabulary skills, writing skills, spelling skills, sequence of skills, and so on. Naturally these terms are not referring to "skills" in the psychological sense (i.e., chains of motor responses). It is more reasonable to assume that what teachers intend when talking about "skills" is "lesson objectives," "teaching focus," or "competencies" (Artley, 1980).

A teaching focus or teaching objective can be simply defined as the purpose for which a teaching activity is initiated. Therefore, a teaching objective might be that students are able to make an outline for an essay, or that they can divide words into syllables, or that they can spell a given number of words correctly. Each of these teaching foci includes a number of skills in the sense described in the following paragraph.

The Purpose of Lists

Whether lists contain skills, processes, strategies, or conventions, they are useful for instructional purposes; however, they also reflect our conception of what constitutes language art. The position taken here is that a focus on the core skills is the most fruitful since they are also the most transferable to all modalities. Mosenthal (1976-77, p. 87), for example, concluded that "a common linguistic competence underlies both silent reading and oral-language processing (listening)," and Danks and Pezdek (1980, p.33) interpret Mosenthal's findings to extend to oral reading as well. Henry (1974, 4) talking about reading as concept development, states that "the strategies inherent in either analysis or sythesis are always the same, from first grade through graduate school." A study by Kellogg (1976) compared first graders receiving reading readiness instruction and those receiving a science inquiry unit on word meaning, listening, matching, alphabet, numbers and copying (i.e., Metropolitan Readiness Test). After the six-week treatments the "inquiry" students outperformed the other group in all but the copying test. Kellogg (1976, 62) concluded that "To learn to read, the child must first have developed some ability in the reasoning process." The observations by Henry and Kellogg support the conceptualizing and language notion of Sticht which was presented earlier.

The contention here is that the same reasons used to support "skills lists" are even more appropriate to core skills as defined here. A list of core skills quickly identifies one's view of language whether it be transformational-generative, schema-theory based, whole-language oriented or some other point of viewing. In addition such a list helps to show how listening, speaking reading and writing draw on similar underlying abilities. This should be useful for teaching purposes since it allows one to use a strong area to work on a weak one. Such a list also helps to determine the scope of what is to be taught and to diagnose who knows what. Hierarchies and sequence should be based on Piagetian notions of development (see Petrosky, 1980, for example). Certainly a list such as suggested in Figure 1 would help to focus instruction and it could form the basis of more realistic language evaluation.

Which are the language art skills?

The intent here is not to present a list of skills but rather to discuss some of the attributes and characteristics of core language skills with the connotation used in this article.

Through task analysis or feature analysis it becomes possible to determine which core skills are involved in a teaching task or which are related to a specific objective. A few examples are given in Figure 3 to indicate which core skills could be related to certain teaching foci. Naturally, which core skills are involved depends on the context of the activity and to some extent the knowledge of the learner (i.e., recall often eliminate the need for analysis).

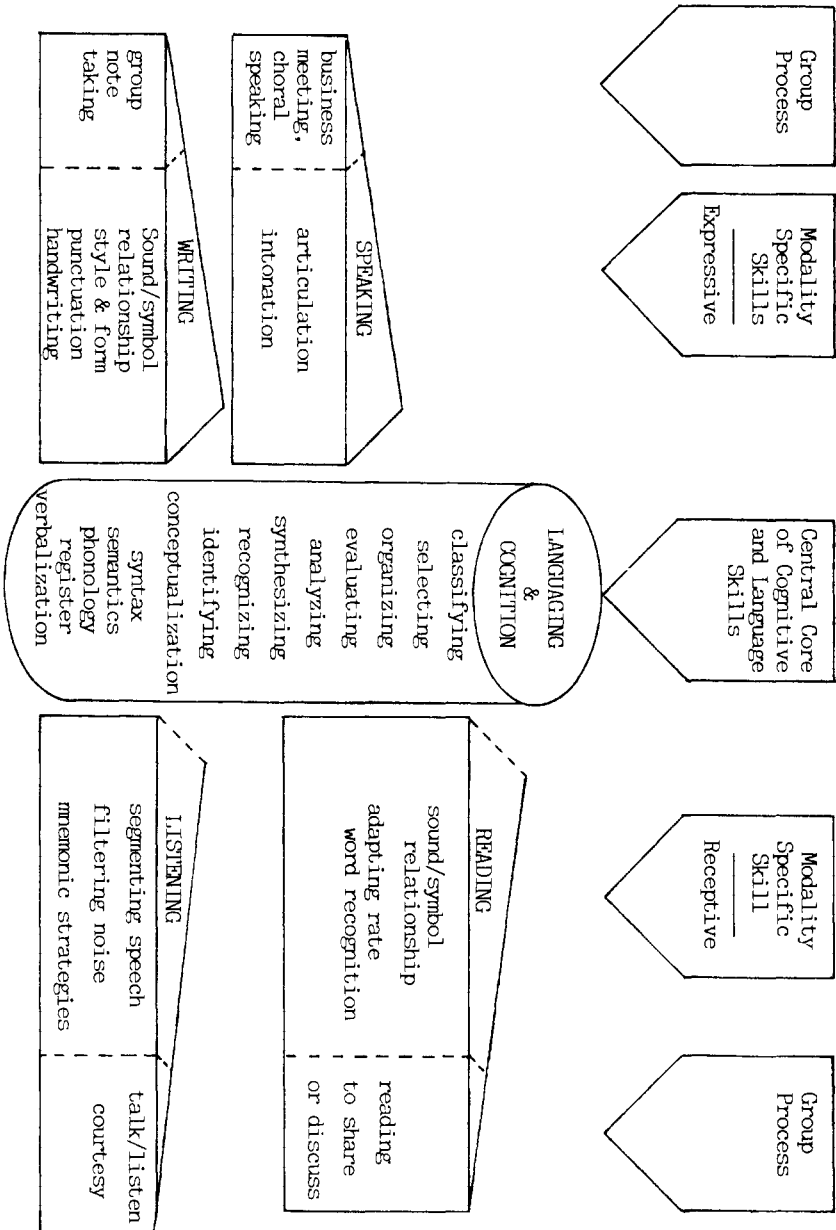


Figure 1 - Interrelationship of cognitive, language, modality specific and group processes

If the word skill is to become more meaningful, I propose that it be used to describe the core processes required for communication purposes. These purposes could be classified into cognitive skills such as classifying, identifying, and selecting, and language skills such as identifying a sound-symbol relationship, using a particular register, and determining the syntactic category of a word. Sticht (1974,19) expresses the distinction between cognitive and language skills in the following way: "The child must first acquire a conceptual base and some skill in conceptualizing, and then he must acquire a system of signs and rules for sequencing these signs (i.e., a language) for communicating his conceptualizations to others."

A few examples should help to clarify the distinction between a skill and a teaching focus as proposed here.

EXAMPLE 1: The child comes across the statement "citrus fruit is grown..." and cannot pronounce the underlined word. The teaching focus might be "initial consonant substitution," but the skills required might be "comparing, identifying, synthesizing, applying." These skills naturally could be used for other, quite different teaching purposes as well.

EXAMPLE 2: The student is asked to find the main idea of the story "Goldilocks." Again the skills involved would include "analysis, classification, and synthesis." The teaching focus is finding "main ideas."

The attempt to differentiate the teaching focus and the more transferable skills is not new. Morrison (1979, 35) states that the Wisconsin Design staff "has been devising a way to help teachers teach not just a specific story but instead teach the student to comprehend better everything he reads. The key to teaching this transferability...is to teach skills, the tools of reading comprehension... The staff has concluded that reading comprehension skills can be categorized as follows: word meaning, sentence meaning, passage meaning, and sequencing." Unfortunately the word "skill" is subsequently used in a variety of different ways by Morrison and by Otto (1977). It is also rather obvious that the "skills" are not solely "reading comprehension skills" but rather comprehension skills common to all the language arts.

A diagram will assist in clarifying this last observation. Figure 1 shows the central core of skills referred to as language and cognitive skills. These core skills are useful in reading, listening, speaking, and writing, and should be transferable. When a skill does not transfer it is very likely that some modality specific skill is involved. For example, the spelling and pronunciation of a word require both core skills (identification, analysis, etc.) and modality specific skills. There are more options when moving from sound to symbol than when going from symbol to sound (see also Read, 1980).

Often group processes and teaching strategies are listed along with other language arts "skills" as well. These are mostly conventions rather than skills in the sense used here and their

relationship to core skills and modality specific skills is shown in Figure 2.

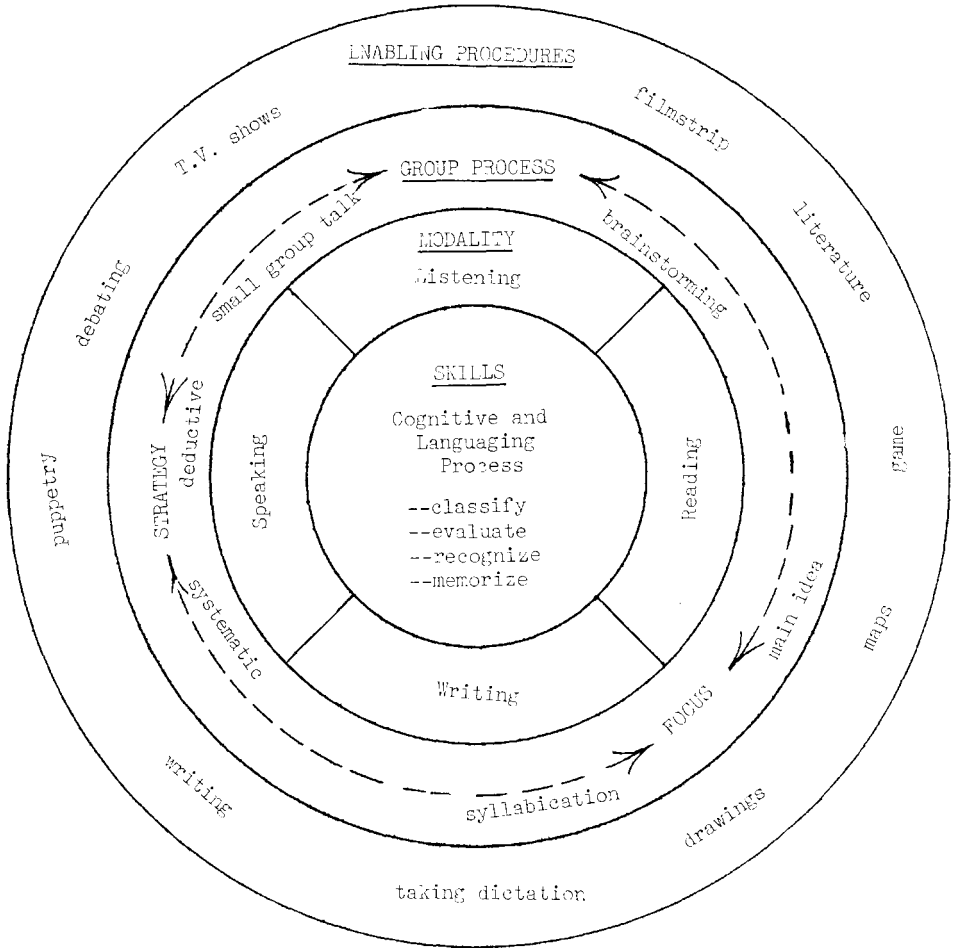


Figure 3 Feature analysis of some common teaching foci.

Teaching Focus	<u>Core Skill</u>				
	recognize	identify	classify	analyze	synthesize
blending		X			X
suggest title	X		X		X
write news story		X		X	
identify tense		X		X	

Gerhart (1975) has presented a wealth of information on how to use "categorization" to develop writing and reading skills and Henry (1979) has applied it to the teaching of literature.

In addition, the task must be developmentally suited to the age of the student as suggested by Petrosky (1980). McConaughy (1980) has extended the developmental notion to the field of literature.

A further consideration is the effect that the conceptualization in Figure 1 can have on integrating the language arts. Rather than teaching the same "skills" separately through the reading modality and through the listening modality (since the lists are very similar—see Lundsteen, 1979, for example), much time can be saved by teaching them simultaneously since the underlying skills are identical. An awareness of modality specific skills will assist the teacher in assuring that the implicit intuitive leap is made by the student when (s)he is expected to make it.

What is the research base for language skills?

Several years ago a colleague and I were working on a language arts textbook and we devised a "Language Skills List" (Braun and Froese, 1977, 273-276) based on the available information. Then, as now, empirical evidence was meager and the bulk of the consensus was based on a variety of curriculum guides.

Very little research has been directed at identifying the language arts skills to be taught at the various age or grade levels. A few exemplary studies, however, are available.

In the area of reading some empirical evidence has accumulated towards defining skills (Quelly, 1969; Rankin & Overholser, 1969; Davis, 1968; Jones, 1970) and in attempting to validate skills hierarchies (Bourque, 1980).

The work of Hanna, Hanna, Hodges and Rudolf (1966) has given us some insights into what should be taught in Spelling. O'Hare (1973) may be credited for giving a new direction to the improvement of writing through sentence-combining. The work of Keunnapas and Janson (1969) and Lewis and Lewis (1964) when combined can

lead to insights into what makes handwritten letters most distinguishable. Spearitt's (1962) work in determining the components of listening comprehension different from reading comprehension is an important advancement. The results of Tough's (1977) initial study and subsequent work could also give some new direction to oral language in the school by helping us to focus on the uses of language as well as on the syntactic or lexical aspects.

The above sources are only examples of the empirical work on what should constitute the components of a language arts curriculum, but an examination of current language arts textbooks will uncover little else of a substantial nature based on research findings. Often the lists presented are tautological or based on other equally unsound compilations.

Summary

I have tried to present a practical system of differentiating skills and teaching objectives such that the underlying common components of the language arts will become more readily identifiable. A quick glance at Figure 1 will review this notion.

Second, I have pointed out the usefulness of skills and objectives as they were defined earlier.

Third, the interrelationship of skills, modalities, teaching procedures, and enabling procedures was clarified in Figure 2.

Finally, a brief list of research-based studies of language arts components was presented to show the meager basis on which our language arts programs rest. Perhaps we need to take this paucity of information as a warning to us to initiate research intended to answer the outstanding questions or else as Emerson said: Beware when the great God lets loose a thinker on this planet.

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UPGRADING EVALUATION OF INSERVICE DELIVERY

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Evaluation is a bit like listening. As listening is commonly labeled the most neglected language art, evaluation is the most neglected component of inservice education. If it is included, the evaluation that's done tends to be one-dimensional. That is, it is usually summative (at the conclusion) and product-oriented (tangible results) instead of formative and process-oriented. Evaluation—if it is to be a worthwhile part of inservice or staff development—needs upgrading.

It is both desirable and feasible to design and implement procedures for multi-dimensional evaluation. First, we need to update our evaluation perspective. What are some current developments in educational evaluation that we can use to improve our inservice program evaluation in reading? Second, we need to think through some actual procedures for drafting evaluation measures. What will give us the most useful information? Third, we need to examine sample evaluation formats. What are their purposes in conjunction with inservice in reading?

Evaluation Update

Over the last ten years, there has been a resurgence of interest in qualitative methods of collecting information for decision-making. Interviewing, observing, note-taking, keeping anecdotal records and uncovering personal documents are among the techniques being employed. At the same time, there are growing reports of dissatisfaction with strictly quantitative evaluation methods (Cook and Reichardt, 1979). The results of these trends may be a positive effect on evaluation design. "Program evaluation can be strengthened when both approaches are integrated into an evaluation design (Cook and Reichardt, p. 45)."

Effective evaluation, according to Guba and Lincoln (1981), depends upon the usefulness of the results. They claim that this can be achieved through the combination of two elements: responsive evaluation and naturalistic methods. Simply put, evaluation must be based on the responses of those directly involved and it must use methods within the context of the natural, educational environment. Above all, evaluation must begin with real concerns.

Drafting Procedures

If, indeed, inservice delivery is to include evaluations that are useful, effective, and built on real concerns, careful

planning is essential. From the outset, from the conceptualization of goals for staff development, the evaluation process can be initiated. The sooner inservice leaders deal with evaluation procedures, the better, for timing is an important factor. Begin to incorporate evaluation into inservice programs before they are in final form. That's one logistic to take into account when drafting evaluation measures; here are some others:

- Pilot questions (in interview or questionnaire) before the inservice begins;
- Use the objectives of the program in composing items;
- Pay attention to the activities for implementation;
- Add, modify or delete sections after the inception of the program;
- Adapt ideas from other evaluation measures;
- Ask participants about the methods of evaluation as well as the inservice itself;
- Develop more than one type of measure.

Prototypes

Typically, inservice programs in reading limit evaluations to one major outcome, such as students' reading achievement scores. This is a product-orientation, one type of evaluation. Less frequently, are measures given to assess the participants' reactions to the ideas presented during the inservice. This is a process-orientation, a second type of evaluation. And almost no attention is paid to the way inservice leaders/speakers deliver those ideas. This is a personnel-orientation, a third type of evaluation.

Most reading professionals would agree that "multiple indicators of student performance can lead to effective decision making for instruction (Vacca, 1981, p. 279)." Why not expect multiple assessment of multiple outcomes in our inservice programs? Three types of evaluation formats follow. They were designed in conjunction with a two week summer institute on material development for vocabulary and concept training and growth.

Thirty elementary and middle grade teachers than piloted their own materials with small groups of children at the university campus school.

I. PRODUCT

Name _____ School _____

VOCABULARY AND CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Evaluation
of

Sample Materials Developed During Summer Institute

I. MATERIAL:

II. DATE IMPLEMENTED:

(I. PRODUCT evaluation continued)

III. CLASSROOM:

IV. STRENGTHS:

V. WEAKNESSES:

VI. MODIFICATIONS:

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

II. PROCESS

VOCABULARY AND CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

Participant Evaluation of Institute Objectives and Activities

- | | |
|---|--------|
| 1) Do you feel you were introduced to a step-by-step process for designing instructional materials? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 2) Do you feel that you were provided with the expertise and time to develop each technique/material for trial use? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 3) Do you feel that the techniques/materials you were provided with will be usable? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 4) Do you feel that these techniques/materials will help your students recognize relationships among concepts? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 5) Do you feel that these techniques/materials will help you establish an environment for vocabulary reinforcement in your classroom? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 6) Do you feel that these techniques/materials will help your students build vocabulary inquiry skills? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 7) Do you feel that these techniques/materials will create an interest and awareness in words? | yes no |
| Comments: | |
| 8) Are you committed to implementing some of these techniques/materials in your regular classroom? | yes no |
| Comments: | |

(II. PROCESS evaluation continued)

- 9) Do you feel the daily evaluations of materials helped you reflect on their usefulness? yes no
 Comments:

- 10) Do you feel the trial implementations at the University School helped you develop your expertise in implementing vocabulary and concept development exercises? yes no
 Comments:

III. PERSONNEL

Rating Scale for Staff Development Personnel

Directions: Appraise the staff developer's performance in the present assignment on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 6 (you strongly disagree). Use the Remarks section for comments.

- A 1. Involves the participants actively in the topic.

1——2——3——4——5——6

- A 2. Relates the topic directly (through examples) to the classroom.

1——2——3——4——5——6

- A 3. Provides materials or ideas for materials useful in a classroom.

1——2——3——4——5——6

Remarks _____

- B 1. Displays a positive attitude and pleasant disposition.

1——2——3——4——5——6

- B 2. Is sensitive to the environment or dynamics within the group.

1——2——3——4——5——6

- B 3. Answers questions directly and patiently.

1——2——3——4——5——6

Remarks _____

- C 1. Is well-informed and well-organized.

1——2——3——4——5——6

- C 2. Has a purpose in mind and adheres to the task at hand.

1——2——3——4——5——6

- C 3. Conveys explanations clearly.

1——2——3——4——5——6

(III. PERSONNEL evaluation continued)

Remarks _____

D 1. Assessed the needs of the group in advance

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

D 2. Is cognizant of local organizational procedures and alternatives.

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6

Remarks _____

The delivery of inservice necessitates a great deal of preparation and attention to detail on the part of its leaders. One of those details is evaluation. If we learn from, rather than repeat, past mistakes, we'll build a multi-dimensional evaluation component into every inservice program.

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REASONING GUIDES FOR CRITICAL COMPREHENSION

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Imagine for a moment that you are a student in a sixth grade classroom studying a Science unit on ecosystems. The teacher announces, "Today we are going to see a filmstrip called 'How Does Man Change Ecosystems?' I want you to pay close attention so we can discuss ideas about man's influence on ecosystems later in class." (Educational Coordinates, 1970)

The lights dim and your eyes focus on the screen at the front of the room. It's a familiarly soothing experience, much like watching television at home. You sit back and relax, letting your mind wander in and out of the filmstrip images and narrator's presentation, perhaps even dozing. Sound familiar?

This passive learning approach to media is in marked contrast to the more interactive style we expect students to adopt when they read textbooks in Science and other content areas (Herber, 1978; Readence, Bean, and Baldwin, 1981). In text assignments, students are asked to answer post-questions, interpret and evaluate concepts, and carry out experiments that extend understanding. Why is it that we treat audio-visual materials in less interactive fashion than texts? Perhaps a kind of cultural inertia surrounds our use of media in classrooms. Indeed, Toffler (1980) suggests that we are just beginning to grasp how to employ "third wave" media effectively in the learning process. If in the 1980's we are as Toffler implies becoming a more aural and visual culture, less bound by the conventions of print, then our classrooms ought to foster literacy in "new wave" forms. We will describe here a process for using classroom media as powerful interactive sources of information that enhance students' critical comprehension.

Three Level Reasoning Guides

An approach that we have found to be effective with filmstrips involves the development of Reasoning Guides designed to move students toward higher levels of understanding (Herber, 1978). Reasoning Guides consist of teacher-devised statements that students either agree with or dispute. Guides can be arranged so that students initially identify literal information in a filmstrip and subsequently interpret and apply this information to what they already know about a topic in Science. Thus Level I. guide statements focus on literal information mentioned in the filmstrip; Level II. statements entail interpreting information that was "hinted-at", and Level III. statements require consideration of

real world problems related to the filmstrip.

In order to fulfill one of the requirements of a graduate course in Reading, the second author developed and field-tested a Reasoning Guide for the thirteen minute filmstrip "How Does Man Change Ecosystems?" The following steps show its development:

1. The filmstrip was viewed several times in order to identify key concepts for the guide statements
2. Twelve literal statements were created for the Level I. guide by paraphrasing what the narrator said in sequential order

This process resulted in the following Level I. guide for the literal information presented in the filmstrip:

Check the statements which tell what the narrator said in the filmstrip.

- ___ 1. Life exists only under very special conditions.
- ___ 2. Too much or too little of anything causes death.
- ___ 3. If one life form completely takes over an ecosystem, the ecosystem becomes imbalanced.
- ___ 4. Man changes his environment to suit himself.
- ___ 5. Man uses what he wants and throws the rest away.
- ___ 6. Men are beginning to throw the earth's ecosystems off balance.
- ___ 7. All machinery that burns fuel to get energy causes smog.
- ___ 8. Sometimes raw sewage is dumped into rivers and lakes.
- ___ 9. Detergents don't break down, and because they don't they kill aquatic life.
- ___ 10. Tin cans and glass containers break down but plastic does not.
- ___ 11. DDT is an insecticide that does not break down.
- ___ 12. Fertilizers have been running off into rivers and lakes; this causes excess algae to grow.

In addition to the Level I. guide, higher level statements were composed, encompassing interpretive and applied information. Six interpretive statements that would be supported or, in some cases, challenged by the content of the filmstrip were composed based on the information in the Level I. guide. This process produced the following guide for interpretive comprehension:

Level II

Check the statements which you think tell what the meaning was of the filmstrip.

- ___ 1. Algae is harmless to any ecosystem.
- ___ 2. The quality of our environment depends upon each individual.
- ___ 3. Aluminum cans are only recycled because they bring in money.
- ___ 4. Detergents are polluting our environment.
- ___ 5. Animals and humans can be harmed by DDT.
- ___ 6. The invention of plastics has not harmed our environment.

Finally, three applied statements were devised that encompass real-world problems related to the filmstrip.

Level III.

Check those statements you agree with based on your knowledge from the filmstrips and your own experiences.

- _____ 1. It is too late to change the damage humans have done to their ecosystems.
- _____ 2. It is right for humans to change their environment so they can live comfortably.
- _____ 3. Oil wells off the Santa Barbara Channel in the Pacific Ocean are necessary to provide energy for Americans even if they do change the ecosystem there.

Using and Evaluating the Filmstrip Reasoning Guide

On the day students were to view the filmstrip, copies of the three level guide were distributed. Students were instructed to read only the Level I. statements before viewing the filmstrip. They were directed to watch for and check those statements containing concepts mentioned by the narrator. After viewing the filmstrip, Level II. and Level III. guide statements were read and checked individually. Then a class discussion was undertaken on all three levels of understanding.

Two qualitative procedures were used to evaluate the degree to which the Reasoning Guide contributed to students' critical comprehension of the filmstrip concepts. First, the teacher jotted down her impressions of the discussion. Second, a colleague observed the discussion and took verbatim field-notes. The field-notes were then coded to indicate the frequency with which students participated in the discussion and the level of comprehension expressed in their statements (Bean and Drew, Note 1).

A feature that emerged in the impression-record of the post-guide discussion was the students' reluctance to justify their answers to Level II. and III. statements by referring to the filmstrip. The teacher had to ask repeatedly "What in the filmstrip leads you to believe that this statement is true?" This is not surprising when we realize that students are unaccustomed to interacting with filmstrips.

Another striking and more positive feature in the anecdotal notes suggested that students were engaging in higher level discussion and integrating previous knowledge with new concepts. Indeed, this feature was confirmed in the fieldnote transcription and analysis. The following transcriptions from Level II. and III. discussions are representative. The teacher is coded as "T" throughout, students identified by initials of names.

Level II., Statement 3—Aluminum cans are only recycled because they bring in money.

Sh: I recycle aluminum cans. I do it not just for the money but because it's for a good cause. One time I took a whole bunch to a recycling center and only got a dollar.

T: Gee, that must have been disappointing.

Sh: Yeah, kind of. But I think that recycling cans is for a good cause. It saves energy. The more cans we recycle, the less energy we use.

T: Good answer. What else in the filmstrip mentioned why we need to recycle aluminum cans? What do tin cans do? Think back. I should see you looking back to Level I. How are aluminum cans different from tin cans?

K: They can't break down.

T: Yes. What word do we use to mean 'break down'?

S: Decompose?

T: Yes. What happens when you can't throw cans away?

S: You take them to the dump?

M: I think that it's called a sanitary landfill.

T: Good. You're remembering back to what we learned a while back. (T. goes into a brief explanation of sanitary landfills)

S: Why it is called sanitary if it's so dirty?

T: Because the waste that is dumped is specially treated to hurry the decomposing process. What else doesn't decompose?

S: Plastics, DDT...

T: Yes, those can't decompose, and, as the filmstrip mentioned, detergents.

As students become more proficient at viewing filmstrips in an interactive fashion, much of what Lindors (1980) calls teacher "fishing" for technical vocabulary (e.g., "decompose") should diminish. Moreover, having a colleague take verbatim field-notes once or twice a year helps a teacher monitor her approach.

Level III. statements and questions offer a chance for vibrant discussion with little risk of being wrong. Divergent solutions to real problems rarely center on any magic cure. In the discussion transcript that follows note how many different students participate and the level of their contributions in comparison to the previous transcript:

Level III. Statement 3. Oil wells off the Santa Barbara Channel in the Pacific Ocean are necessary to provide energy even if they do change the ecosystems there.

T: (Gives some brief background information concerning rich shale, oil deposits; the argument - 'we must drill because we need it' and 'we shouldn't drill because it will change the ecosystem') How many think it is necessary to pump this oil even if it does change the ecosystem? What happens if an oil rig breaks?

S: There would be an oil spill.

T: Yes, and what happens then?

C: The fish die.

S: Whales can't breathe.

T: That's true. How many agree that we should pump this oil?

A: I do. We need it.

I: I don't think we need it, we just want it.

T: All right. Let's wait to hear from those who disagree a little later. Someone else who agrees?

K: I agree. Foreign countries are charging more for oil and we better start now getting our own oil.

The discussion continued, inevitably reaching a point where students wanted a "decision" from the teacher. An informal comparison of Level II. and III. discussion reveals increasing critical thought by Level III. Of the 23 teacher and student interchanges, seven were questions and only five of these were teacher originated. More importantly, the majority of students' questions represented higher order thinking beyond the literal level.

There were 16 statements in the Level III discussion, 10 contributed by students. Eight of these were literal level items and the remaining eight included higher level concerns. In this first exposure to filmstrip Reasoning Guides, the pattern of interaction went from teacher to student, then back to teacher. With repeated exposure to guide material and the introduction of small groups for discussion, the pattern might become interactive with students conversing among themselves.

In summary, using a Reasoning Guide with films and filmstrips in any content area will transform a passive learning situation to a highly interactive one. When students know in advance what issues are involved, watching becomes as active as reading. The added ingredient is the student knowledge that there will be opportunities to face the issues and exchange views on what was presented.

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CONTENT AREA READING PREPARATION: EFFECTIVENESS OF FOUR METHODS OF INSTRUCTION

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The belief that secondary content teachers should have content reading as a course in their pre-service education is an idea that is gaining increasing acceptance. Surveys examining certification requirements show that an increasing number of states mandate a course in reading for secondary certification (Bader, 1975; Lamberg, 1978). This trend is also reflected in increased numbers of teacher training institutions that are now offering a content area reading course for their undergraduate secondary education majors, as compared to ten years ago.

This increased emphasis on content area reading as a course for undergraduate secondary education majors has occurred during a period of time that has also witnessed increased criticism of traditional teacher education programs (Goodlad and Klein, 1970; Silberman, 1970). Various alternatives have been put forward as ways to improve the quality of teacher education programs generally and of education courses in particular.

One of the options put forward has been the recommendation to increase the field experiences of prospective teachers through increased teaching contact in conjunction with courses in method (Joyce, Yarger, and Howey, 1977; Ross, Raines, Cervetti, and Dellow 1980). The integration of teaching contract with reading methods courses has also been recommended for pre-service teachers (Manning and Moe, 1974; Morrison and Austin, 1977; Wylie, 1971).

Another alternative that has been put forward as a viable way to improve the quality of teacher training has been Competency Based Teacher Education (CBTE) (Houston and Howsam, 1972). CBTE has been discussed, and in some instances recommended, as a means of offering realistic alternatives to traditional reading methods courses (Blair, 1979; Burnett and Schnell, 1975; James, 1975).

Content area reading courses for undergraduate secondary education majors can be designed in different ways, but various programmatic questions exist concerning the design of these courses. Should content reading be offered as a traditional methods course? Should a field based course be offered instead of the traditional course? Would a CBTE modular based course be better? Who should teach the course? When should the course be offered to secondary

majors? Should a common pool of materials be used or should professors be free to develop their own materials? These are but a few of the considerations that exist when one faces designing the program of a content reading course for pre-service teachers.

Questions such as the above have led to this study, which examined the effectiveness of four different methods of content area reading preparation for undergraduate secondary education majors. Conflicting viewpoints regarding factors such as mode of instruction, location, and time prompted this study at a large midwestern university. The effectiveness of the four methods was determined through an evaluation of appropriate and correct use of content area reading strategies made during participants' term of student teaching.

The first method of preparing pre-service secondary teachers in content area reading was designated as the On-Campus Method (I). Instruction in this method was given to a group of secondary teacher candidates before their student teaching assignments. Instruction in this method was given by a faculty member whose specialization included both secondary and content area reading. This method of instruction most closely approximated the traditional methods course.

The second method was designated as Field Method A (II). Here, instruction was given to a group of secondary ed majors during their term of student teaching. Instruction was given by student teaching professors, who were given instruction in content area reading and furnished with materials for use in instruction by the professor who instructed the Method I group.

The third method of instruction was designated Field Method B (III). This method was similar to Field Method A, but attempted to control for instructor expertise. The instruction in this method was given by a field consultant with a secondary reading background. This consultant had also previously been given extensive preparation in content area reading by the Method I instructor. Materials for use in content area instruction in this third method of instruction were the same materials used in the other methods.

The fourth method of instruction was part of a Competency Based Teacher Education program (CBTE) (IV). Instruction in content area reading was provided in CBTE materials prepared by the On-Campus Method instructor, with the aid of two graduate students. Support for these materials was given by CBTE teacher education faculty and field associates. This program extended over two terms with instruction occurring before and during student teaching.

Method. The population included secondary education majors who were to be engaged in spring term student teaching, except those assigned to physical education, music, and art. Students were placed when possible in one of eight geographic areas of their choice, thus determining the method of instruction in which they participated. An examination of student grade-point averages showed the groups to be equal. Table 1 summarizes the number of students assigned to the various centers (methods) of instruction.

Table 1
Number of Student Teachers Assigned to Centers

Stu. Tchg Ctr	Instruc- tional Method	Areas Exclud. fr Study	Number Eligible Students	Number in Study	Propor- tion
A	I	1,2	9	5	.56
B	II	1,2,3	14	7	.50
C	I	2	16	14	.88
D	II	1,2,3	13	12	.92
E	II	1,2,3	14	6	.43
F	II	1,2,3	5	4	.80
G	III	1,2,3	11	10	.91
H	IV	1,2,3	21	15	.71
Total			103	73	.71

Areas Exclud. = 1 Phys Educ, 2 Music, and 3 Art

Objectives were selected prior to the experiment for evaluation during the students' term of student teaching. These included the following categories: (1) estimation of readability level, (2) construction and interpretation of an open book reading test, (3) construction and use of a multi-structure reading guide, (4) construction and use of a margin guide, (5) demonstration of guided reading and vocabulary instruction, and (6) providing instruction for non-readers (those below the fourth-grade reading level). Instructors in all four methods of instruction approved the evaluation instrument and were provided with copies of it prior to their instruction of the students.

During the seventh through ninth weeks of the term of student teaching, two advanced graduate students in reading, who had served intensive supervised internships in evaluating the teaching of content area reading, visited the eight student teaching centers which participated in the study. They met with each student teacher to determine which of the six major competency areas had been mastered. Mastery was determined through classroom observation of guided reading lessons and instruction of non-readers and examination, as appropriate, of the plans and products developed by the student teachers. Each meeting took about fifteen to thirty minutes. More than one visit was made, as necessary.

For the purpose of this study, 80% or more of the specific objectives listed under each of the six categories needed to be mastered for a student to receive credit for the ability. The dependent measure used to evaluate the comparative merits of the four methods of instruction was the percent of the six competencies mastered by each student.

Findings. An independent evaluator used an ANOVA to compare

the percent of skills mastered for each method of instruction. The mean square error terms was 512.52 with 69j.F. The estimate of variance was 13, 367.07, J.F. = 3. The ratio of these variance estimates yielded an F-value of 26.08 which was found to be significant at $p .001$. It was concluded that the various methods of instruction were not equally effective in producing competence in teaching content area reading on the secondary level, when such abilities are assessed in the student teaching environment.

The Post-Hoc Schiffe procedure at the .01 level indicated that Method I was significantly superior to the remaining methods, that Methods II and III were significantly superior to Method IV, and that Methods II and III did not differ in results. Table 2 summarizes the findings of the study.

Table 2
Means and S.D. of Percent of Mastered
Teaching Abilities for Each Method

Method	N	Mean	S. D.
I. On Campus Method	26	64.77	32.34
II. Field Method A	22	28.23	18.75
III. Field Method B	10	31.60	12.14
IV. C B T E Method	15	2.27	5.98

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that content area reading was most effectively presented to undergraduate secondary education majors by the On-Campus Method. The quantitative superiority for the On-Campus Method was also supported by an examination of the demonstrated levels of mastery exhibited by the student teachers in each of the four methods of instruction. Six categories of content area reading had been evaluated for this study. More of the student teachers in the On-Campus Method exhibited mastery of at least five of the six categories evaluated than in any of the other methods. Of the twenty-six teachers who participated in the On-Campus Method, ten were credited with mastery of five of the six content reading categories. None of the student teachers in any of the other three methods exhibited mastery in five of the six categories in their student teaching. Table 3 presents the number of student teachers in each method of instruction and their records of mastery in each category.

Table 3
Students Showing 80% Mastery in Each Category

Method Used	Number Students	Obj. (1)	Obj. (2)	Obj. (3)	Obj. (4)	Obj. (5)	Obj. (6)
	26	18	20	17	16	18	12
II	22	18	3	4	4	4	3
III	10	10	1	0	0	6	2
IV	14	0	0	0	2	0	0

While for the purposes of this study, demonstrated mastery for the categories assessed was defined as successful completion of 80% of the objectives listed under each category, the reports of the two on-sight evaluators concurred with the quantitative findings of this study. Based on their on-sight evaluations and on their discussions with the student teachers, both evaluators reported that the majority of those student teachers prepared by the On-Campus Method exhibited an understanding of content reading. Even where the undergraduates had failed to receive credit for demonstrating mastery of a category, these student teachers, for the most part, seemed receptive toward content reading strategies and felt that the instruction they received was valuable.

The evaluators' reports on those student teachers that participated in Field Method A and Field Method B, while generally positive, also relayed some concerns. Many of the student teachers appeared to understand the worth of content reading strategies, however, they were uncertain in how to implement the strategies. An opinion frequently expressed by the student teachers in the two field methods was that they were too pressed with the demands of classroom management and the assorted problems associated with student teaching to acquire a full understanding of the strategies and implement those strategies in their instruction. Many of these student teachers expressed the thought that their content reading instruction would have been more valuable if it had not been concurrent with student teaching.

The student teachers in the CBTE program had the least favorable attitude toward content area reading, the evaluators reported. Not only had the CBTE student teachers failed to demonstrate mastery in implementing the six categories of content reading into their instruction, the conceptual understanding of content reading that they exhibited was less than that of the other student teachers. The CBTE teachers showed more confusion over implementing the strategies than the other teachers. Perhaps most importantly, the CBTE student teachers' showed a less favorable attitude than the others. One may hypothesize that these student teachers, while exposed to the specifics of content reading strategies, had not been adequately exposed to the rationale and philosophy of content area reading. Consequently, the importance they placed on integrating content reading strategies into their instruction was minimal.

The results, limited to the conditions of the study, indicate that content area reading needs to be taught by faculty who are specialists in the field, that instruction should not be initiated at a time when students are pressed with the demands of classroom management, mastery of highly specific subject matter, and other elements present in the student teaching experience. Faculty teaching content reading courses need to have preparation in both academic and classroom teaching experience in which they have been employed—content area reading as part of instruction. In other words, this is an academic specialization that should not be "trivialized" into isolated skills or competencies that "anyone can teach." Students of education need to understand the theoretical base of the procedures they are using; they need to understand how the language processes apply to the subject area of their

specializations, and they need to create their own applications for the students they teach. On the affective level, faculty who are experienced and confident project an aura of the importance, desirability, usefulness, and practicability of content area reading.

The four methods of instruction examined in this study do not exhaust the possible variation for content reading instruction. Another variation is suggested on the basis of the authors' experience. The authors have provided content area reading instruction before, during, and after student teaching. Student enthusiasm for the course was highest after student teaching. Although this time placement was not included in this study for obvious reasons, it is suggested as another option. Possibly, increased field experiences prior to content area reading instruction would help to sensitize undergraduates to the importance of content reading. Another variation of this option is that student teaching need not be considered as the final experience in the preparation of a teacher. Faculty in other institutions may wish to conduct further action research to determine which method of instruction appears to be the most desirable in their particular setting. This study helped to resolve some important questions for those holding various viewpoints.

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PIAGET'S THEORY OF CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT AS IT APPLIES TO THE TEACHING OF READING

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This essay will investigate Piaget's theory of conceptual development as it applies to the teaching of reading. Piaget's views are important as a corrective to much of the behavioral approach to reading—using contingencies of reinforcement to aid students in learning (memorizing?) basic units of language and in remembering linguistic rules. It is obvious that one can "remember" such rules but not be able to apply them to a particular situation. We will discover that this is Piaget's main point in his criticism of behaviorism.

One of the important insights into children's intellectual development that Piaget offers us is that each child develops "uniquely"; thus, the teacher (or any adult) should not impose his/her standards of logic on the student. In understanding the child's growth the teacher must rid him/herself of egocentrism. In whatever way possible, the teacher needs to take the student's point of view, to be empathetic to the student's developmental process. Learning, according to Piaget, is more something the student does (through active participation in the learning process) than something the student has done for him/her by an educator.(1) Let us, then, examine how Piaget's view of intellectual (concept) development relates to the teaching of reading.

Piaget, among others, has disputed the notion that a person's IQ is fixed. For Piaget, there is an interaction between heredity and environment in intellectual development. Thus, intelligence constantly changes through the individual's stages of cognitive development.(2) Thus, in understanding Piaget's thoughts regarding the teaching of reading the educator would have to know the developmental stage of the student and consider the intellectual process evident at that stage. For instance, if a student has not developed processes of logical reasoning, then he/she can't handle abstract concepts; so the teacher would have to develop teaching strategies to reflect this level of intellectual growth on the student's part. As I have written elsewhere(3), if the student cannot cope with certain logical (abstract) problems, the educator needs to "set up" an environment whereby logico-mathematical operations can be learned. This is as important in science as it is in reading.

Piaget would have quibbles with the current behaviorist approach to the teaching of reading, for he feels that knowledge

comes from within the student and not from without, as the behaviorist with the insistence on positive reinforcement contends. Like John Dewey, Piaget equates learning with experiencing.(4) It is the student's interaction with a particular environment that increases knowledge—and also increases cognitive functioning. The way many reading skills are taught (with the teacher doing X to insure skill Y) are contrary to the sensory-motor, the pre-operational, and the concrete operational stages of cognitive development. To quote Phil Jackson, "Teachers have a tendency to 'teach' and have children listen.(5) This may apply to teaching reading as to teaching anything.

For Piaget, intelligence develops through a sequence of stages. These stages are somewhat age-related, but they are as well dependent on human experience and social (educational) interaction. It is through the student's own actions that he/she learns about the world. This knowing is developed through two processes; what Piaget refers to as assimilation, and accommodation.(6) Sensory knowing is termed assimilation, while the restructuring of new cognitive structures (partly through assimilation and the interaction it demands to develop) is called accommodation.

Thus the intellect has structures in a similar fashion to bodily structures (digesting food, for instance). These structures Piaget refers to as "schemata"; and these develop as the individual assimilates knowledge. The restructuring (accommodation) is the *modus operandi* for understanding one's world; for coping with the multifaceted aspects of experience. It is during the pre-operational stage (roughly occurring during the first three years of schooling) that the stage is set for further development; where accommodation is most clearly visible. It is important, then, to examine this preoperational phase, for it will give us some guidelines for teaching reading.

II

At the preoperational stage the child "lets go" of some of the exclusive functioning which is evident at the sensory-motor phase. The student now begins to function in a conceptual-symbolic mode. Yet there are several reasons why the student at the pre-operational stage has difficulty learning the alphabet and its phonemic representations. The individual at the preoperational stage is bounded by egocentrism, so that transformations (accommodation) become less frequent than at subsequent stages of cognitive growth.(7)

What, though, does egocentrism imply? At the preoperational stage the student believes all people think as he/she does. The student is unable to consider the viewpoint of another. This ability is derived through increased social interaction, for it is through such interaction that the child realizes others' perceptions differ from his. Thus, if a student is dominated by egocentric perceptions, the child will not be interested in learning to read others' thoughts and ideas. Egocentrism and empathy are antithetical concepts.

As was just mentioned, the student at the preoperational

stage does not attend to transformations (accommodation) very well. For instance, if a ball fell from a shelf to the floor, the individual would certainly know (realize) what has happened; the child would know that the cause of the ball being on the floor is that it fell from the shelf. But the student would be unable to think of the steps between the cause-effect relationship; the child may not be able to visualize the ball falling to the floor.

If this degree of transformation is impossible for the child, we as teachers need to understand what this may mean for the teaching of reading. The process of logical thought (realizing as many steps as possible in the ball's falling to the floor) has direct applications for reading instruction. If the child cannot yet perceive intermediate steps involved in causal relationships (a student at the preoperational stage, that is), then how can teachers of reading expect the student to develop certain reading skills through letter-sound associations? Going from a letter-sound association to stringing words together in some fashion, to putting words into some meaningful sentence is not a miraculous process; but its accomplishment does depend on the ability of the student to perform logical thought processes at varying levels.

III

It is quite easy for most children to memorize the sound-symbol correspondence of any set of letters. Even very young children, according to Piaget, have the ability (that is, the cognitive functioning) to learn to attach phonemic equivalents to a graphemic symbol. This means that since children can associate (memorize) they know that the letters d, o, and g are equivalent to "dog".(8) Yet the word "dog" does not obviously sound like the separate sounds for d/o/g. In more technical language, the word "dog" has a different "graphemic-phonemic" relationship than letters d,o,&g.

If children are merely taught to associate sounds (memorize sound-symbol relationships) he/she will have difficulty (to say the least) in comprehension. The student at the preoperational stage who cannot "transform words" when they change their appearance would have difficulty "sounding out" the phonetic equivalent of "e" on the words: met meet & meat. One cannot merely memorize rules and then decide which words they do or do not apply to. In order to learn to read children must have a large conceptual base acquired from experience for words to have meaning.(9) And "experiencing", as was said, is done in the classroom through interaction with others and with the environment. In a word, reading teachers must construct experiences (and use natural ones) for the student to acquire this broad conceptual base. A couple of practical suggestions regarding this will be given later. No amount of knowing about reading will suffice for the student to know how to read.

IV

Another aspect of preoperational thinking Piaget refers to as "centering".(10) This means that in the act of perception the child focuses his/her attention (centers in) on only one aspect of a whole at once. The preoperational child does not perceive

in gestalts, but in parts. For instance, when shown a row of sticks a child can only focus on their length but not on their spatial relationships at the same time.

What does this perceptual ability (or lack of it) have to do with reading? It follows logically that a student who is at the preoperational stage (with its attendant centering strategy) cannot be expected to both learn rules and to apply them, for the child can only center in on one task at a time. Thus the primary school child cannot pursue a reading program by which he/she is expected both to know grapheme-phoneme relationships and to put words together to form a sentence. Children can learn verbal relationships among letters in the alphabet, for instance, but not be able to put letters into words or to put words into sentences.

Likewise, Piaget's concept of "reversibility" has vast implications for teaching reading.(11) "Reversibility" is an aspect of the child's cognitive process which allows him/her to follow an operation from its conclusion back to its beginning (and vice versa). The student at the preoperational stage (who cannot perform this task) cannot perform such activities as converting graphemes to phonemes. The child cannot logically reason from a grapheme to a phoneme. This would demand reversibility in thinking, a process the child has not yet developed.

To put this differently, it takes the development to the concrete stage of cognitive growth for the student to handle both parts and wholes of words. To remember rules of relationships through which one has the ability to transform letters and to synthesize meaning from letter-combinations the student must be a concrete thinker. Thus, the ability to reverse thought and to decenter (rather than merely center) are prerequisites for learning to read.

V

What practical application does all this "psychological talk" have for reading instruction? There are several applications which can be mentioned here, but not elaborated upon:

A. Before reading instruction can be initiated, the teacher needs to assess the student's abilities and cognitive learning sequences. Piaget never tires of pointing out that each student has a "unique" manner of relating to the social and physical environments. A student can only be taught to read after his/her cognitive developmental level has been evaluated.

B. The reading teacher needs to assess both the general and the specific cognitive abilities of the student. The student's general level of cognitive growth needs to be evaluated as well as the particular mode of intellectual functioning within that general level. It is very important in reading instruction, for instance, to ascertain the mode of the student's representations of reality. It is important to know if the student can understand pictorial representations; or if the student can relate gestures to concrete objects (that pointing to X is suggesting that the student pay attention to it).

C. The preoperational student (in primary grades) should

be helped to build a perceptual base from the environment before reading can be initiated. This interaction should include the manipulation of concrete materials to the use of pictorial and symbolic modes of representing reality. Reading should move from the development of perceptual-motor functioning to abstract representations (of which words are one type).

D. Piaget's theory of reading instruction is often termed the "language-experience approach." This approach is based on the belief that learning to read must be based on the experience(s) of the learner to be effective. Reading, on this view, becomes an extension of the student's own language and experience—something he/she already possesses and does not have to be taught to experience, although they can be taught about. This "language-experience approach" to reading instruction is rooted in the child himself/herself. The child must be able to respect his/her own thoughts before the student can go on to read (to respect the thoughts of others). Likewise, the student needs to be aware of (and respect) his/her own way of talking about reality (relating it in a linguistic and metalinguistic manner) before the child can learn to read.

E. If the above arguments are correct, a few implications for the organization of the reading environment (classroom) can be drawn out. The list is not meant to be exhaustive:

- 1- The child would need time for self-expression, of which the use of language is an essential aspect. Experiences with art, drama, discussion, manipulation of objects, and so on, can be a start.
- 2- There needs to be time for the systematic study of language. Word study games, independent writing and the discussion of diction are but three vehicles for such study.
- 3- There needs to be time for students to be initiated into the language and thought of others. Perhaps before (or concurrent with) reading instruction, puppetry, musical compositions, art work, tapes and films can be used for this initiation.

Whatever else reading is, it is an active process. But the activity required in reading demands certain cognitive kinds of development. The student at the preoperational level is not capable of formal reading, for he/she is not yet capable of understanding the traditional alphabet. In order for the teacher to initiate the student into the beautiful process of reading the educator must determine the student's level of symbolic representation. Without this, the process of learning to read will be a horrid (and painful) one for the student. Wouldn't it be terrible if students echoed Einstein's words:

"After graduation I refused to pick up a book, to read an article, to even browse through a newspaper. The way I was taught to read kept coming back to me like a nightmare."(12)

Thank God he transcended his "reading-experience." Is it possible that some students never do?

NOTES

1. This active approach to education and human development is elaborated on by Piaget in Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child. NY: Viking Press, 1969, Chapter One.
2. Jean Piaget, The Origins of Intelligence in Children. New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1952, pp. 3-41.
3. I have discussed this in Robert P. Craig, "The Child's Construction of Space and Time." Science and Children, Vol. 19, No. 3 (November-December, 1981), pp. 36-37.
4. Dewey elucidates the relationship between learning and experience in Experience and Education. New York: MacMillan Company, 1979, pp. 25-32.
5. Philip Jackson, Life in Classrooms. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968, p. 17.
6. Piaget's clearest discussion of stage development as it relates to the processes of assimilation and accommodation is found in Genetic Epistemology. New York: Columbia University Press, 1970, Especially Chapter One.
7. This concept of "egocentrism" is elaborated on in many of the works of Piaget, for instance, see The Moral Chapter of the Child. New York, The Free Press, 1965, Chapter Four.
8. Piaget's thoughts in The Language and Thought of the Child suggest this. He never wrote a book devoted to the teaching of reading. This work is available through World Publications in New York, first published in 1973.
9. This "conceptual base" is discussed by Piaget in Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child, Chapter Three.
10. This concept is developed at length in Jean Piaget, The Construction of Reality in the Child. New York, Basic Books, 1954. Notice that even the title of the book implies that reality is "constructed" by the child; it is not determined by adult language and conceptualization, although the teacher can help "explain" different views of reality.
11. I have discussed this notion in a more philosophical context in Robert P. Craig, "On Jean Piaget." Educational Studies, Vol. 8, No. 3 (Fall 1977), pp. 43-45.
12. This quote is found in Paul Goodman's Growing Up Absurd. New York, Vintage Books, 1960, the Appendix.

THE MNEMONIC VALUE OF THE PICTO-ORGANIZER FOR WORD IDENTIFICATION AMONG DISABLED READERS

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Research on the role of memory in reading, particularly as it relates to the disabled reader, has increased substantially in the last five years. In fact, evidence has accumulated which indicates that reading disabled youngsters, as a group, perform more poorly than normal children on tasks involving memory skills (Berger & Perfetti, 1977; Pelham & Ross, 1977; Wong, Wong, & Foth, 1977). Some researchers have even suggested that reading disabilities may result from deficiencies in memory skills rather than in perception (Morrison, Giordani, & Nagy, 1977). Torgesen (1977, 1978-79), too, found general support in the literature for his observations that disabled readers rarely use verbal labeling, cumulative rehearsal strategies, or structuring as memory aids. Nevertheless, the results of some of the research Torgesen reported did suggest that certain memory deficits in disabled readers may be overcome by instruction in the use of mnemonic strategies. (Meaning "aiding the memory," mnemonic can refer to unusual, artificial techniques, and as in the case of this report, to visual imagery.)

The present study was designed to compare the effects of a mnemonic strategy which utilized context to facilitate word recognition and identification with a context-free strategy. Specifically, disabled readers were taught to recognize and identify meanings for abstract words either through the mediation of a picto-organizer or through flashcard presentation. The idea of a picto-organizer evolved from an earlier study (Alvermann, 1980) in which students recalled a story using key vocabulary terms schematically arranged to show hierarchical and parallel relationships among words (see Barron, 1969). The picto-organizer provides pictorial clues to word meanings as they are used in the context of a story. This direct meaning-bearing property of the picto-organizer makes it particularly appealing, since much of the criticism leveled against mnemonic strategies in the past has been that they help only with meaningless, rote learning (Bellezza, 1981; Higbee, 1979).

METHOD

Subjects and Design

The 34 disabled readers (23 boys and 11 girls) who participated in the study were enrolled in a university tutoring program. Their ages ranged from 8 years, 4 months, to 13 years and 10 months ($M = 10$ years, 3 mos.). The mean grade-equivalent score for instructional reading level as measured by the Classroom Reading

Inventory (Silvaroli, 1976) was 2.54 (SD=1.50). The mean IQ as determined by the Slosson Intelligence Test for Children and Adults (Slosson, 1963) was 104.06 (SD=11.28).

Participants were matched on instructional reading level and age to form 17 matched pairs. Members of each pair were randomly assigned, one to the **picto-organizer** condition and one to the context-free flashcard condition.

Materials

The pretest consisted of 15 abstract words obtained in the following manner. The isolated word lists of each participant's informal reading inventory were scanned for commonly mispronounced or omitted words. This produced a total of 24 words to which the experimenter added another 30 words from The Harris-Jacobson Short Readability Word List (Harris & Sipay, 1980). Abstractness was determined by the parameters set by Gorman (1961) and Paivio (1965) Using criteria such as lack of an object or material referent that can be directly experienced, two adults independently rated the 54 potential pretest words as abstract or concrete. Of the 29 rated as abstract by both judges, 15 were selected. The posttest contained the same 15 words randomly reordered.

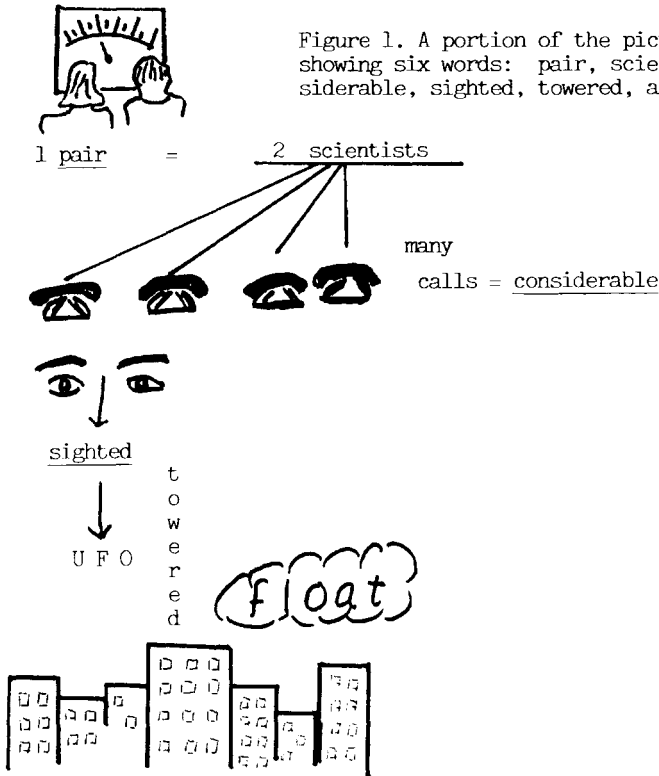
An experimenter-composed story which included the 15 target words follows:

One dark night as the lights were just beginning to go on in one of America's largest cities, a pair of scientists on duty at a nearby space center began to get a considerable number of calls. People said they had sighted a UFO which towered over the highest skyscraper. It seemed just to float in space. Drivers stopped their cars to see what was happening. Soon a terrific traffic jam occurred as cars began backing up. Meanwhile, in the shadows of a darkened doorway, a man was tearing of the clothes he was wearing. When he appeared shortly afterwards in the sky, everyone gasped, "Superman!" His name suited him well, for within seconds he was back on the ground. He was carrying the UFO in his mighty arms. "Is it heavy?" they asked. "No," he replied, as he strutted away with the helium balloon.

A portion of the picto-organizer showing how 6 of the 15 words were presented to students in the context condition is presented on the following page. For the context-free condition, each word was printed alone in large type on a card.

Procedure

The experimenter worked individually with each child for 15 minutes a day on four consecutive days during regularly scheduled tutoring sessions. The fifth day was reserved for administering the posttest. On day 1, all participants were given the pretest



which consisted of two parts: word recognition and word identification. Students were instructed to pronounce the first word in the column of 15 target words and then to use it in a sentence. If a word was mispronounced, refused, or used incorrectly in a sentence, a zero was recorded and the child was encouraged to try the next word in the list. Pronouncing a word correctly and using it in an appropriate sentence earned one point each. On day 2, subjects assigned to the picto-organizer condition listened as the experimenter read the story. A discussion followed in which the child used the clues from the picto-organizer to retell the story twice. If a word was mispronounced or omitted, the experimenter supplied the correct one. Subjects assigned to the flashcard condition were shown a word and were asked to pronounce it. The experimenter supplied the correct pronunciation whenever necessary and gave a brief dictionary definition of each word. Following that, each of the 15 words were flashed twice. On day 3, students in the context-free condition were given practice in recognizing the 15 words by playing a game of Concentration with the experimenter. In this game two sets of the 15 word cards were turned face down. A player turned over two cards at a time to see if a match occurred. In order to keep a matched pair, a player

had to correctly pronounce and define the word. If a match did not occur, both cards were turned face down as before and the next player took a turn. Day 4 was a repeat of day 3. On day 5, the posttest was administered and scored in the same way as the pretest.

Results and Discussion

To verify that students in both conditions were comparable on IQ and familiarity with the 15 target words, their performance on both the Slosson Intelligence Test and the pretest were subjected to *t* tests of dependent means (two-tailed). As indicated in Table 1, the two groups did not differ significantly on either measure.

Table I
Mean Scores on the SIT, Pretest, and Posttest for
the Picto-Organizer and Flashcard Conditions

	<u>Picto-Organizer</u>		<u>Flashcard</u>	
	M	SD	M	SD
Slosson Intelligence Test(SIT)	106.00	10.49	103.18	11.95
Pretest				
Word Recognition(Pronunciation)	1.06	1.14	1.24	1.35
Word Identification(Meaning)	.89	1.17	.77	.91
Posttest (Gain Scores)				
Word Recognition(Pronunciation)	6.29	3.02	5.41	2.50
Word Identification(Meaning)	5.35*	2.18	3.47*	1.74

* Difference between means was significant at $p < .05$; all other means were not significantly different.

The question this study was designed to answer was whether or not a mnemonic strategy that required disabled readers to use context in recognizing and identifying abstract words would be more effective than a context-free strategy. Table I shows the results of matched-pair *t* tests of posttest gain scores. Mean values for the two conditions (picto-organizer and flashcard) indicated that students who were required to use context did not recognize significantly more words than their context-free counterparts, $t(16) = .98 > .05$. However, subjects in the two groups did differ significantly, $t(16) = 2.76$, $p < .05$, in their ability to attach meaning to the words that they were able to pronounce. This finding has educational as well as statistical significance in that word-calling without word meaning does not contribute to concept development, a prerequisite for any successful reading experience.

The fact that 71% of the total sample failed to show recognition gain scores higher than 7 by the end of the training period could be attributed to several factors. Aside from methodological ones, it could be that poor readers simply find abstract words particularly difficult to recognize. There is some support for this interpretation in Jorm's (1977) work.

Intuitively, one would expect that word meanings would be acquired more readily from contextually rich information than from explicitly stated definitions. Such was the case in the present study. Although subjects in the flashcard condition either gave or were given brief definitions for each of the 15 words during each training session, they were generally unsuccessful in using the words in sentences on the identification part of the posttest. Clearly, this has implications for teachers, reading tutors, and others who use a flashcard approach to teach accuracy and speed in decoding. Goodman (1973), who is highly critical of teaching words in isolation, likens such an approach to teaching children to "bark at print." It may be more efficient to help children develop a mnemonic strategy that will aid their memories as they learn to recognize words and identify meanings for those words.

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ENCOURAGING RECREATIONAL READING THROUGH BOOK TALKS

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Many children who have adequate reading skills rarely do any reading that is not specifically required in school. Reading-for-fun, and sometimes even required reading are frequently given a low priority when time for reading competes with sports, television, free play, music and dance lessons, etc. However, recreational reading is of critical importance for reinforcement of what is learning during reading instruction. The book talk is an excellent approach for motivating students to read outside of the classroom and during opportunities for free reading provided at school. Further, development of important oral communication skills can be fostered as well. Procedures for presenting a book talk can be described as follows:

The Book Talk

1. The presenter introduces the book in an enthusiastic way
 - a. show the cover, give the title and author's name
 - b. write the title and author's name on chalkboard
 - c. bring props, if necessary, to add interest
 - d. provide information about the author
2. Presenter leads up to a selection to be read from book
 - a. describe main characters
 - b. set the scene (time and place)
3. Presenter reads a short but appealing selection
 - a. does not give away too much of plot or ending
 - b. changes pronouns to proper nouns where needed
 - c. ad libs bits of explanation for listeners where needed for clarification

Rehearsing a booktalk is very important for fluency. Practice helps the presenter concentrate on content and not on the process of reading. Consequently, accurate phrasing and appropriate expression would be easier to maintain.

In order to be convincing, the book talker must genuinely like the book and is not presenting it because it is a "classic" or on a timely topic. Eye contact holds the listener and makes him or her feel important and drawn into the presentation. Huck (1976) suggested that "the effectiveness of a book talk is judged by the number of children who want to borrow the book."

Students can be taught to give effective book talks to their classmates. The instruction requires that we teach oral expression as well as helping develop reading ability. Writing can be brought into the activity when students are asked to present a written summary of the book talk. A model outline might include—

Book Talk Outline

1. Book title
2. Author - Publisher - Date
3. Facts about the author
4. Setting of the story
5. Main characters
6. Specific pages of the book read during the book talk

Frequently, a book jacket will provide sufficient information about an author. Extensive information about authors of books for children is provided by Commire (1971-81, 1978) and DeMontreville and Crawford (1978).

Book talks can be onerous both for presenters and listeners if they are not well prepared. Foremost, the model (teacher and/or librarian) giving a demonstration of a good book talk is essential to the success of the activity by the students.

Evaluation through the use of agreed-upon criteria is basic to the process of helping students become good book talkers. Areas to be evaluated are those such as 1) lead-in, 2) enthusiasm, 3) fluency, 4) volume, and 5) eye contact. A weight of five points can be assigned to each category in order to obtain a total score and specify areas where extra work is needed. A sample format for evaluating book talks is shown here—

Student <u>Roy</u>		Name of book <u>A Penny's Worth of Character</u>			
Lead-in	Enthusiasm	Fluency	Volume	Eye Contact	Total
Slow in calling main characters knowing setting 3	Didn't back - I can't say why he likes it 3	Good fluency He wrote re. cognition problems 5	Lost to back rows 2	Didn't at all and looking most of time 1	14

The chart indicates that Roy reads well but needs help with presentation skills. He lost some of his audience because he didn't look at them. The children in the rear gave up trying to hear him and did not benefit from his presentation. Follow-up activities with Roy would involve more practice in small groups where eye contact is more easily held. Roy would gain from practice to become more familiar with the text, making it easier for him to lift his eyes from the page. Practice for increased volume is a matter of increasing the opportunity, and signals could be provided to increase volume.

A list of observations which can be incorporated into the five basic categories used on the Book Talk Chart follows:

loses word endings	lead-in vague
inadequate enunciation	poor phrasing
poor enunciation	use of slang
ignores natural pauses	reading rushed
speaks (reads) in monotone	voice shaky
lack of energy (expression)	body too rigid
unfamiliar terms used without explanation (Ex: P.O.W)	
hesitations, caused by insufficient preparation	

Deficiencies cited during presentations can be expected to become less and less evident as the student practices. Many weaknesses are caused by excessive nervousness which practice and successful performances tend to overcome. Presenting book talks in reading group usually provides a comfortable atmosphere.

A sample book talk based on A Penny's Worth of Character is presented below. The book talk outline provides the presenter with a guide. The outline, which could be done on a form or a 5"x8" card, later placed in a book talk file for future reference by the teacher and other students.

Book Talk Outline

1. Book: A Penny's Worth of Character
2. Author: Jessie Stuart. Publisher: McGraw-Hill. Year: 1954.
3. About the author: Jessie Stuart was born in Riverton, Ky, in 1907. He has written many books about life in the southern Appalachian part of the United States. (Use wall map.)
4. Setting: The story is set about 40 years ago in a small farm community in the southern Appalachian region
5. Characters: Shan and his mother
6. Pages read during book talk: pages 13-15
7. Why I liked the book: Shan had a problem like I had one time. I liked how he made things better.

The book talker could use the outline for the lead-in and then would use the book itself for the selected reading. With practice, most students would not have to read the introductory notes but refer to them if necessary.

Lead-in: This is a story about a boy named Shan. His family did not have much money, but usually when he sold eggs at the country store he got to keep ten cents for himself. With the ten cents Shan always bought his favorite treats, a chocolate bar and a lemon soda pop. This time though, Shan's mother said there was no extra money to be spent on candy or soda pop. Shan was disappointed. Then Shan's mother said there were some empty sacks in the smokehouse that he could sell to Mr. Conley, the store owner. He would get a penny for each sack.

(Now the presenter, with the audience well prepared, moves to the text)

He began to smile as he thought of the candy he would get at Mr. Conley's store.

Shan ran to the smokehouse and opened the door. He hurried

in and found the sacks stacked up neatly on a chair. There were more than he expected. He counted one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight--- and very slowly he counted the ninth sack. He had hoped there would be ten. Ten large sacks equaled a dime. And with a dime he could get his favorite chocolate bar and lemon soda pop.

Shan stood there thinking. Then he went over and looked at the tenth sack with a hole in it. It sure was too bad this sack had a hole in it.

He tiptoed to the smokehouse door and looked out to see where his mother was. She was walking across the yard with another basket heaped high with clothes. She was taking them to the clothes line and was on the other side of the yard from the smokehouse. He waited until she set the basket down and started pinning up the clothes. Then he put the nine sacks under his arm and started out.

He stopped; then he went back. He picked up the tenth and looked at the hole. "Not really much of a hole," he said to himself. "A pretty useful old sack if you didn't put stuff like sugar or meal into it."

He knew how Mr. Conley took the top sacks from the pile and held them up to the lighted window and looked inside to see if any light came through. But Mr. Conley was old and he might not be seeing too well. And besides, Mr. Conley never looked at all the sacks. He might look at some on the top and some on the bottom of the pile, but he wouldn't hold every one in the pile up to the light.

Suddenly Shan knew the way to fool Mr. Conley. He put a good sack down. This was number ten. Then he laid down number nine and eight. These were good sacks too. Then he put the sack with the hole in it down for number seven. He placed six good sacks on top. This would throw Mr. Conley off either way he looked. If he looked at the sacks from the top or the bottom, it wouldn't matter now.

Shan smiled as he picked up the paper sacks and held them under his arm. His troubles were over. He had found the way to get what he wanted. He could have both the chocolate bar and the lemon soda, and shucks, what did one little old hole amount to? He walked through the door and stepped onto the soft green grass.

The presenter might then close with an offer to answer questions about the book (not revealing anything critical to the story content) or by saying something such as: I really liked this book. I think you will find it very interesting, too. What do you think happened to Shan when he got to Mr. Conley's store?

Children might want to add another dimension to their book talk such as making and demonstrating a primitive tool, constructing a model, or making a diorama. Effective book talks encourage the development of reading skills, the desire to read, oral language competence, and foster numerous other language skills. Further, book talks help to demonstrate that books are highly valued in the classroom and that there exists a tremendous number of wonderful books to read. In this light, teachers need to have a broad knowledge of children's books to provide suggestions for students and for presenting book talks of their own. Excellent resources

for learning more about children's books are provided by Huck (1976), Larrick (1975), Root (1973), Cianciolo (1977), and White and Schulte (1979). Periodicals such as The Horn Book and Language Arts provide numerous reviews of current children's books.

The book talk can be a great way to broaden children's awareness of literature while developing important verbal skills as well. Teachers, too, can enjoy their expanding awareness of children's literature through the successes of their students.

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STRATEGIES FOR DEALING WITH THE GROWING CENSORSHIP ISSUE

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Contrary to the First Amendment, there is a growing trend to ban certain books, magazines, and other reading material from American classrooms and libraries. Censorship has been on the rise for the past ten years and is escalating nationally. Kanewaha County, West Virginia; Idaho Falls, Idaho; and, Island Trees UFD on Long Island, New York, are just a few of the cities and towns that have censored books. The list is growing and the whole censorship issue is becoming a deep concern to librarians, school officials and school board members.

This alarming increase in book censorship is evidenced by a recent report entitled "Limiting What Students Shall Read," sponsored by the Association of American Publishers, the American Library Association, and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

This report is based on responses to a questionnaire by 1,891 elementary and secondary school superintendents, principals, librarians and library supervisors in all fifty states and the District of Columbia. It was conducted during the school years 1978-79 and 1979-80.

Almost three-fourths of the respondents indicated that the rate of challenges had increased, and about one-third said that recent challenges had resulted in changes in books and materials or in the educational process. Seventy-five percent of those reporting challenges said the number is growing.

Such books as One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, The Grapes of Wrath, Merchant of Venice, Little House on the Prairie and Farewell to Arms are a few titles which have been chopped from school and library lists. Surprisingly, even Webster's Collegiate Dictionary and such magazines as Sports Illustrated and Mademoiselle have been censored in some communities.

Although eminent, Hemingway, Steinbeck, Shakespeare, and Hawthorne are a sampling of the authors whose works are being banned in some districts and destined for the scrap heap.

Why is censorship gaining ground in America? A variety of reasons are given for banning certain books. Books are banned because they allegedly are anti-American, anti-Black, anti-Christian and anti-Semitic. Objections to school literature are also made because they are concerned with "sex, obscenity and objectionable language."

Censorship is also gaining ground because of the efforts of national pressure groups such as the New Right, the Moral Majority, and the National Christian Action Coalition. A Florida organization called Save Our Children has even proposed a purge from libraries of well-known and popular books because their authors are reputedly homosexual. All these groups are launching massive campaigns to influence parents, school board members and the general public to ban certain books.

These campaigns are well-orchestrated and well-financed. They use computerized mailings, newsletters, letters and state conferences to marshal parents and citizens to crusade against certain books deemed unworthy.

A Texas organization known as the Education Research Analysts, consisting of Mel and Norma Gabler, conduct their own reviews of books. This couple was the subject of a segment on "60 Minutes," a popular television program, as well as an article in People Magazine. Since many states adopt textbooks on a state-wide basis, an "imprimatur" from the Gablers is important, as their influence is spreading nationally and they are being courted energetically by publishers.

The activities of the Moral Majority and the New Right were denounced recently by Yale University President A. Bartlett Giametti who stated in a letter to 1,267 incoming freshmen that these groups are "peddlers of coercion" and enemies of free inquiry. He stated that these groups are angry, rigid and absolutistic in morality. According to Giametti, they take issue with any view that differs from theirs and label anyone who holds this view as anti-American.

It is interesting to note that many books banned have not even been read by those who banished them from classroom or library shelves. One school district belatedly discovered that one of the books banned was written by a Pulitzer prizewinner. Another school board banned a book called "Making It With Mademoiselle," but reversed its decision after discovering it was a how-to pattern book for youngsters hoping to learn dress-making!

In September, 1981, the Connecticut State Board of Education issued a policy on academic freedom called "Free to Learn." This policy defines academic freedom as the freedom to teach and learn and would protect teachers and administrators from "bookburning" and censorship groups.

Threats to academic freedom take two forms:

—Censorship of books or other instructional materials or the promotion of political or religious viewpoints in the classroom

—Restrictions on teaching methods of staff development or the selection or retention of school personnel.

A key point to remember in dealing with the censorship issue is that to study an idea is not necessarily an endorsement of that idea. There is a difference between teaching and indoctrination.

Not only is censorship growing, but it is getting out of hand. The Pro-Family Forum in Texas is distributing a leaflet on which is a drawing of a small child in overalls, holding in his right hand a new lunchbox with a picture of a teddy bear on it. A parent holds the child's free hand as they approach the school with the American flag waving out front. Another child is beginning his formal school training. Above this simple image on the handout is a question; in bold print it asks, "Is Humanism Molesting Your Child?"

Some citizens would not be bothered by such literature, but it would not be an overstatement to assess this type of approach as odious and fear-producing. Emboldened by the success of conservatives at the polls, the political right is employing these scare tactics and taking aim at humanism.

In fairness, there is no question about it: some books which have been placed on approved classroom or library lists have very little literary merit. Pornography, anti-feminist books and books which espouse questionable ideas and ideals may oppose our standards.

However, censorship in some forms can be equated with mind control. If students are to become discriminating readers, they should be placed in a position to reject a book because they—not an adult or group who has not even read the book—decide for themselves that a book is worthless, has no redeeming qualities and that reading it is a colossal waste of time.

Although the majority of challenges to certain books and magazines have been handled informally, there are strategies that are plausible for dealing with the censorship issue. What are some effective ways? We will describe a few, hoping to stimulate thought about others.

1. School districts must first establish a written selection policy and a clearly defined method for handling complaints. This written policy should be developed by librarians, parents, and teachers, before it is submitted to the local school board for formal adoption.

2. Education organizations can take strong stands countering the unnecessary censorship of reading material. NCTE has been particularly active in this area. The Intellectual Freedom Committee of the International Reading Association has also been busy in monitoring and taking positive steps to deal with the censorship issue. Recently, the Association of American Publishers, the American Library Association and the American Civil Liberties Union sponsored a two-day colloquium in which publishers and lawyers discussed legal and political strategies in waging the war against censorship. Meetings of this type need to be held on a continuing basis.

3. Librarians must work more closely with school personnel—particularly English and reading teachers. It is a fact that library materials are more often attacked than are classroom materials because school personnel themselves often initiate challenges to libraries. Obviously, the practice of having librarians

ians order books without consulting teachers needs to be changed. Communication is the missing link.

4. Books being considered for formal adoption as classroom texts by the school district should be on display at a central location for parents and school board members to examine before they are purchased. A little card can be filled in giving the viewer's positive response or objections for each book previewed. These notations should be considered carefully before a school district decides to buy books. It is a process that avoids hassles, time-consuming meetings and even litigation.

Concluding Remarks

The bottom line is that censorship robs individuals of their rights and violates the First Amendment. Banning books is a practice that is growing by leaps and bounds. The strategies offered above may help alleviate the problems and concerns book censorship cause. They will also save time for librarians, administrators and teachers to devote to other pressing matters.

USING R A D A R TO ZERO-IN ON CONTENT AREA CONCEPTS

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Teachers are always faced with the problem of making concepts encountered during reading meaningful to their students. One technique often suggested is to relate the new information to something with which students are already familiar (Smith, 1975; Pearson and Johnson, 1978). Examining analogies is an excellent way to accomplish this task. In addition, their use in concept learning encourages students to take an inquiring, creative approach to what they read by having them apply the information presented in many different ways.

RADAR is a strategy in which students build analogies that take advantage of their own knowledge in order to develop and reinforce concepts taught in the content areas. Using RADAR, students establish analogous relationships between the concept they are studying and a seemingly unrelated concept. While examining these analogies, they relate the new material to an old concept, something with which they are familiar. In the process of comparing the new to the known they are forced to pay attention not only to the details of the concept being presented, but also to the dynamics of the concept--the processes involved in its workings.

The RADAR technique consists of the following steps:

R--READ:

In the first step students read a passage on a given topic, for example, the problems of water pollution. If teachers wish to focus on a specific analogy, students may be asked to read for the purpose of explaining the analogy: "How is the problem of water pollution analogous to the problem of a messy bedroom?" or "In what ways are the problems of a messy bedroom similar to the problems of water pollution?" If teachers plan to work with several analogies, a more general purpose for reading should be given: "Read to find out as much as you can about the problems of water pollution."

If students have not previously worked with analogies or are uncomfortable with comparing apparently dissimilar concepts, some warm-up exercises may be in order before beginning RADAR. These should be designed to free students from stereotypical thinking which might keep them from discovering commonalities among concepts.

An approach which has proven successful is to begin with concepts which are very similar and gradually extend the activity to more and more divergent concepts. For example, students can be asked to think of all the things that a bicycle and a tricycle have in common both in the way they look and operate. Teachers can record students' responses on the chalkboard. It is important that teachers establish an open, nonthreatening atmosphere where students feel free to volunteer answers without the fear of being wrong. Accordingly, students' answers should not be questioned at this stage. All answers should be accepted. Finally, after the class has exhausted its supply of answers, the teacher may then call for the explanation of those responses that are difficult to understand.

This process would continue with the students exploring commonalities between more and more dissimilar concepts. How is a bicycle like a car? How is a bicycle like a football team? How is a bicycle like having a friend?

Warm-up should be spread over several days so as not to tire students of the activity. The exercise can also be used even after students are familiar with the process to increase their knowledge of a content area before reading. By attending to the range of responses given by the students, the teacher can get a good idea of how much background needs to be built prior to reading a lesson.

A- ANALOGIZE:

Following the reading step, students are asked to explain the analogous relationship which is presented to them. When introducing the procedure, it is best to work with the whole class or in large groups. In this way, the strategy can be modeled and students can benefit from each others' responses while trying to generate their own. The teacher should record the responses on the chalkboard for future reference. Later students may work in small groups or individually, reporting to the class after the relationships have been listed. A good way to get started well is to begin all responses with a common stem: "A messy bedroom is like the water pollution problem in that ..." This is useful with those students who are reluctant to volunteer answers.

Teachers should be sure to look for responses that not only describe the physical relationships ("They are both dirty" "They are not nice to look at" "They can both smell"), but also describe processes that are similar to both ("They may take a while to really get bad" "It often takes much effort to clean both up").

D- DISCUSS:

In the discussion step, the class comments on elements of the analogy which they liked best or which they felt brought out important points about the concept being studied. Edward de Bono (1970) suggested three areas which should be discussed when exploring analogous relationships:

1. The number of different ways the analogy is related to the problem. How many different approaches were taken?
2. The consistency in the development of the analogy. Was a certain element of the analogy always related to the same element of the concept?

3. The details of the analogy. How did the details of the analogy add to the understanding of the concept?

Teachers serve a very important role in the discussion phase of RADAR. As with any technique that depends on students' responses, teachers may need to guide students so that major elements of the concepts are not ignored. This is best done through questioning. For instance, assume that the class' responses have centered upon the physical similarities between pollution and messy rooms, and have failed to bring out points concerning the possible consequences of both. Teachers can prompt their students to respond in this area by asking simple questions: "What happens to you at home when your bedroom is messy? How might that relate to the water pollution problem?"

A- APPLY

Once the analogy has been firmly established through the listing of common characteristics and the discussion of their relationships, the class can use new insights to approach specific problems related to the concept under study. "How might water pollution be controlled?" or "What are some things that prevent its control?"

Once again, students are instructed to study the analogy and the analogous problem. "What are some things that prevent my bedroom from staying clean?" Solutions to these analogous problems are then related to the problem originally posed.

R- RESEARCH or REVIEW:

Points about the concepts being studied which were brought out during the first four steps of RADAR provide an excellent source for research topics. Research may be undertaken individually or in small groups. These projects can revolve around aspects of the analogy which students found particularly interesting or deal with the actual problems posed in the "APPLY" step of the lesson.

Research activities could include the development of new analogies for the original concept, certain aspects of the concept, or problems related to the concept. Groups or individuals could then report back to the class and discuss their findings.

If research is not desired at this stage of the lesson, or as a follow-up activity to research reports, the final step in RADAR would involve the review of points discussed in the previous steps. Charts might be made which illustrate the relationships between the analogous concepts. Teachers might also decide to use this final step as an introduction to the next reading selection by relating what has been discussed to what will be read, for example: How the chemical industry controls water pollution.

Once students are familiar with the strategy, they enjoy proposing their own analogies for use in the procedure. Teachers may ask for a set of possible analogies from which they can select ones that they or their classes would like to explore for the remainder of the lesson. Analogies can also be presented in the form of short stories. These stories should bring out specific points about the concept which the teacher feels are important.

Later students may be asked to select stories which they feel are analogous to the concepts being taught. In this way different content areas can be related and integrated with language arts.

A final note concerning the selection of analogies to be used with the RADAR procedure—it is not important that the analogies chosen directly parallel the concepts being taught. When using RADAR, teachers might remember that the objectives of the procedure are twofold: 1) to try to relate the new to the known, thus establishing a basis for concept learning; and 2) to attempt to help students to break away from stereotypic thinking and learning of concepts. By relating things that are commonly thought not to be related, students are encouraged to take an inquiring, creative approach to learning from text. Accomplishing the second objective will be hindered if the analogy is too parallel to the concept. In fact, selecting analogies that do not readily fit is desirable because students must exert an effort to relate the analogy to the problem, and, from the effort can arise new ways of looking at problems (de Bono, 1970).

RADAR has been presented as a valuable classroom activity for using analogies to teach new concepts and take new looks at old ones. Applying the technique, teachers can integrate new materials with those previously learned while encouraging their students to become creative thinkers. The imaginative teacher can also see many opportunities to use RADAR to relate concepts across different subject areas. It is hoped that, through these learning experiences, students will become more active readers who will independently integrate materials while reading.

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Ken VanderMeulen
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