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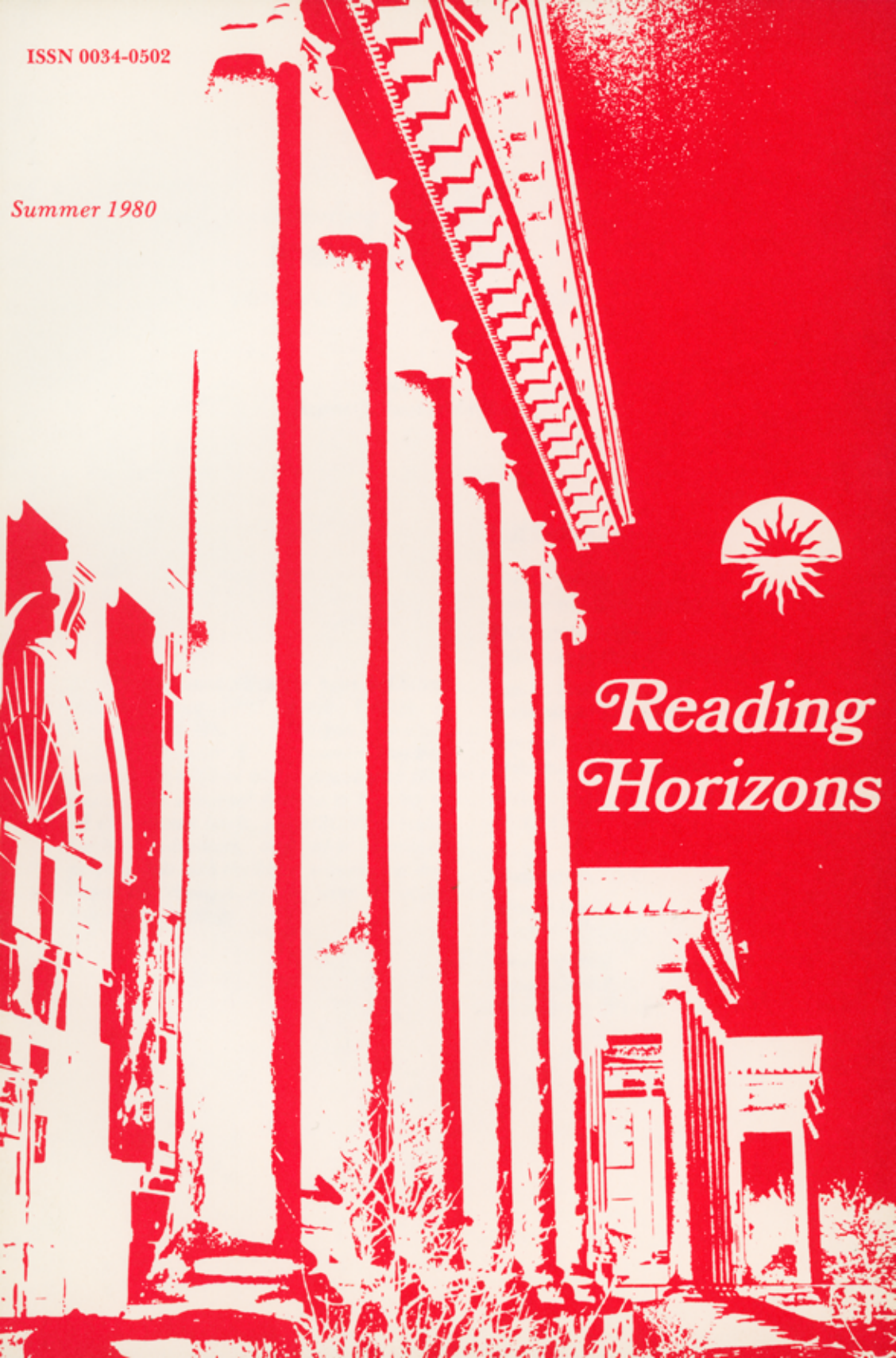

Reading Horizons

Reading HORIZONS

VOLUME 20 NUMBER 4

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GUEST EDITORIAL

MESSAGE TO PUBLISHERS—WE NEED EXPANDED ROLE MODELS IN READING MATERIALS

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Numerous analyses of children's textbooks of the 1970's have demonstrated the pervasiveness of sexism, that is, differences in the portrayal of female and male characters which can have a negative effect on the development of either girls or boys.[1] The under-representation of females as main characters or in careers outside the home in comparison to their representation in reality is a frequent finding. When girls and women are portrayed, they are seen in a limited number of familial and societal roles which often reflect a stereotypic definition of appropriate female behavior based on such characteristics as weakness, passivity and emotionality. In contrast boys and men are seen in a far greater range of roles although many of these roles may also reflect stereotypic notions of appropriate male behavior, such as the display of strength, constant action and a lack of emotion.

Publishers of educational materials have responded to charges of sexism in textbooks in two major ways. First, they have issued guidelines for editors, authors, and illustrators to eliminate sexism and to improve the image of females in their materials. Publishers' guidelines have most often addressed the concern to eliminate sexism in language, occupational roles, personality portrayals, proportion of space allotted to women, and types of activities depicted. Fair and accurate portrayals of males as well as females are encouraged in most guidelines.

Second, some publishers have produced materials which have eliminated sexism in significant ways. In a recent study I found that two newly published elementary reading series contained a substantial proportion of female main characters, many of whom were portrayed in nontraditional, nonstereotypical roles. Stories about girls who were active, competent and assertive were numerous. In contrast, however, roles portrayed by male main characters were overwhelmingly traditional and often stereotypic. Boys continue to be portrayed as strong and silent, engaged primarily in activities stereotypically associated with

[1]See for example, the following: Gwyneth Britton and Margaret Lumpkin, "For Sale: Subliminal Bias in Textbooks," *The Reading Teacher*, 31 (October 1977), 40-45; Diane W. Kyle, "Changes in Basal Reader Content: Has Anyone Been Listening?" *Elementary School Journal*, 78 (May 1978), 305-312; Sylvia-Lee Tibbetts, "Sex-Role Stereotyping in Children's Reading Material: Update," *Journal of the National Association of Women Deans and Counselors*, 42(Winter 1979), 3-9.

males, such as sports, adventure, and leadership.

While these publishers are to be commended for increasing the representation of females and portraying them in nontraditional roles, the portrayal of males in primarily traditional, stereotypical roles reflects a serious distortion. When males are portrayed according to a one-sided perspective of human behavior, boys' role choices may be limited, also, just as girls' role choices have been. This omission also contributes indirectly to reducing nontraditional role options for females by introducing a new double standard: Girls can now do "anything" (and everything) but boys should maintain power and dominance at all costs.

Traditional socialization practices encourage boys to develop aggressiveness, competitiveness, and independence at the expense of expressing a wide range of emotions or developing nurturing qualities. Males experience pressure to "prove" their masculinity by outperforming females as well as other males. They are more severely punished than girls for acting in ways which do not conform to the traditional role expectations for males. In reality, individual males exhibit a wide range of personality traits and role behaviors. Traits which are socially desirable for females and linked with society's traditional notions of femininity, such as nurturance, quietness, and emotional sensitivity, are also displayed by males and very often have positive consequences. For example, boys who do display stereotyped feminine characteristics are also more likely to have greater intelligence and creativity than boys with a higher proportion of stereotyped masculine characteristics. Therefore, males and females should feel free to choose their behavior from a wide range of behavioral traits, according to the dynamics of varying situations. And no activity should be discouraged for an individual solely on the basis of sex.

Because they convey influential messages about society, reading materials are needed to show boys in nurturing and expressive roles as well as active and independent roles. Publishers' guidelines encourage such diverse roles for males as well as females. For example:

> Both sexes should be shown exhibiting a full range of emotional expresion. Men and boys as well as women and girls can be pictured as unhappy, dependent, angry, and joyous.[3]
>
> Both men and women should be shown cooking, cleaning, making household repairs, doing laundry, washing the car, and taking care of children. . . . Males as well as females can be fearful, weak, mechanically inept, and illogical. . . . Males can be polite, cooperative, inactive, or neat.[4]

(Continued on Page 246)

[3]Silver Burdett Company, *Guidelines for Developing Bias-Free Instructional Materials* (Morristown, N.J.: Author, 1979).

[4]Scott, Foresman & Company, *Guidelines for Improving the Image of Women in Textbooks* (Glenview, Ill.: Author, 1972).

READING INSTRUCTION FOR THE HANDICAPPED CHILD: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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The concern of parents and teachers that some children have needs significantly different from the majority of other students has brought about educational opportunities which provide special learning environments and unique teaching procedures. From this educational endeavor, programs entitled "special education" have been established for the purpose of helping handicapped children develop their abilities to a maximum. It is important that the teacher of reading be aware of several essential principles regarding special education. First, teachers often become frustrated because the screening process for special education is often such a time-consuming procedure. Some children may remain in a regular classroom for almost the entire year while diagnosticians and other specialists test and prescribe for their particular learning needs. Secondly, many children are classified as "borderline handicapped" and, as a result, may not have the opportunity to participate in special education programs. In such cases the regular classroom teacher must retain the primary responsibility for meeting the "special needs" of some students.

1. *Why has there been a surge of interest in and concern for the handicapped?*

In recent years a greater awareness of the needs of special students has emerged. Even with the more enlightened attitude, it is estimated that only slightly more than one-half of the handicapped students are being provided the kind of educational program they need, either in special or regular classes or schools. During the past decade, court decisions and state laws have consistently determined that handicapped children are to be afforded the same educational rights as other students. As a result, handicapped learners are entitled to instruction according to their needs, whether in special or regular classes, or both; schools must be changed to accommodate the handicapped. Although local and regional awareness has been augmented by state legislation, it was not until quite recently that the full ramifications of such awareness were realized. The passage of "The Education for All Handicapped

Children Act," (Public Law 94-142) gave full weight to the need for educational equality for all children.

2. *What are some of the key components of P. L. 94-142?*

Its essential features are similar to the requirements that some state courts and legislatures had previously set forth in order to ensure that each handicapped child would receive a free appropriate public education. Public Law 94-142 simply brought some badly-needed uniformity and consistency to disparate state laws. In Public Law 94-142, the term "free" means the government or school cannot charge parents for the expense of special education. A combination of local, state, and federal funding must provide the necessary support for the handicapped child's education. "Appropriate" refers to the requirement that schools are now obligated to provide all handicapped children an opportunity to achieve at their level of potential in the "least restrictive environment." For some handicapped children, this might merely mean short-term integration with other students for non-academic work such as physical education. On the other hand it might mean, for some handicapped students, assignment to a regular classroom with appropriate special instruction as needed.

3. *Are the terms "least restrictive alternative" and "mainstreaming" the same?*

Mainstreaming means moving students from their segregated status in special education classes to the mainstream of regular classrooms where they are integrated with their peers. Least restrictive alternative describes an individual placement. That is, one child's least restrictive alternative might be a self-contained special education class; another's, a regular education class. Therefore, mainstreaming is merely one step in the continuum of the term least restrictive alternative.

4. *Should educational programs be based upon labels indicating a handicapping condition?*

The Education for Handicapped Children Act reflects a general movement toward development of programs designed to meet each child's unique educational needs. When needs are adequately met, the handicapped child has a chance to become all that he or she is capable of becoming. Under such a plan, grouping on the basis of a disability is no longer advocated. Writers and supporters of the law make the point that while there are many classifications and types of handicaps, children, both with and without disabilities, are more alike than different. As a matter of fact, to label and precisely classify every disability has a way of preventing a child's full and total integration with non-handicapped peers. Although the federal and state laws tend to define handicapped children by some diagnostic or handicapping label, this requirement is basically performed to count students for formula funding. Realistically, this is an inefficient procedure because many handicapped pupils of differing labels exhibit the same learning or behavioral problems.

5. *If labels should not be used for programming what is a better way?*

A more efficient measure of special educational needs are the terms "high-incidence," "low-incidence," and "sensory-impaired/physically handicapped." For example, mild to moderately mentally handicapped, language or learning disabled, and behaviorally disordered children manifest similar school related behaviors. Such children are classified as high-incidence handicapped because they represent the largest percentage of handicapping conditions. High-incidence handicapped children are those who have less severe learning problems and are those who will be most easily afforded the mainstreaming option. The movement of high-incidence handicapped children into regular classrooms is likely to be accelerated.

The federal law establishes priorities for special educational services to handicapped students not currently being served by existing programs and to handicapped pupils with severe learning impairment. As a result, most of the "priority" children would fall under the second category, low-incidence handicapped—severely or profoundly mentally handicapped, or emotionally disturbed. Low-incidence handicapped children are relatively few in number but are clustered because of the severity of their disability. The major difference between the high and low incidence groups, then, is in degree of severity of learning and/or behavioral problems. Low-incidence children will most likely *not* be afforded the total mainstreaming options in their education, and will probably remain in full or part-time self-contained special education units or special education classrooms as their least restrictive alternative.

A third category of handicapped children are classified as sensory-impaired/physically handicapped. Such children include those with auditory, visual or motor handicaps. The needs of sensory-impaired/physically handicapped children are much more obvious than those of high-incidence children. Their impairments typically involve input problems rather than learning or behavioral problems. As a result, program options and environment modifications are possible within the regular classroom, and many of these children will be able to function in the mainstream.

6. *What are the major curricular differences between handicapped and non-handicapped learners?*

It is the consensus of professional educators that there are really no content differences between a curriculum for the handicapped and a curriculum for the non-handicapped child. The difference between educational programs for special and non-handicapped children is essentially a matter of applying one or more of the following instructional strategies:

- modifying the way in which the content is presented.
- modifying the way in which a child is asked to respond to the content.

- modifying the position where the child may fall within the content sequence.

7. *How would a reading teacher deal with each of these program modifications?*

In reference to the first two strategies mentioned above, Cawley, Fitzmaurice, Goodstein, Lepore, Sedlak, and Althaus (1976) developed a comprehensive and systematic plan for incorporating teacher input and learner output in mathematics instruction. Its utility, however, is apparent for the reading teacher. Based on their model, the teacher of reading can present material in one of four ways to the learner: (1) by gesturing or constructing something; (2) by presenting pictures; (3) by stating words; or (4) by writing words. Likewise, the learner can respond to material in one of four ways: (1) by gesturing or constructing; (2) by identifying pictures or objects given choices; (3) by stating words; (4) or by writing or reading words. Each teacher input can be used with each learner output thereby producing sixteen possible instructional interactions *for any reading objective.* If a handicapped child cannot acquire information in one interaction, the teacher of reading has multiple options to fall back upon.

In reading, a preliminary content might be auditory synthesis and the corresponding objective for the child stated, "The learner will synthesize auditorily presented sounds." In this case, the teacher behavior is fixed (stating sounds). However, the teacher might ask the child to point to the picture that represents the synthesis of the sounds (identifying pictures); to demonstrate the sign that represents the synthesis of sounds (gesturing); to say the word that represents the word that represents the synthesis (stating); or to write or read the word that represents the synthesis (writing or reading). Which interaction(s) he or she chooses obviously depends on the individual child's strengths and weaknesses.

A higher level reading skill might be comprehension and the corresponding objective for the child states, "The learner will answer vocabulary type questions." Here, the teacher behavior is not fixed. Typically, the teacher orally reads a passage to the youngster (stating), or presents a written passage (writing). The learner could respond by gesturing (signing a word that means the same as another in the passage); by identifying (pointing to a picture that corresponds to the meaning or structure of a vocabulary word); by stating (saying a word that starts like or rhymes with another vocabulary word); or by writing/reading (writing or reading a word that is similar in structure to another vocabulary word). Again, the choice of effective reading interaction(s) is based upon the child's present skill.

In reference to the third instructional strategy, it is imperative that the reading teacher relate the developmental sequence of language with the level at which the handicapped child can perform within that sequence. If the handicapped learner cannot meet curriculum expectations at one level, the teacher *must* place the child at a different position

within that content sequence. It is probable that the teacher will also have to adapt content presentation and expected learner response once the appropriate level is determined.

A sound reading program is based upon a defined content sequence. It is possible that the handicapped child will require individual placement and advancement on the reading continuum. For example, the word attack skill of pronouncing initial consonant sounds is preceded by a recognition of the alphabet. For all children, the developmental skill of "visual literacy" may precede instruction in phonetic analysis. Visual literacy refers to a child's capacity to decode pictures and encode the results; the ability to orally place coherent thoughts into words, words into sentences, and sentences into larger units (Stewig, 1978). In other words, teachers need to help children talk about what they see in the visual stimuli of everyday life before asking them to break the language into segmented units. Obviously, the reading teacher must become keenly aware of a valid content sequence so that appropriate placement within and effective instruction from the sequence will take place.

8. *What other general instructional practices are advocated for use with the handicapped learner?*

- Develop short-term instructional goals to meet the special needs of the handicapped child.
- Prepare realistic and specific objectives that comply with the program requirements of the handicapped child.
- Tell the child exactly what is expected to successfully complete a particular learning objective.
- Teach content information in smaller, meaningful units to the handicapped child.
- Provide meaningful opportunities for the student with special needs to receive recognition for accomplishments.
- Encourage the handicapped child to compete with self rather than peers.
- Promote the wide use of different kinds and special types of reading material.
- Create an organized and systematic, instructional plan that includes an appropriate evaluation procedure.
- Remain patient and understanding in dealing with the behavioral aspects of special students.
- Make non-handicapped children sensitive to their role in maintaining classroom stability for the child with special needs.

Effective teachers have always attempted to meet the unique and individual needs of diverse learners. Recent legislation and current school policy makes it inevitable that the once isolated handicapped child will now become part of the regular classroom environment. As a result, teachers of reading are likely to become partners with those in special educational programs. The difficult task of maximizing learning potential for the handicapped child may be realized through a greater

awareness of handicapping conditions, an increased understanding of program modification, and the realization that successful reading instruction continues to be based on sound teaching practices.

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(Continued from Guest Editorial)

Research studies indicate that when boys are exposed to nontraditional role models in texts, their attitudes can be positively affected without a loss of reading interest or comprehension. Well written and moving stories such as "Mushy Eggs,"[2] about an 8-year-old boy who comes to understand why people often cry at ship docks and who cries himself because his babysitter is leaving on the ship of her homeland, will be enjoyed by both boys and girls.

At present males are not being depicted in a full range of roles in reading texts. As long as individuals of either sex are expected to adhere to a limited number of occupational roles, personality traits, or types of activities, sexism will continue. Educators have an opportunity to address this inequity through the use of reading materials which show expanded roles for males as well as females. Publishers need to adhere to their guidelines to produce sex fair materials, and educators should insist that schools buy such texts. All children will ultimately benefit.

[2]Allyn and Bacon, *Pathfinder* (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1978), Level B.

A RECREATIONAL READING PROGRAM FOR DISABLED READERS: IT WORKS!

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Much has been written about the desirability of turning disabled readers on to reading. Replacing negative feelings and disinterest which disabled readers typically have toward books is one of the most difficult tasks of all. But when disabled readers report little or no encouragement from home the challenge becomes even greater. Recent research has shown three very important factors in developing interest in reading—all three factors within the home: (1) fathers who read to children; (2) mothers who read to children and; (3) the availability of easy reading material in the home (Sucher, Note 1). When asked about reading habits and home involvement via the *Literature Preference Inventory* (Abrahamson and Stetson, Note 2), disabled readers tutored at the University of Houston Diagnostic Learning Center reported very little home involvement (Colvin and Tomas, 1978). A tabulation of student responses concerning home reading habits revealed that 85% of the mothers and 95% of the fathers seldom or never read to them. The prospects of turning these readers on to books did not look bright. The following paragraphs detail the Recreational Reading Program (RRP) implemented at the Diagnostic Learning Center in order to meet this challenge.

Goals

Turning kids on to reading is the primary goal of the RRP. This goal is based on the premise that children can read provided they are encouraged in a positive way to read materials that are within their capabilities or area of interest (Estes and Vaughn, 1973).

Because success or failure as a reader is often shaped more by the influence of the home than by the classroom teacher or materials used at school (Larrick, 1975), a second goal of the program is direct parental involvement. By using informal questioning techniques after their children have completed a book, parents become more intensely involved in the reading development of their youngsters. Parents also participate by receiving information concerning sources from which inex-

pensive books may be purchased to begin or expand a home library (Scholastic, 1978; Perfect School Plan, 1978).

A third goal of the program is to initiate lifetime reading habits. Initially, extrinsic rewards are provided to help overcome the reluctance disabled readers usually have toward pleasure reading. Ribbons and free books are awarded according to the RRP Rule Sheet (See Figure 1). The achievement of intrinsic motivation is realized as parents report continued positive effects of the RRP for youngsters after they leave the center.

Figure 1—Recreational Reading Program—Rule Sheet—distributed to students and parents during the first day of the recreational reading program.

RECREATIONAL READING PROGRAM (RRP)

Rule Sheet

1. READ ONE BOOK
   a. selected by the student
   b. paperback or hardback
   c. fiction or non-fiction
   d. subject of the book selected by the student
   e. newspapers and comic books do not count
   f. the book has never been read before
2. TALK TO AN ADULT ABOUT THE BOOK
   a. book should be read entirely
   b. no tests or book reports are required

      BUT

   c. the student must talk to an adult about the book (a parent, adult relative, or the teacher will do)
   d. the adult should interact informally with the student by asking questions such as:
      — Tell me about the book.
      — What else happened? *or* What happened next?
      — Who was your favorite character? Why?
      — What was the best part of the book?
      — Was there someone or something in the book you didn't like? Why?
      — Would you like to read your favorite part to me?
      — What did you learn from the book?
3. ADULT SIGNS CERTIFICATE OF READING EXPERIENCE (CORE)
   a. must be signed by adult who interacted with the student about the book

b. adult could be mother, father, adult relative, teacher, or even a responsible adult sibling (high school or older)

4. TURN CERTIFICATE OF READING EXPERIENCE (CORE) IN TO THE TEACHER TO RECEIVE RIBBON
   a. certificate of reading experience required before ribbon can be awarded
   b. CORE forms are filed in student's work folder
   c. ribbons are displayed in the DLC until the end of term
5. READ TEN BOOKS—RECEIVE ONE FREE BOOK
   a. book to be selected from the trade book library
   b. award label with the student's name is attached to the cover of the book
   c. read thirty books, receive three free books
6. BOOK CERTIFICATE AWARDED AT THE END OF THE TERM

Procedures For Implementation

After a brief discussion of the program and rules, a Book Certificate inscribed with the child's name is displayed in the tutoring area. Along side the certificate a reward ribbon is displayed to illustrate to the child what he will be working for. The last ten minutes of the typical sixty-minute tutoring period is used by the child to check out books from the center's trade book collection. Assisted by his tutor, the youngster selects one or more books on his independent reading level (Betts, 1957; Guszak, 1978; et al). A Certificate of Reading Experience (CORE) form helps keep track of books read and insures that books are being read (See Figure 2). Several of these forms are sent home with students on the first day of tutoring and must be signed and returned before ribbons are awarded.

Parents are also informed of the program through parent meetings conducted by the Center's staff. Parents are taught how to interact with their child when books have been completed. Emphasis is placed on informal sharing and parents are asked not to make the experience a grueling drill on facts and details but rather a pleasurable exchange of plot, character analysis, likes and dislikes. The RRP Rule Sheet and CORE forms identify the types of information questions to be asked.

Signed CORE forms are returned to the tutor who awards ribbons and displays them next to the Book Certificate. After ten books have been read, students earn a free book of their choice. An inscription, "Presented to John Doe for reading ten books, July 15, 1978," is added to the book's cover by the tutor. The Book Certificate and ribbons may be taken home on the final day of tutoring.

Figure 2—CERTIFICATE OF READING EXPERIENCE (CORE)—forms distributed to parent(s) to be completed when the student has completed a book and interacted properly with an adult.

CERTIFICATE OF READING EXPERIENCE (CORE)

Name of Student _____

Name of Book _____

Author _____ Publisher _____

I, (parent, teacher, or other adult's name) _____ do solemnly certify by affixing my name to the line provided below that the above named student did indeed read the book described above and talked with me about the book, its main characters, what happened to the characters in the book, and told me whether or not he/she liked or disliked the book. This Certificate of Reading Experience, when presented to the teacher, entitles the student to receive one ribbon.

_____ _____
DATE ADULT SIGNATURE

_____ _____
DATE STUDENT SIGNATURE

Results

During the first summer school term of 1978, eighty-five students attended the center daily for remedial instruction in reading. During this four-week period an average of nine books per student were read—one student read twenty-six books. All participants received at least two ribbons and thirty-five students received at least one free book.

In order to get feedback from parents, a RRP questionnaire was used during the last week of tutoring. When asked to rate the effects that the program had on changing their child's attitude towards reading, 33% reported that the program had a "dramatic" effect in a positive direction and 64% felt that the effects were "definitely positive." Only one parent reported no effect. In addition, all but one parent stated that they would continue a similar program at home after

the tutoring session was over. When asked to comment on what they considered to be the most positive aspect of the RRP, the most frequently appearing parent statement was that the entire family felt the effects of the program and that communication among family members was enhanced. Many added that the program influenced them to read more as well.

Overcoming the negative feelings many disabled readers have toward reading is difficult but far from impossible as evidenced by the success of the RRP described above. With care devoted to involving parents and matching disabled readers with interesting as well as easy recreational reading material, turning on to reading is unquestionably possible. Try it! You'll be convinced as we were.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Perfect School Plan (a program sponsored by the school to encourage parents to purchase books and magazines points are awarded to the schools for purchase of equipment), Box 866, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19105.

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THE OVER-THE-SHOULDER CONFERENCE: TEACHING AS CHILDREN READ

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In most classrooms, at one time or another during each reading lesson, the teacher can be seen bending down, looking and pointing at a book or notebook on some student's desk and talking to the student about the material being written or read. This interchange can be labeled an "over-the-shoulder conference."

Over-the-shoulder conferences are not replacements for formal conferences at the teacher's desk, nor for the disciplinary conference outside the door, but rather are brief, less-structured encounters. Over-the-shoulder conferences, loosely defined as the teacher interacting about reading material with a student at the student's seat, are neither unique nor novel. Nearly all teachers have worked with students in this manner. However, few teachers seem to make use of over-the-shoulder conferences in a systematic fashion which maximizes their effectiveness.

Advantages

Over-the-shoulder conferences have some definite advantages over the more typical, sit-down, face-to-face conference. Over-the-shoulder conferences are spontaneous: The teacher moves around the classroom, exploiting instructional moments as they occur. They are short: The teacher spends a maximum of three minutes with students, and with most students, that time can be reduced to one or two minutes. They are easy: There is no preparation required. And, furthermore, they are timely: The teacher is there when needed or wanted, rather than when an appointed time occurs.

Another advantage of the over-the-shoulder conference is that it leads to increased teacher awareness of what actually is occurring in the classroom. The peripatetic teacher (one who moves around the classroom) should be ready to learn as much as the students. Circulating among students, the teacher can pick up tangential and specific information about students and their progress by carefully observing (with all senses) the types of activities students are engaged in and the manner and ease with which they go about working on their tasks. And, of course, though the circulating is not meant to be threatening, the teacher is monitoring on-task behavior. With the teacher likely to stop by at any time, students tend to remain actively involved with their assignments.

Purposes

Over-the-shoulder conferences are both similar to and different from the more traditional sit-down conference. Many of the same types of activities are feasible in either conference. Teachers of reading use sit-down conferences for three reasons: to diagnose, to instruct, and to deepen appreciation for reading. In over-the-shoulder conferences, the teacher consciously attempts to accomplish these same three purposes while circulating among students in the classroom. However, equal time will not usually be devoted to all three purposes. While diagnosis will consume a large portion of over-the-shoulder conference time, remediation will take relatively little. There are two reasons for this: The teacher is spending such a short time with the student that effective remediation would be difficult, if not impossible, and over-the-shoulder remediation would be so fragmented that the student would profit very little from the help. Over-the-shoulder developmental instruction, however, can be quite effective, since the student demonstrates a need for a particular kind of help with his reading at a particular time and the teacher can relate to that need without being unduly concerned about integration with other skills. Such incidental teaching may or may not remain as part of the child's knowledge base, but the likelihood is great that it will, since it was meaningful instruction given at the moment of need.

The Teacher's Role

The teacher's role in over-the-shoulder conferences requires greater intensity than is required for sit-down conferences, even though the conferences have less depth. A one- to three-minute conference which focuses on one or two items cannot begin to yield the amount of information to be gained from a sit-down conference. Another major difference is that teacher preparation is unnecessary. The peripatetic teacher shouldn't normally pre-plan the probes (or tentative, exploratory questions) to be used during the over-the-shoulder conferences, although, of course, it can be done. However, such preplanning locks the teacher into a set of behaviors and activities and limits spontaneity, which is one of the key strengths of the over-the-shoulder conference. The teacher who is cognizant of the reading process and who knows students well enough to identify their major strengths and weaknesses can react to students' needs as she looks over their shoulders.

Guidelines

Conducting over-the-shoulder conferences is simple if a few guidelines are understood and adhered to. The teacher carries a stack of note cards on these meanderings, one for each student in the class, with the students' names on the top of the cards. The teacher records the date while observing a student and then begins making notations throughout the observation and the conference itself. Dating the jotted

down notes has value for the teacher to check on who has not had a conference recently and also to give the teacher dated, annotated information to use in compiling grades, planning instruction, preparing for parent-teacher conferences, and for sharing with any other teachers who may teach the student. It is crucial that this information be available to students. The teacher may want to spend one of the over-the-shoulder conferences sharing what has been discovered during previous over-the-shoulder conferences rather than probing for new information. Or the teacher can file the cards so that students can locate them and read for themselves what strengths and weaknesses in reading the teacher has determined them to have. Students have the right and the need to know what they are doing and why.

Another guideline for conducting successful over-the-shoulder conferences is to randomize the selection of students. It is counterproductive to go person-by-person, row-by-row. It is equally ineffective to always select those students with the largest number of reading difficulties, though it is a temptation to give them "a little more help." If the teacher conducts lock-step, round-robin, over-the-shoulder conferences, the students who need help or whom the teacher should talk with for other reasons, lose out. The teacher is *not* right there when wanted or needed, and students can determine when they are going to have their conferences and "plan" to be off task for a period of time. Also, if only those who are in difficulty have over-the-shoulder conferences, then the conference, students tacitly understand, is for "dummies." It is a subtle, yet effective means of classroom segregation.

Over-the-shoulder conferences are to be conducted while students are engaged in seatwork (worksheets or other assignments). The teacher then circulates among the students as unobtrusively as possible, a skill which increases with practice. The teacher goes to students who either signal for a conference or who the teacher determines need a conference on the basis of the dated note cards. The teacher should balance these two selection methods, letting neither one be the sole determinant of the over-the-shoulder conference participants.

The teacher stands behind or to the side of the student during the conference. Standing is important since conversations tend to be shorter if one is standing. If the teacher sits down by the student for the over-the-shoulder conference, the chances are greater that the conference will tend to be longer than the few minutes it should be.

Cautions for the Over-The-Shoulder Conference

The over-the-shoulder conference must be considered supplemental to other conferences or instructional lessons since they are of neither the length or intensity of regular conferences. Over-the-shoulder conferences provide the teacher with additional information which, taken with the information obtained from more traditional sources, can aid the teacher in preparing instructional materials and lessons for the students.

The teacher must also take special pains to relieve student anxiety about over-the-shoulder conferences. The regular, sit-down conference is one the student or teacher has scheduled for a mutually convenient time. The student, also, prepared for this type conference and considers teacher-questioning as an essential, if not welcomed, component. But, the situation may be less relaxed if the students know that at any moment, without prior warning, and with no preparation time, the teacher may descend upon them for a mercifully, short time.

The teacher must communicate that these conferences are valuable to her as well as to the students. It is critical that teachers share their jotted-down notes with students. Doing so not only informs the student about the skills being taught, but why those skills are important to the student's success in reading. It is just as important for the students to know their strengths as it is for them to know their weaknesses. Furthermore, students' self-concepts can be enhanced if they know the teacher has observed them performing well.

Over-the-shoulder conferences must be kept short. One- to three-minutes is sufficient to make the one or two probes used during the conference. Any additional time may be counter-productive and will certainly limit the number of over-the-shoulder conferences which can be conducted in a period of time.

Summary

Over-the-shoulder conferences can be a powerful addition to the classroom teacher's repertoire of assessment/teaching strategies for teaching reading. The teacher's expertise, energy, and creativity are the only real limits on the quality of the over-the-shoulder conference. While teachers can greatly increase their knowledge of students' understandings, work habits, and skills, over-the-shoulder conferences are taxing (no doubt), since the teacher must be constantly alert to "teachable moments" and the best ways to use them. But, for the teacher who wants to systematize and incorporate over-the-shoulder conferences into daily classroom use, the benefits are well worth the effort required.

SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF DISABLED SECONDARY READERS

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As high school teachers of reading and English know, some students in their classrooms are poor in all areas of language. They read on a fourth-grade level; they write and spell so as to obscure most communication; they speak in simple sentences; their listening ability is so low that they can't seem to follow most directions. What can we do to fill in the innumerable gaps in all these areas? It is the purpose of this article to present two ways to improve a student's level of language development: 1) daily exposure to good literature *in the original* (not adapted to a fourth grade level) and 2) daily lessons in syntactical manipulation and sentence combining, including the use of language games.

Reading the Originals (Listening while Reading)

Probably students like those described above with low levels of language development need to be exposed to the richest variety of language possible, an exposure which may very well have been denied them in a way affecting their language development. Carol Chomsky (1972) made this suggestion in her study correlating reading backgrounds and linguistic stages. Such exposure to rich language is based on the nature of language acquisition, which occurs naturally as people mature and develop in an environment where they are adequately exposed to language and where they can use such inputs in their own ways. Hoskisson and Krohm (1974) recommend "assisted reading" in a classroom, using a tape recorder, a listening post, and reading couples. This kind of reading gives children the full context of written language while they learn to read, just as their environment should have provided them with the full context of spoken language while they learned to speak.

Listening while reading has its roots in the basic assumption of the psycholinguistics-information processing theory of reading: "Reading programs must enhance the strategies natural to the reading process. Readers . . . need practice at the strategies natural to the skill of reading" (Cooper and Petrosky, 1976, p. 200). Such exposure would provide an antidote to "controlled" reading and reading "made easy" as students' "structural understanding of their reading material could be enhanced by greater exposure to the more complex syntax of informed

adult speech" (Stotsky, 1975, p. 43). It also is the way reading—and language—were taught in the "good old days" when "the basics" were the only things around. Here is a description of "English" at the turn of the century in a Kansas country school:

> Readers were fairly solid affairs, designed to do more than develop skills. They included chapters from novels by Dickens, selections from *Walden* and *Gulliver's Travels,* and poems by various English and American poets. . . . *The Psalm of Life, Barefoot Boy,* parts of *Thanatopsis,* and Lowell's stanza on June were usually memorized. I recall that at about the sixth grade our teacher read *Oliver Twist* aloud as part of the morning exercises, younger pupils being expected to appear attentive (as they did). We also did choral reading. On one occasion the four upper groups memorized Byron's *Battle of Waterloo* and recited the whole as a single voice. (LaBrant, 1977, p. 6)

In addition, theory is backed up by research. Cohen (1968) reported on 580 second graders from seven New York City schools with high minority populations. The experimental group read an interesting story each day of the school year and participated in many kinds of follow-up activities; the goal was to strengthen the vocabulary of socially disadvantaged children, to stimulate their desire to read, and to increase their actual reading achievement. The experimental group made significantly higher gains than the control group in vocabulary, word knowledge, and reading comprehension. Schneeberg (1977) described a similar situation at the fourth grade level in an inner-city Philadelphia school. In this case the experimental group, which read and listened to 70-80 books during two school years, for two to four hours a week, and then participated in follow-up activities, gained 2.5 years on the total reading test of the California Achievement Test. Normally, educationally disadvantaged students progress .65-.75 grade equivalent units per year (Tempo Center for Advanced Studies, 1971).

The way disabled secondary readers could read the originals would be to provide them with both tapes and printed copies. If ears and also eyes are put to work on interesting material, the problem of comprehension should be solved. Some work with three-level study guides (Herber, 1970), reinforcement activities, and reactions to the books read (Mavrogenes, 1977) would be a regular part of the program. Here are some suggestions for solidly written original reading material appealing to secondary students: Edgar Allan Poe ("The Pit and the Pendulum," "The Tell-tale Heart," "The Cask of Amontillado," "The Oblong Box," "The Black Cat"); Robert Louis Stevenson ("The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde"); Mark Twain ("The Celebrated Jumping Frog of Calaveras County," *Huckleberry Finn*); Jack London ("To Build a Fire," *The Call of the Wild*); Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories; J. D. Salinger ("For Esme—With Love and Squalor," *The Cat-*

cher in the Rye); Ernest Hemingway ("My Old Man," "The Short Happy Life of Francis Macomber," "The Snows of Kilimanjaro," *A Farewell to Arms*); John Steinbeck ("Flight," *Of Mice and Men*); O. Henry ("The Cop and the Anthem," "The Gift of the Magi," "The Ransom of Red Chief"); W. W. Jacobs ("The Monkey's Paw"); F. Scott Fitzgerald ("Babylon Revisited," *The Great Gatsby*); Kurt Vonnegut (*Welcome to the Monkeyhouse, Slaughterhouse-Five*); Shirley Jackson ("The Lottery," "Charles"); Dorothy Parker ("The Waltz"); *The Diary of Anne Frank*; Dick Gregory (*Autobiography*); Gordon Parks (*Autobiography*); William H. Armstrong (*Sounder*); Mary Shelley (*Frankenstein*); Bram Stoker (*Dracula*); perhaps such current popular novels as *Carrie, The Omen, Sybil,* or *Jaws.* Adolescent novels could also be used provided they are written at a minimum readability level of seventh grade. At this level the language in the books should be complex enough to stimulate language development but not above the students' listening levels.

Syntactical Manipulation

There is evidence from research that work on the development of syntactic understanding improves language skills. In the case of writing the evidence is clear. O'Hare (1973) studied the impact of sentence-combining on seventh graders' writing. He demonstrated that such practice in combining groups of kernel statements into sentences more structurally complex than those students would normally be expected to write resulted in twenty times normal growth in words per T-unit, "the most reliable measure of syntactic maturity. . . . The experimental group's compositions showed evidence of a level of syntactic maturity well beyond that typical of eighth graders and in many respects quite similar to that of twelfth graders" (p. 67). Even experimental students with low IQ's made significant gains in syntactic maturity.

Stotsky (1975) suggests that sentence-combining exercises may have opened the door to "an uncharted and unexplored area—the concept of writing as a profound mental activity" (pp. 66-67), which may facilitate cognitive growth as well as reading ability. She cites the "meager evidence" available on whether a writing approach can improve reading comprehension: in one tenth-grade experimental writing program reading comprehension gains were noted at the .06 level for four out of seven experimental classes, and in another study, work on syntax and paragraph structure in the seventh grade improved reading comprehension at the .01 level.

Another report (Hughes, 1975) of twenty-four seventh graders compared an experimental group which had ten to thirteen weeks of sentence-combining exercises. On a standardized test of reading speed and accuracy there was no difference in gains of the two groups, but miscue analysis showed that the experimental group's reading improved significantly in the use of grammatical relations and in the integration of syntactic and semantic cues. Combs (1977) reported on two groups of seventh graders, one of which received sentence-combining instruction.

Although the two groups were similar on a pretest in reading rate and comprehension, the experimental group, after sentence-combining practice, experienced significant gains in reading comprehension but not rate.

If a teacher decides to incorporate sentence-combining into his/her instructional program, there are several ways to go about it. Some commercial programs exist utilizing sentence-combining activities. Frank O'Hare (1975) has a complete workbook called *Sentencecraft*. If a less extensive or easier program is desired, Cahill and Hrebic's two workbooks, *Cut the Deck* and *Stack the Deck* (1977), might be appropriate. In addition, a teacher could make up his/her own exercises, based perhaps on a book the class is currently reading. Here are some examples taken from Frank Bonham's *The Nitty Gritty* (1968). Complex sentences can be broken into kernels or, vice-versa, kernels can be combined into complex sentences:

1. Complex sentence: *Since Charlie was not especially interested in the conversation, he let his mind slip out of gear like a car.* Kernels: 1) *Charlie was not especially interested in the conversation;* 2) *Charlie let his mind slip out of gear;* 3) *Charlie's mind was slipping out of gear like a car.*
2. Complex sentence: *Charlie had talked to some old winos around the bars on Ajax Street, the main stem of Dogtown, a rundown section of the big city where he lived.* Kernels: 1) *Charlie had talked to some old winos;* 2) *The winos were around the bars;* 3) *The bars were on Ajax Street;* 4) *Ajax Street was the main stem of Dogtown;* 5) *Dogtown was a rundown section of the big city;* 6) *Charlie lived in Dogtown.*

Besides sentence-combining, there are other ways of providing practice for the development of syntactic understanding. Sentences can be lengthened in the manner suggested by Francis Christensen (1967). The basic sentences in the following examples are again taken from *The Nitty Gritty*.

1. Begin with a main clause, then qualify it, or compare it, or detail it, as follows:
   Basic sentence: *Charlie kept forking in the food,*
   Qualifying: *smearing red sauce from the ribs over his mouth,*
   Comparing: *like a mechanical arm in the Schlitz beer factory,*
   Detailing: *bread mixed with collards, butter mixed with the ribs.*
2. Examples of two-level and multi-level sentences:
   [1]*Charlie's father muttered,*
   [2]*stripping the meat from a sparerib with his teeth.*
   [1]*Charlie's father drank deeply from the can of beer by his plate,*
   [2]*slurping some beer over his cheeks,*
   [2]*licking it all off to get the last drop.*
   [1]*Charlie would come out of a dream*
   [2]*like a person walking from a theater on a summer afternoon,*
   [3]*blinking in the cruel sunlight.*

3. Examples of basic sentences to add to:
   a. The old building sounded fascinating, especially the basement, .
   b. Some of those old winos were interesting, _____ .
   c. Outside, Charlie heard a motorcycle popping along like _____ .
   d. Charlie was seventeen, short for his age but _____.

Another possibility would be to use exercises which give practice in structures such as expanded verb forms, relative clauses, participle phrases, causal clauses, question forms, negative sentences, passives, connectives, and indirect discourse. The following examples are taken from McCarr (1973).

1. Give the sentence a "helping word."
   The boys ran in the hall. The _____ _____ in the hall.
2. This question is wrong Make *one* change, and write it correctly.
   Wrong: Did Tom lost his cap? Correct: _____?
3. Change to a question.
   They play baseball sometimes. _____?
4. Write the answer. Where did the boys walk? The boys _____.
   a) in the morning; b) fast; c) to the park.
5. Read the sentence. Write in "so" or "because."
   The house was locked _____ Ann couldn't get in.
6. Change to indirect discourse.
   Tom said, "The game is starting." _____.
7. Write in the correct answers.
   Bob's bike was bought by Mike. _____ bought the bike. He paid _____ $10.

A final way to provide practice for the development of syntactic understanding would be exercises based on Fillmore's case grammar. Such exercises might direct the students to an understanding of the semantic relationships between parts of sentences. For a discussion of this approach to grammar, see Brown (1975, pp. 132-147).

1. Start with a verb, such as *gave* or *hit*.
2. Add the agent, in two ways (the animate instigator of action):
   Mike gave a party. The party was given by Mike. Mike hit Ed. Ed was hit by Mike.
3. What was the instrument? (The inanimate object causing the action)
   The wind gave me a cold. The car hit Ed. Mike hit Ed with a rock.
4. Who was affected by the action? *Me* and *Ed* in the above sentences.
5. Where was the action taking place? *Mike gave the party in his basement. With a rock, Mike hit Ed on his head.*
6. When did the action take place? *Mike gave the party in his basement two weeks ago. Last Saturday Mike hit Ed with a rock on his head.*
7. Who benefitted from the action? *Mike gave the party for Jenny in his basement two weeks ago.*

8. Who else was along? *With Sue and Jane making to dozen pizzas, Mike gave the party for Jenny in his basement two weeks ago. Mike, with the help of Bob, hit Ed on his head last Saturday.*

Language Games

The following suggestions are representative only, examples of activities which can serve as pace-changers or fillers on days before vacation. They are taken from Bailey (1975), Hurwitz and Goddard (1969) and Shipley (1972), which are all rich sources for further ideas.

1. Write a telegram of one sentence in which the words begin with letters of the alphabet in order. Or choose one word and write a sentence with words beginning with those letters—e.g., *procrastinate.*
2. Hold a contest involving two teams which write as many sentences as possible using ambiguous words with their different meanings—words like *drum, fair, back, saw, fire, hole,* etc.
3. Hand out dittos with words on them like the following. The students are to begin at the bottom and go up, finding as many sentences as possible. Words can be used more than once, and the students write the sentences on their papers.

up	ideas	looks	once	late
shut	the	her	always	for
please	understand	like	you	me
you	don't	to	and	are
I	will	listen	try	why

4. Adjective brainstorming: given a limited time, and a noun, the student is to write as many applicable adjectives or descriptive words as possible. Adverb brainstorming: given a limited time, and a verb, the student is to write as many adverbs or adverb-phrases as possible that are applicable to the verb.
5. The group writes a story: The first person writes one line, folds the paper over so that no one can see it, passes it on. When everyone has written a line, the paper is unfolded and read aloud. Several stories may be written simultaneously, with two or three papers passed in different directions at once. For extended practice, these stories or poems may be edited and rewritten and the best ones saved.
6. Card game—antonyms or synonyms: Make a set of cards with as many pairs of words as desired. Deal three cards to each player. The rest of the deck is placed face down in the middle of the table, and play proceeds as in the card game "Fish."
7. Compound word spin: Make a wheel, with a spinner in the middle, with words on it such as *car, light, room, day, where, side, thing, to,* etc. Also make a deck of cards with words such as *air, grand, head, up, down, base, kick, snow, every,* etc. Fan the deck of cards out on the table, face down. Player one draws a card and then spins the word wheel. If the word in his hand and the word he dialed

make a compound word, he scores one point. If not, he keeps the card. At his next turn he may choose to draw another card, or spin to match the one he already has. When all the cards in the deck are used, the game is over.

8. Big Deal (prefixes, suffixes, roots): Make a deck of 68 cards—16 prefixes (7 with *re,* 3 with *pre,* 2 with *mis,* 4 with *un*), 42 roots (3 each of *view, heat, tell, call, cover, spell, even, understand, pair, coil, form, claim, taken, written*), and 10 suffixes (5 each of *ed* and *ing*). After the cards are shuffled, seven cards are dealt to each player, and the rest of the pack is laid face down. The object of the game is to build as many words as possible by putting together prefixes, roots, and suffixes. Play proceeds as in the card game "Rummy."
9. Sentence-forming: From a dictionary select at random 10-12 words, preferably as unrelated as possible. The players write these words in a vertical list. Then each player tries, within a given time, to compose a sentence using all the words in the order in which they are listed, using a few words either before or after each word so as to connect it to the rest of the words in the sentence. When time is up, the sentences are read aloud and compared.
10. Word trading: Make up a deck of cards consisting of the words of several related sentences of equal length, each word on a separate card. If three play, there should be three sentences of not more than twelve words each and each player should receive a third of the cards. With his cards, each player tries to construct a sentence, without showing them to the other players. Players can trade cards, each laying down a word that does not fit his sentence. As a player picks up a word, he has to discard another one. Players keep trading words, one at a time, trying various rearrangements of their cards until one sees exactly what he needs to win. The first player to put down a complete sentence wins.

The advantages of such a program for strengthening the language development of disabled readers go beyond "merely" language. Since language is the basis of all cognitive development, including reading, it can be hypothesized that strengthening the level of language development will also strengthen reading ability. Basic mental skills will be developed: concentration, accuracy, seeing relationships and analogies, forming hypotheses, following directions, comparing and categorizing (Hurwitz and Goddard, 1969). It can further be hypothesized, based on psycholinguistic theory interrelating all parts of the language process, that such a program might also involve gains in students' writing ability, oral reading, listening ability, and oral language ability. In fact, if all these areas are improved, gains should also be noted in self-confidence, the very basis of all adolescent and, indeed, all human achievement.

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READING THE READABILITY RULES: ERISA AND THE SPDs

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EDITOR'S NOTE—While we are unable because of space limitations to print Dr. Thompson's study in its entirety, we know our readers will be interested in this excerpt regarding readability levels and the rules. Its irony may not be delightfully humorous, but it will elicit a wry smile, even from taxpayers.

"Ignorance of the Law is no excuse." Not exactly true! This common law legal maxim may be honored in the breach as much as it is taken to be literally true. Ignorance is often a very good excuse. If a person can show that the law has not been adequately communicated to him, ignorance may be bliss.

From the earliest days of recorded history, governments have recognized the importance of communicating laws to the people. In past generations this meant reading proclamations of law in city squares and nailing rules to church-house doors. Now state legislatures are required to have laws printed and distributed in advance of their enforcement. Federal agencies give the public notice of pending rules in the Federal Register. Likewise courts issue advance sheets as cases are decided. These efforts are all designed to put the public on notice. Public knowledge of the law is considered an essential element in the implementation of the law.

In the past few years, the problem of public notice has been viewed from another angle. The large volume of public rules and their complexity has been seen as a deterrent to effective communication. A Federal Paperwork Commission has been started. It attempts to eliminate unnecessary agency regulations. President Carter has aided the cause by requiring department secretaries to personally read all regulations their departments issue. The idea of readability has also been discovered. A rule may be long. It may be complex. Now the question is being asked of its authors, "Can the rule be understood?"

The ideas of disclosure, notice, and understanding have been a special concern in the pension field.

In the past, private pensions became "broken promises," as benefits were denied workers who could not meet obscure qualification rules. Management adopted a philosophy of "The big print giveth, the small print taketh away." Moreover, ineffective management often led to the

insolvency of pension funds and the consequent denial of expected benefits to workers. Ignorance was not bliss; it was tragic.

Public rules were necessary to correct abuses. The first rules involved disclosure. The Welfare and Pension Plan Disclosure Act of 1958 required that private pension plans report information to the United States Department of Labor. The Act was not effective. Penalties for non-reporting were minor. The accuracy of reports could not be ascertained. Reports were not given to workers. However, pension administrators soon realized they had to be careful with their promises. In 1962, the U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that explanations given a worker by the corporation's pension consultant were incomplete and misleading. Judging Henry J. Friendly declared "failure to communicate with clarity may give rise to liability," and awarded the plaintiff's beneficiary $78,356.

The closing of Studebaker Corporation in 1964 sent shock waves through our Nation's Capitol. Because Studebaker had not set aside enough money for pensions, many workers received as little as 15% of the pension benefits they had expected to receive. In 1965 a presidential commission called for new federal legislation. Bills were prepared and put before Congress. After a long struggle, the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) was passed, and signed into law by President Ford in September, 1974. This very comprehensive law regulated all aspects of private pensions. Pension promises could no longer be retracted. Benefits had to be funded as they accrued. Rules for the management of funds were established. But if the funds were mismanaged, pension promises could still be kept. A new federal agency, the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, was created to insure certain pension benefits.

Unreasonable qualification rules were abolished And disclosure was required—disclosure both to the government and to the worker. The summary plan description (SPD) was the basic document that had to be prepared and given to the worker. It informed him of the pension plan contents, and his rights under the plan. SPDs have to be written in "a manner calculated to be understood by the average" worker. If management fails to write readable summary plan descriptions, and willful neglect can be proven, such failure may mean a fine or imprisonment.

However, specific requirements for SPD and ERISA are hidden in bureaucratic verbiage.

Now, the plans have been written and submitted. It is likely that the Department of Labor will utilize one of the several readability scales to assess the level of difficulty of the written passages. Thus, pension managers are well advised to apply such systems or scales to reports they give to workers. If their writings score too high, they should rewrite.

Pension managers do not only have to interpret their own writings for the workers—they must also interpret ERISA and the Labor Department's rules. How much of a chance does the government give the pen-

sion managers? Just how readable are the rules which call for Summary Plan Description readability?

To answer this question, the Gunning Fog Index was applied to the ERISA provision on SPDs (Section 102), and pertinent sections of the Department of Labor rules on summary plan descriptions which appeared in the Federal Register on July 19, 1977. The section contains 332 words, 86 of which are hard words (three or more syllables). There are six sentences. An average sentence length of 55.3 and frequency of hard words of 25.9% yield a Fog Index of 32.5.

Gunning has written: "If your copy tests 13 or more . . . you are writing on the college level of complexity . . ."

After almost two years of trials and delays, the Department of Labor has issued a "final" set of regulations on SPDs. The Labor Department had received many comments regarding interim regulations, and made adjustments in them. Labor explicitly recognized that some of the regulations had been hard to comprehend. Clarifications were made in some places and not in others. Regarding rules on dates of submission, the Department indicated those sections had been revised to make them clearer and more easily understood.

The Fog index was again applied, this time to indicate the readability of the three most pertinent parts of the regulations. The section on the content of the SPDs (formerly 32.5) now scored 18.4. The section dealing with the style and format of the SPDs scored 21.9. A third section, which provided for certain options produces a Fog Index of 19.4. Indications are that regulations on SPD readability are also beyond the reading abilities of the average college graduate.

Within the regulations whose scores are reported above, are three passages written directly for plan participants.

If a large portion of plan participants are literate only in a foreign language, the SPD must contain a prescribed statement for these participants in their language. In English, the statement contains 63 words, eight of which are hard, and 4 sentences. A Fog score of 11.4 is calculated for the passage. This means the passage is readable at a level slightly above the average high school junior's reading comprehension. It is almost certain that foreign language workers that have not become literate in the English language do not, on the average, have this level of education.

ERISA created the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation. The PBGC insures benefits in defined benefit plans. The SPD for a defined benefit plan must carry a prescribed statement indicating this fact. The statement prescribed was in the interim regulations. It drew comments indicating that it was "too complicated." However, "after consultation with the PBGC, it was decided (by the Department of Labor) that the standard statement should not be changed." This was not a good decision. The statement contains 162 words, 34 (20%) of which are hardwords. The nine sentences in the statement have an average of 18 words

each. The Fog Index for the passage is 15.6. It is readable for average college seniors.

A lengthy statement regarding participants' rights under ERISA must be included in each summary plan description. The statement contains 551 words, 76 (13.8%) of which are hardwords. The statement has 22 sentences, each averaging 25 words in length. A Fog Index of 15.5 demonstrates that this passage also is readable only at the college senior level. The fact is that the American work force has an educational attainment averaging somewhat less than completion of high school. These passages are simply not written in "a manner calculated to be understood by the average" worker.

The reading difficulty of the ERISA provisions and regulations suggests that our congressmen and bureaucrats are not able to achieve what they demand of others. If pension managers would write SPDs like the federal government writes the rules, or even like the federal government writes SPD passages, they could be fined or imprisoned. This is certainly an untenable position for our government to be in.

SURVEYS: VALUABLE TOOLS FOR THE READING CONSULTANT

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Grant-writing—everybody's doing it. Have you noticed the increasing number of job descriptions related to reading that include this as a necessary skill for qualification in the particular position? Project directors, reading coordinators, supervisors and all sorts of administrators must face, sooner or later, the task of pulling together the resources upon which to base a "can't miss" grant application.

If you are writing a grant application or a district reading curriculum, think for a minute about two sections of those documents: the needs assessment and comprehensive planning. Information necessary for both may be obtained via the same technique: the survey.

Surveys range from involved to simple; some are well-done, while others are poorly-constructed. One thing is certain . . . depending on your own immediate objectives, the complexity of the survey will vary. But what of the quality? If you foresee any possibility of employing a survey, you may wish to consider the following information about the construction of survey instruments.

Background Information

The most significant type of study has been the social survey. Historically, surveys date to the first census ordered by Caesar Augustus. Their primary goal—the investigation of the present status of phenomena—is generally the same, despite their variance in complexity and sophistication. As bases upon which to make decisions, surveys are decidedly practical.

In our present diversified society, ways to bridge the gap between school and community is a "survey-ripe" topic. It divides into the following dichotomous grouping: 1) sell the school to the public; and 2) involve citizens in planning, executing, and evaluating the local educational effort (Hofstrand, 1971). Choosing the second alternative often necessitates that additional information be obtained.

Surveys, however, are more than merely collecting information. They involve:

1. designing the survey instrument;
2. collecting information;
3. analyzing the information;
4. reporting the findings;
5. making recommendations.

In other words, surveys do more than merely uncover data. It is the

interpretation, synthesis and integration of these data that provide the ammunition with which to point out the implications and interrelationships that can strengthen your proposal.

Types of Instruments

In order to describe various survey instruments and to determine characteristics peculiar to those types, an informal study was conducted in which approximately thirty were examined.[1] Their potential usefulness was ascertained by measuring each according to certain basic criteria:

1. Does it contain a sufficiently long sample of the actual instrument used?
2. Does there appear to be a definite organizational structure, rather than a vague diffusion of questions?
3. Is there accompanying information which indicates the geographic coverage, intended respondent, length, and method for collecting data?

When several types of design (such as check-list, open-ended) were present in a single instrument, this was noted, but the type encompassing the majority of the information was used for the purpose of analysis.

It was first necessary to select the frame of reference for classification. The one chosen for this discussion has merit from a functional as well as operational and organizational point of view; the *type of instrument* formed the major area of identification.

Three main categories emerged when the instruments were classified functionally according to their *type*. Figure 1 shows the types of survey instruments categorized functionally. The number of instruments having the characteristics attributed to the check-list type comprises 50½ of the total. Since some check-lists and rankings follow a rating-scale format, the distinguishing criterion between these types was the prioritization factor.

Based on a thorough qualitative examination of the characteristics of survey instruments, these generalizations seemed appropriate as descriptors of "most" survey instruments:

1. Check-list in format;
2. Structured;
3. Locally-administered and focused;
4. Addressed to staff, parents, students, and the community-at-large;
5. Brief, especially if free responses are requested;
6. Collected, rather than mailed back.

Surveys, then, may be valuable resources for the reading consultant, especially in the area of staff development.

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[1]Survey instruments reviewed at the Institute for Responsive Education, Boston University, Boston, MA.

Figure 1.
Types of Survey Instruments
Categorized Functionally

INSTRUMENT TYPE	%	SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS	SAMPLE QUESTIONS
open-ended	.23	—elicit opinion —are often unstructured —request additional information —interview	a) What are some of the good things you see happening in your child's reading program? b) What do you expect to get out of your work as a literacy volunteer[0]
check-list	.50	—true/false; yes/no —check as many as apply —structured —demographic information	a) Does the board utilize ad hoc committees? b) Does your parent advisory council meet regularly?
ranking	.27	—scaled —prioritized —structured —coded data sheet	a) Put a "1" in front of the most important experience, a "2" in front of ... b) Place an "x" on the following line to indicate . . . .
Total	1.00		

Surveys of Content Teachers

Consider these two examples of pre-assessment surveys for functional reading in content areas. The first (Figure 2) is designed to probe teachers' opinions about their own strengths and weaknesses in relation to their instructional situations.

Figure 2

Survey of Competency Needs and Resources

Directions: Listed below are competencies related to reading in content areas. Indicate whether you would like assistance in each area. If you are willing to help others, or if you know of resources that might be used for staff development activities in an area, please indicate this in the column labeled "Resources."

Competencies	Needs			Resources
	I feel confident in this area	I would like a little more help	I would like lots of help here	
1. Differentiate reading assignments in a single text to provide for a range of reading abilities				
2. Plan instruction so that students know how to approach their reading assignments				
3. Help students identify various patterns of organization which a writer uses in text material				
4. Help students set purposes for their reading assignments				
5. Develop reading and study guides to help students comprehend text material				

continued:

Competencies	Needs			Resources
	I feel confident in this area	I would like a little more help	I would like lots of help here	
6. Pre-teach technical vocabulary before students meet terms in their reading				
7. Reinforce students' understanding of technical vocabulary by providing opportunities for their repeated use				
8. Use tradebooks to supplement the basic textbook				
9. Determine the difficulty of my content area materials				
10. Use informal group inventories to discover students' limitations in reading textbook assignments				

The second survey (Figure 3) is designed for content teachers to get a handle on their students' performances in various kinds of reading and study activities.

INSERT – Figure 3

Reading and Study Behavior	Student Name							
Comprehension								
1. Follows the author's message								
2. Evaluates the relevancy of facts								
3. Questions the accuracy of statements								
4. Critical of an author's bias								
5. Comprehends what the author means								
6. Follows text organization								
7. Can solve problems through reading								
8. Develops purposes for reading								
9. Makes predictions and takes risks								
10. Applies information to come up with new ideas								
Vocabulary								
1. Has a good grasp of technical terms in the subject under study								

continued:

Reading and Study Behavior								
2. Works out the meaning of an unknown word through context or structural analysis								
3. Knows how to use a dictionary effectively								
4. Sees relationships among key terms								
5. Becomes interested in derivation of technical terms								
Study Habits								
1. Concentrates while reading								
2. Understands better by reading orally than silently								
3. Has a well-defined purpose in mind when studying								
4. Knows how to take notes during lecture and discussion								
5. Can organize material through outlining								
6. Skims to find the answer to a specific question								
7. Reads everything slowly and carefully								
8. Makes use of book parts								

9. Understands charts, maps, tables in the text								
10. Summarizes information								

Grading Key: A = always (excellent)
B = usually (good)
C = sometimes (average)
D = seldom (poor)
F = never (unacceptable)

This article has attempted to provide a thorough "grounding" for the reading consultant who seeks to collect information for proposed funding and/or curriculum innovation. Clearly, surveys can be efficiently constructed tools, used for an amalgam of purposes by reading personnel.

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A SELF-APPRAISAL INVENTORY FOR READING TEACHERS

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After teaching my first year in a sixth grade class, where the reading levels ranged from 2 to 12, I realized that I needed to know more about teaching reading. I went back to school and learned a lot more. Then, I worked with a federal project that functioned in about a dozen school districts, so I saw lots of teachers—some very good and some awful—and lots of children. I then taught some more myself and decided that kids never get to be better readers without good teachers. But, that meant more training for me. When I went back to school again, I found that many people who knew far more about teaching reading than I did said the same thing—the teacher is the key to successful reading instruction. Research by Wallace Ramsey (1962), Guy Bond and Robert Dykstra (1967), Sterl Artley (1969) and Albert Harris and Coleman Morrison (1969) has indicated that the teacher is the most important variable in reading instruction.

However, at that time and still today, there is not good conclusive research data on the characteristics of good reading teachers. Nevertheless, those of us who have watched good reading teachers and who have tried to be good ourselves often have our own intuitive ideas of what competency in teaching reading involves. The following list, although not mutually exclusive and not in any particular order, contains several traits that many successful reading teachers exhibit. An explanation of each trait and ways that it might be exhibited follow the characteristic itself. The list is intended as a self-analysis. The reader can rate him or herself in column I (always), II (sometimes) or III (never) for each item. Teacher whose students are successfully learning and who are enjoying their job will probably have at least seven answers in column I. Anything less than five answers in I probably signals the need for some help from a supervisor or consultant, further training in reading methods courses, additional reading or participation in staff development work. Careful analysis of the items answered with 2's or 3's may help in formulating personal goals for self-improvement.

	Rating		
Characteristic	Column I Always	Column II Sometimes	Column III Never
1. I am an enthusiastic model of reading.			

Characteristic	Rating Column I Always	 Column II Sometimes	 Column III Never

Teachers can project to children the idea that they think reading is important and that they spend valuable time engaged in it. Such activities as talking about books that we read and book clubs that we belong to; sharing new books; and devoting time at school to reading things that are not required convey our own beliefs and values.

2. I encourage youngsters as a facet of their learning to read and then becoming sophisticated readers, to learn all aspects of language.

Students need to learn that all the language arts of speaking, listening, reading and writing are important. Beginning readers, regardless of age, must have the opportunity to learn oral language before learning to read written language. Listening activities should be important parts of language arts instruction, and children must learn to talk, listen, read and write proficiently. In other words, they need to learn respect for all aspects of language.

3. I help my students learn what reading is.

Many childen define reading as reading a textbook story aloud and completing the accompanying workbook assignment (Johns and Ellis, 1976). As a teacher, do I try to help children find pleasure and usefulness in reading by exposing them to larger varieties of reading materials and helping them relate those materials through all the language arts?

4. I read to my students often and draw attention to reading.

Many good reading teachers appear to be excited about reading and teaching reading. Their reading lessons reflect that excitement! They make reading the center of attention and create that focus through personality, appearance and style. They not only draw attention to reading instruction but also to good literature – by reading aloud to children everyday, telling stories effectively and acting out books.

Characteristic	Rating Column I Always	Column II Sometimes	Column III Never
5. I insist that reading is a "meaning-getting" process.			

There is really little reason to read if the material does not have something to say or if there is no message to be comprehended. This should be true of all materials, however simple, yet we often dwell on how well youngsters say the words. We badger them with decoding skills and make them practice in meaningless materials. Instead we might be most interested in whether or not students obtain meaning when they read and whether or not we help them develop only those decoding skills that they need to help them comprehend.

6. I spend my reading time actually teaching reading and letting children read.			

Most teachers try to devote a reasonable amount of time to reading instruction each day. However, careful analysis of that period can show that many of the minutes are devoted to correcting behavior, clarifying instruction for children involved in other work, dealing with messengers and other tasks (Porcher, 1974, Tierney, 1974). Actual reading time may be minimal unless the teacher sets up strict ground rules for interruption. Furthermore, students can often spend a lot of their time marking worksheets or completing workbook pages that do not really make them better readers. They may need such time to actually practice reading.

7. I can teach reading with a basal reader series and/or through other instructional approaches, such as individualized reading or the language experience approach.			

The basal reader approach is the most widely used for teaching reading in our country. In many schools, it is the only way that children are taught to read, even though numerous students have significant problems and need alternative instructional strategies.

Characteristic	Rating Column I Always	Column II Sometimes	Column III Never

Most successful reading teachers can supplement the basal with the language experience and individualized approaches or can adopt these and other means altogether.

8. I am organized.

The most knowledgable and enthusiastic reading teacher will have difficulty if lessons are not planned, materials are not on hand and time is not budgeted. It takes a lot of out-of-class work to be prepared to teach reading efficiently. In-class time must be spent keeping track of why a certain youngster is having difficulty, what another one aleady knows, which ones need some changes made, etc. The key to such management is organization.

9. I continue to learn about reading instruction.

The teaching of reading is a rapidly changing and expanding field. Good teachers try to continually keep up and learn about these new findings. Such continuing education may come through reading professional publications, attending conferences, participating in personal exchanges and evaluating new materials.

10. I always create some success for my students and myself.

All children do not learn to read equally well, but each one can meet with some success. That success is generally dependent upon being instructed at an instructional level. Alternate approaches and supplementary materials ae sometimes needed. The teacher who teaches children at a level where they can learn and varies approaches and strategies usually achieves some success. No teacher always succeeds equally well with every student, but those who strive to insure the students' success generally feel successful themselves. In that way, the children and teacher are happier.

Here, then, are some ideas on what makes a good reading teacher. They have been gleaned from observing teachers, teaching children and undergraduate and graduate reading teachers, conducting inservice and exchanging ideas with other teacher trainers. Some are based on research, while others are mostly intuition. They are offered here as a source of self-appraisal with their ultimate goal being encouraging those

teachers who exhibit these traits and spurring changes in those who want to improve and change their reading instruction.

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THE 5 C'S: A PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH TO STUDY SKILLS

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The most expansive and mobilizing impression a student can acquire is that *what is, may be, but it can be otherwise.* The attitude that all life and circumstances are amenable to analysis and some measure of modification is the avowed purpose of the strategy to improve "Study Skills" described below.

A set of guidelines has been evolved which simultaneously aids the student to meet various reading/learning/study needs while internalizing the fundamentals of problem-solving. This we have called PASS, a Problem-solving Approach to Study Skills. There are two critical features of this approach. For one, an oral language/thinking interaction occurs between the teacher and the class in which the teacher, in the role of facilitator and resource person, serves as a model of effective language and problem-solving behaviors. Second, the student joins with the teacher in the common cause of diagnosing and dealing appropriately with personal learning needs. This approach tends to reduce much of the dependency and child-like behavior students often exhibit when involved in more traditional basic skills instruction.

Five C's code our rendition of a problem-solving approach to study skills. The teacher may wish to employ other problem-solving approaches which he/she finds compatible with his/her thinking.

THE 5 C's:

COUNT:

A list of common study skills is presented to students. They are asked to indicate their judgments as to the severity of each as a problem to them. By simple count and averaging, it can be determined how problems should be ordered for class discussion and treatment.

CHARACTERIZE:

Once a general problem has been identified, the teacher/convener guides students in defining the problem and themselves in specific terms. A general problem may come to be seen in different ways. In test taking, for example, for some, the problem may be lack of systematic preparation; for others, the problem may be anxiety. In any case, the problem often is

in the student in some way as well as in the situation. Thus in this step, the teacher should urge the student to take diagnostic tests of his skills. abilities and such. and thereby reach a firmer sense of himself as a learner. (See recommended instrumentation.)

CONSIDER:

Next, students are led to consider how they intuitively have dealt with a particular problem. The likelihood that better learning habits will be "learned" is felt to be increased when initial credence is given to the methods students gravitate toward personally. The discussion should revolve around whether there is merit in such intuitive means for coping.

COLLECT:

At this point, appropriate myths, "old saws," and standard techniques related to the particular reading/study problem are discussed. (See partial bibliography of standard techniques.) Each is examined in terms of "what aspects of the problem it solves and what problems it presents." As procedures are examined, they are judged on the basis of whether they are compatible with the student's habitual patterns of behavior and temperament. Thorough examination should reveal what, of the student and/or the procedure, can be altered readily, and what might require a level of extraordinary—perhaps to the point of warping— effort . . . and therefore might better be accepted as a technique of marginal effectiveness, unless an alternative plan can be devised.

CREATE:

Where standard procedures have not sufficed, and marginal performance cannot be tolerated, inventive strategies are sought, through creative problem-solving. Depending upon how sensitive and complex the problem, this can be done through group discussion of an individual's problem, or in private with the instructor during a conference period.

How Effective is PASS?

The evidence for a problem-solving approach to study skills is mounting slowly, but steadily. Traditional lines of empirical research are difficult to follow due to the complexity of the objectives, the extemporaneous nature of the strategy, and the paucity of literature and common concern with the general idea. Careful case studies of several students currently are being gathered over a year long period to see the extent to which these support earlier impressions and the anecdotal reports of teachers trained in the strategy.*

A recent book, *Personal Problem Solving in the Classroom* (Mor-

rison, 1977), follows a line of reasoning and approach to learning which parallels the one recommended. Morrison, who calls his approach a "reality technique," also developed his support in an anecdotal manner.

We agree, too, with Morrison that this type of teaching methodology must be appreciated first from an ideological point of view as one which is needed.

One of the major supportive reasons for the inclusion of this form of teaching methodology in a study skills class can be stated in this way: identifying, articulating and solving nagging problems, which is the primary purpose of PASS, is a powerful means of realistically raising hope and fighting failure. Hope, observed O. H. Mowrer, the hard-nosed learning theorist, is an attitude with an accompanying body chemical change which is unparalleled for its impact on motivation to learn and to move forward.

PASS lessons, then, are addressed to attitudinal, affective, and cognitive factors. The belief is that this more holistic approach will prove to be more effective than current methodologies which tend to focus rather exclusively on reading/academic skills as if these somehow were entities apart from other human attributes and foibles.

Partial List of Diagnostic Instruments
Which We Have Found Useful

Reading/Study Skills

1. Textbook Diagnostic Test (see David L. Shepherd, *Comprehensive High School Reading Methods.* Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1973).
2. Wofford and Willoughby Study Practices Inventory (available from T. Lee Willoughby, University of Missouri-Kansas City).
3. Watson-Glaser test of Critical Thinking (Psychological Corporation).
4. Brown-Carlsen Listening Comprehension Test (Psychological Corporation).
5. Critical Judgments test (available from Manzo and Casale at no charge).

Affective/Attidudinal/Learning Styles

1. Estes Attitude Scale (*Journal of Reading,* Nov., 1971).
2. Manzo Learning Preference Inventory (available from author at no charge).
3. Manzo Bestiary Inventory (available from author at no charge). Projective Test
4. Brown-Holtzman Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes (Psychological Corporation).

Intelligence and Verbal Ability

1. Tests of General Ability (K-12, Science Research Associates).
2. Gorham's Proverbs Test (Psychological Test Specialists).
3. Slosson IQ test.
4. Peabody Picture Vocabulary test (American Guidance Association).
5. Raven Progressive Matrices (Psychological Corporation).

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TEACHERS AS READERS: AN EXTENSION OF THE 'IMPACT OF READING' SURVEY

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True or False.

1. Teachers who are avid readers are likely to have a positive influence on the reading habits of their students.
2. Teachers who are themselves reluctant readers are not likely to lead students to a lifelong love of reading.

Most reading teachers probably would classify both of these statements as True. For many years it has been widely held that teachers who are readers, who themselves value reading as an important part of their lives, will be more successful in inspiring their students to hold reading in similar esteem. It is a most tempting, common sense idea, and there is some evidence from research to support the notion that teachers with good reading habits are more likely to lead their students to improve in reading (El Hagrasy, 1962).

Do teachers have a responsibility to help students to develop positive attitudes about reading? The idea that teachers can and should play a major role in the development of students' reading habits and interests has never been seriously questioned. In fact, most reading methods texts and many journal articles repeatedly stress this aspect of teachers' responsibilities. "Interests do not grow in a vacuum . . . the teacher's task, then, is not only to feed the interests the child already possesses but to open up new avenues of interest and opportunity" (Strickland, 1957). "Developing permanent interests in reading must be the goal of every teacher regardless of the particular subject she (sic) may be teaching" (Barbe, 1963).

Just how teachers are to become effective in shaping positive reading attitudes in their students is a continuing problem that has prompted a plentitude of suggestions. Games, puzzles, inducements, and rewards abound. Almost daily, it seems, or at least with discouraging regularity new devices and strategies appear, all calculated to titillate and maintain young readers' interest in reading.

A fundamental ingredient in any of the plans for teachers to help

students to develop positive reading attitudes, it seems to us, is the teacher's own love of reading. Appeals to teachers to assume the role of model for students' reading attitudes are common in the literature of teacher preparation. "Logic and some research indicate that teachers' reading abilities, attitudes, and habits have an influence on those same characteristics of students" (Smith, et. al., 1978). The modeling function of teachers' reading behaviors is suggested directly: "One way we can build strong positive attitudes toward reading in our students is by demonstrating that we ourselves enjoy, respect, and profit from reading" (Dulin, 1978).

Yet, despite the call for such modeling behavior, a curious gap in reading research is the dearth of investigations into the personal reading attitudes and habits of teachers. There are a few studies in this area, such as the one by El Hagrasy which was cited earlier. In general, however, the more serious and ambitious research into reading habits and attitudes seems to concentrate upon the general adult population rather than upon teachers. A recent example of this type of research is that done by the Book Industry Study Group which released a report of its investigations in October 1978 (BISG, 1978). Guthrie (1979) reviewed this research and compared it with similar studies done by Strang in 1942.

To understand the impetus for such general readership studies is not difficult. Both book sellers and reading teachers have a stake in increasing their knowledge about the reading habits of the general public. However, our point is that much more must be known about the reading attitudes and behaviors of teachers if insights are to be gained about teachers as positive models of reading behavior for their students.

However, gathering solid information about the reading behaviors of teachers presents complex investigative problems. Quantitative research, while useful, seems to fall short of what is really needed. It may be relevant to know that teachers read less than one book a month (Odland and Ilstrup, 1963), but the question of why this is so remains unanswered. Qualitative research, such as case studies and extended interviews, may provide more insight into teachers' reading predilections but it is somewhat suspect in that such research may lack generalizability.

Maring (1976), among others, has written about the shortcomings of quantitative research into reading attitudes, and he suggested a design for gathering more pertinent information which he called "Survey on the Impact of Reading" (Maring, 1976). Although Maring's survey is clearly intended for use by classroom teachers with their own students, it can be viewed as a productive point of departure for investigating the reading habits of those who teach. Because it seems important to gain insight into teachers' reading behaviors, because quantitative research alone does not produce exactly the type of information needed, and because subjective reports by themselves are difficult to generalize, one might propose a symbiotic format which uses both quantitative and

qualitative elements. By examining statistical evidence in the light of teachers' subjective comments about their reading preferences, attitudes, and habits, more useful knowledge may be obtained than if either method were used alone.

There are several reasons for this suggested procedure. First, there is an obvious advantage in time, cost, and effort, if reliable information about the impact of reading on teachers' thoughts and actions can be obtained by a survey method. Second, comparative information may be obtained about teachers' perceptions of the impact of reading at different stages of their careers. Third, the format may be easily modified to permit other questions to be added as more and differing information is required. Finally, by the very act of responding to a survey on the impact of reading on their lives, teachers may be encouraged to further self-reflection about the relationship of reading to their personal value systems.

Description of the Study

The study was undertaken to investigate the reading habits and self-perceptions of teachers in various stages of their careers. The intent was to couple reflective information of the sort given with an earlier "impact of reading" survey (Maring, 1976) with other quantifiable measures.

Subjects

The subjects were 22 pre-service teachers, 26 graduate students in reading, and 26 experienced classroom teachers. All the subjects were drawn from a population in or near a large Midwestern city.

Materials

The survey form was comprised of a force-choice segment and an open-ended response section. The forced-choice component gathered information at:

1. Number of books read yearly
2. Frequency of library use
3. Self-evaluation of reading ability
5. Imaging behaviors

The open-ended response section probed:

1. Types of books read
2. Ways in which reading impacted on thought
3. Ways in which reading impacted on actions
4. General observations on reading

Data Analysis and Discussion

The data were subjected to several forms of analysis, both statistical and anecdotal. The former attempted to find significant differences among the three groups of subjects on the quantifiable variables; the latter was analyzed to attempt to explain any variances discovered as well as to elaborate on any measures that showed quantitatively insignificant differences which might be qualitatively different.

Analyses of variance among the groups along the dimensions of the first five variables (number of books read, frequency of library use, enjoyment of reading, perceived reading ability and imaging) pointed out similarities among the groups. An analysis of sheer quantity of books read (Group X number) indicated a large difference among the groups (see Table 1). There appeared to be an inverse relationship between the level of experience and the quantity of reading with the pre-service teachers reading three times as many books as the practicing classroom teachers and almost twice as many as the graduate students in reading.

TABLE 1

Analysis of Variance
Number of books read per year X group

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Between	2	9600.4249	4800.2124	10.2857
Among	71	33134.7238	466.6863	
Total	73	42735.1486		
p .0001				

An initial supposition might be that involvement in college courses would necessitate the greater amount of reading done by the pre-service teachers. However, analysis of the most recent books read by all the subjects indicated that, in this group's reading material, fiction outnumbered instructional type reading 4-1. 50% of the practicing teachers read 5 or fewer books per year while 90% of the pre-service teachers and 80% of the graduate students in reading read more than 5 books per year.

Anecdotal comments of the classroom teachers suggested that the real reason for their limited reading was time. An overwhelming comment was that the exigencies of teaching and everyday life made them unable to read as much as they would like. An interesting side analysis (Group X library use) revealed that the groups were significantly different in the frequency of library use (see table 2), the pre-service

TABLE 2

Analysis of Variance
Frequency of Library Use X Group

Source	DF	SS	MS	F
Between	2	9.0425	4.5213	4.4130
Among	71	72.7413	1.0245	
Total	73	81.7838		
p .01				

teachers being rare users of these public facilities. Anecdotal expansions noted that they preferred to buy books, especially mass market paperbacks, another indication that the reading they were doing was done for pleasure rather than for school requirements.

The majority of all groups considered themselves better than average readers and rated their enjoyment of reading as greater than average (see tables 3 & 4). Similarly, the subjects rated themselves as high imagers.

TABLE 3

How much do you enjoy reading?
(Percentage response)

	Teachers		
	Pre-service	Graduate	Practicing
Much more than most people	31.8%	34.6%	19.2%
More than most people	27.3%	34.6%	30.8%
As much as most people	22.7%	23.1%	19.2%
Less than most people	13.6%	7.7%	19.2%
Much less than most people	4.5%	0%	11.5%

TABLE 4

How well do you read?
(Percentage response)

	Teachers		
	Pre-service	Graduate	Practicing
Much better than most people	13.6%	30.8%	11.5%
Better than most people	36.4%	42.3%	34.6%
As well as most people	45.5%	26.9%	42.3%
Less well than most people	4.5%	0%	3.8%
Much less well than most people	0%	0%	7.7%

The open-ended surveys gave very real insights not only into quantitative differences but to qualitative ones as well. While the most current reading of the pre-service teachers was fiction, the graduate and practicing teachers listed more books of a "how-to" nature (*How to Sell Your Crafts),* books on psychology of self-actualization *(I'm O.K., You're O.K.*), and books on religion/philosophy (*Walden, The Bible*). The informal tabulations suggest the function of reading changes from reading for pleasure to reading as food for reflection and activity.

Examination of the anecdotal comments on change of life and thought support these notions. An overall outcome was that the subjects

rarely differentiated between books impacting on thought and those impacting on action. Books that changed thoughts were usually listed as the same as those which changed actions with little appended notes that "when I think differently I act differently." It might be hypothesized that the types of books listed as significant could reflect on sheer quantity of reading as the more experienced teachers commonly listed as important books those that could be reread or read slowly, such as the Bible.

A final overview of this attempt to extend the "impact of reading survey from students to classroom teachers suggests that such an endeavor can prove useful in several dimensions. First, the "questionnaire plus forced-choice" format provided information on teachers as reading models. Both pre-service and in-service teachers revealed very positive attitudes toward reading and toward themselves as readers. Their book-use habits gave credence to the belief that people do, indeed, read for many purposes and that the role of reading in life changes. A significant negative outcome, however, would seem to be the reduction of reading that takes place, if teachers' self-evaluations are correct, because of the demands of the profession. Perhaps such an outcome speaks most strongly for the inclusion of a Sustained Silent Reading period in the school day as advantageous not only for the students but for the teachers. Such a curricular addition would help the teachers retain their own "reading stamina" and acts as guides and models at the same time.

A second dimension of information relates to the format of the survey. The combination of direct questions and self-reflective essays provided two different sorts of data which allowed a cross-checking mode of interpretation. To date, a good balance and range of questions has not been determined. On the forced-choice segment, the amount of reading and list of recent reading proved useful as did the self-perception questions. On the open-ended section, it was most interesting to note that very few of the respondents differentiated between books that changed thoughts and those that changed actions, noting the same books in both categories. Many of the subjects stated that the same books that changed thoughts also changed actions. Cross-cultural inquiries might raise interesting questions about reading for reflection as opposed to reading for action; in this survey, however, the two questions were not discriminating. Useful and pertinent items might best be developed in concert with those polled and should be a major focus for extending this line of inquiry.

Indeed, the final, and perhaps most informative outcome is related to the survey process as a learning and self-exploration tool. Many of the subjects noted, in conversation and on the final open-ended response sheet, that being asked to reflect about reading made them think about reading in new and productive ways. Although conditioned to talking to their students about their (the students') reading, teachers very rarely though about themselves as readers. Such reflection, they noted, made

them consider the place of reading in their own lives, their reading habits and their functions as reading models for their students. Many of the teachers felt that the introspective process would favorably affect all these categories of their reading behavior.

Perhaps, then, the most important impact of an "impact of reading" survey is to reorient teachers to a primary goal of reading instruction, the communication of the love of books and the enjoyable habit of lifelong reading to their students. For,

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> Example is stronger than precept, and imitation is the most immediate form of learning. Words have no meaning other than the action they produce. And in our schools words are activated by what teachers believe. From every standpoint, then, it is important that teachers, the unacknowledged legislators of the world, shall believe in the right things. For unless they do, their words and conduct, no matter how noble the sentiments they are supposed to express, will be recognized for the counterfeit coin they are.
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> (Montagu, 1951, p. 107)

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TOWARD A MORE COGNITIVE DEFINITION OF READING COMPREHENSION

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Perhaps the most pervasive and unsettling problem confronting the community of reading educators, researchers, and theorists is the lack of a commonly held view of the precise nature of reading comprehension. "Comprehension" has developed denotative and connotative characteristics which befuddle even the most serious students of language and language processes.

This paper proposes, as a partial solution to this vexing situation, a straightforward theoretical construct as a lexical equivalent of the technical term. The focus here is upon relating reading comprehension to a variety of research and theoretical paradigms which lend themselves to divergent interpretations, but which have a common conceptual base.

It should be noted at the outset that the perspective from which this paper is written obviates the inclusion of a variety of commonly held notions concerning the definition of "reading comprehension." In brief, the following assumptions are held to be less than complete in their descriptions of the term:

1. That comprehension is a possession of the individual upon completion of the reading act.
2. That comprehension is a product of the reading process.
3. That comprehension is the final link in an essentially nonmentalistic associative chain.
4. That comprehension is a sequence of skills, each skill somehow serving as a component of a complete entity.
5. That comprehension is somehow the equivalent of a sub-vocalized decoding (e.g., "rauding") in the sense that it is a "compliant oral rendering of the text" (Page, 1977, p. 3).

Each of these conceptualizations of reading comprehension omits the creative, affective, idiographic, and ontogenic aspects of the construct. Gibson, addressing another problem and another audience, succinctly summarizes a portion of the view presented here: "Reading is a cognitive process. No S-R theory is going to help us. It starts with perception . . . and it ends up as a conceptual process" (1972, p. 3).

But perhaps it is the plethora of models, theories, and suggested explanations from which we are asked to choose that provides for the general confusion. A small sampling of these offerings demonstrates

their variety. Some semanticists equate comprehension with "understanding" in the context of an information-storage-retrieval-reaction device (Scriven, 1972, p. 32). Other investigators recommend exhaustive componential analysis (as per the extensive kinship terminology research of anthropology) as a tool for comprehending comprehension. By far the largest and most influential school however, presumably extending and adapting some aspects of sub-strata factor "theory" (Holmes, 1953), employs a reductionistic strategy in developing a multitude of comprehension "sub-skills," the implication being that transference can and will occur to other contexts.

No doubt each of these paradigms offers something to the teacher or theorist who wishes to utilize or put forth a clear-cut definition of reading comprehension. Each offers, however, a definition based less on empirically verifiable data and well-organized cognitive principles, than on a functionalistic or structuralistic perspective.

How then are we to define reading comprehension so that it is of legitimate use to the teacher, researcher, and theorist? The suggestion offered here is that we attempt a synthesis of cognitive theory with the significant results of recent idiographic and nomothetic research in comprehension. The result is proposed as the rational—some might say rationalistic—beginning of a more cognitive definition of reading comprehension.

The goal of this brief paper, then, is a tentative definition of reading comprehension which invites response and criticism. Its purpose is to engender examination among model-builders and practitioners in the field of reading. It is certainly not offered as the right answer; at this stage it is doubtful that the right questions are being asked. Rather it is offered as a plea for the examination, empirically and theoretically, of reading as a molar cognitive process bound by linguistic convention.

The Ambiguity of Comprehension

In the statement by Gibson quoted above, three terms would seem to serve as useful components of a foundation for a more useful definition of reading comprehension: "cognitive," "conceptual," and "process."

Reading comprehension is cognitive in its most elemental sense; i.e., it is internal, rationalistic, and covert. It is conceptual in that it does not readily lend itself to reduction into elements or bits of information. Although it is possible to view comprehension from the perspective of reducing uncertainty, it may be more profitable to analyze the process in holistic terms (Smith, 1978). Comprehension is a "process"—rather than a product—which is not easily quantified, which is ultimately not observable, and which begets other processes.

A useful benchmark in establishing a definition of reading comprehension may be found in Page's (1978) differentiation between pseudo-reading and meaningful reading. In assessing a variety of oral reading altercues, Page describes pseudo-reading in terms of a "spoken analog that replicates the printed language." This variety of reading,

begetting very little in the way of internalization of cognitive conceptualization, is vividly contrasted to "the reconstruction of the message" which occurs during meaningful reading; e.g., comprehension (p. 3).

Other writers, too, have implicitly noted the ambiguity surrounding the variety of references to the vague concept of "comprehension." Carroll, for example, notes that "the commonly accepted definition of comprehension is that it is a process of apprehending the 'meaning' of something—the 'meaning' of a word, phrase or idiom in a sentence, or longer discourse" (1972, p. 10).

It is possible to infer from this statement a certain degree of dissatisfaction with the "commonly accepted definition." As a professional group, reading educators tend to be decidedly ambiguous concerning comprehension, what Goodman has called the "only objective" of all our instruction, research, and theory (1972, p. 2).

The comment by Carroll noted above implies the vague nature of "meaning" as a distinct property of language and cognition. A multitude of scholars has been unable to resolve the meaning of meaning, ranging from Ogden and Richards (1923) through Quine (1964) and Putnam (1975). Even a superficial discussion of meaning requires the integration of such abstruse but essential considerations as the language-Weltanschauung hypothesis of Sapir and Whorf (1956), the semantic generalizations of Luria and Vinogradov (1959), and the case relations of Fillmore (1968) and Gruber (1965). Each of these somewhat recondite concepts suggests a wider distance between the theoretical and practical levels of application.

Perhaps, however, it is possible to define, at least operationally, the process of reading comprehension within cognitive parameters without the exhausting necessity of defining the meaning of meaning.

The Disambiguity of Comprehension

The tentative definition of reading comprehension proposed here takes as its source contemporary work in psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology. The suggested operational definition takes its unifying principle from the Piagettian notion that "no form of knowledge, not even perception, constitutes a simple copy of reality, because it always includes a process of assimilation to previous cognitive structures" (Piaget, 1971, p. 4).

This statement is, of course, central to the concept of the cognitive schema. The linguistic interiorization of cognitive content is thus assimilated by schemata which may be said to be pre-conceptual. Depending upon one's perspective, it is possible to see in this concept the confrontation between conventional logical positivism and genetic epistemology.

However, if these points are considered in the light of recent psycholinguistic research in reading (Goodman and Burke, 1973; Page, 1976; Thorndyke, 1977), a synthesis of the conclusions may suggest the following definition: reading comprehension is the integration of

idiomatic or "chunked" structures are provided for, as well as longer forms of narrative and expository discourse.

Further, this definition of reading comprehension would seem to be consistent with the empirical results of miscue analysis research and with the "incidentally perceptual" information processing description suggested by Smith (1973). The proposed definition of reading comprehension would also appear to account for the pseudo-reading described above. In this context, pseudo-reading would appear to be essentially the grapho-phonemic aspect of sub-vocalization. In cognitive terms, it would serve merely as perceptual interpretation through the intermediary of functional and/or spatial schemata.

The overriding concern is that the fundamental interpretive base is semantic in nature. While the other primary language systems contribute to assimilation, language (hence reading) is essentially meaning-centered. Syntactic and grapho-phonemic considerations are important, but ancillary.

Part of the definition of reading comprehension postulated here is analogous to some components of the original analysis-by-synthesis model proposed by Bergson (1911) and refined by Neisser (1967). But the definition discussed here is essentially eclectic.

Empirical validation of a definition such as the one proposed here is, of course, quite difficult to obtain when so much of the validation depends upon the researcher's perspective in interpretation. Some recent and on-going studies (Page, 1977; Carey, 1978) would, however, appear to lend some validity to this definition when interpreted in the light of contemporary cognitive theory. Also, a long-held truism from the natural sciences is still pertinent: absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

As noted earlier, there is probably no single definition or macro-definition of reading comprehension available to us, just as there is not, as yet, a representative model. This brief paper has been an attempt, however, to engender discussion on the topic, the ultimate goal being a clarification of the entire concept.

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INTEGRATING THE ESL READER INTO THE AMERICAN COLLEGE CLASSROOM

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A non-native speaker of English attending an American college or university needs a variety of reading skills to succeed as a student, as a resident of an American town or city, and as a member of the cultural community. Although each student's needs will differ according to his/her previous amount of contact with the English language, certain general needs can be assessed for the non-native speaker who has at least an intermediate range of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills. Both secondary and college teachers can help ESL (English as a Second Language) readers prepare for and adjust to life on an American college campus by recommending specific reading materials and techniques to help meet these students' needs.

Four general categories of reading needs can be defined for the ESL student:

1. *The need to read and understand materials associated with life as a college student.* On a typical day, the ESL reader might encounter such materials as college catalogues, registration forms, schedules of classes, course syllabi, campus newspapers, campus signs, posters for campus events, and library use instructions, not to mention reading assignments for particular courses. Besides developing specialized reading skills for these different kinds of materials, the reader must learn the uniquely American vocabulary of informal English usage. He/she needs to learn how to "fill out" forms, how to "hand in" assignments, how to "make up" exams, how to "catch up on" missed homework, and how to "goof off" while "hanging around" at the student union. But, in addition to learning how to "get around" on a college campus, the ESL reader has further needs.

2. *The need to read and understand materials associated with finding one's way around the town or city where one lives and taking care of one's basic needs.* Think about how much native English speakers take certain reading materials for granted: bus schedules, city maps, the white and yellow pages of the telephone book, restaurant menus, to name just a few. The non-native speaker, however, needs to learn how to deal successfully with all of these basic types of information. Then, too, the ESL reader must learn to understand local newspapers, not only to find out the state of current events but also to learn where to shop for groceries, how to locate an inexpensive but reliable used car, and (in

places such as Wisconsin) where to buy such indispensible items as snorkel parkas and stocking caps. Related to this group of basic needs is another important need.

3. *The need to read and understand materials associated with the social and cultural life of the town or city where one lives.* For instance, the student needs to locate information about various religious groups, information about childcare and adult education classes, information about the campus International Student Association, and information about campus support groups formed by others from his/her native country. It is important to remember that, though the ESL student needs to become involved in the U.S. culture while living in the states, the student may return to his/her native country and needs to keep abreast with the social, political, and economic situation there. Finally, the ESL student has one more important reading need.

4. *The need to read and understand legal and statutory materials.* Knowledge about the system of city, state, and federal government in the United States is not only interesting but also important to the non-citizen, who must abide by the system's laws while living in this country. Laws that most U.S. citizens take for granted, such as traffic statutes or driver's license regulations, are not second nature to the ESL student. Thus, he/she may need to learn how to prepare for the driver's license examination or how to study the right-turn-on-red regulation. If the student works while in the U.S., he/she needs to be fully aware of the tax laws affecting his/her situation. Perhaps the most important statutes for the student to read and understand, however, are those governing different types of visas and their respective work restrictions. For example, the student needs to understand what having a B-2 (tourist) or an F-1 (student) visa means; and he/she needs to know how to apply for an I-20 form, issued through the college or university to verify one's student status. These are but a few examples of legal materials which the ESL reader must be able to comprehend.

Now that the student's reading needs and the kinds of reading materials that he/she might typically encounter have been examined, what practical reading tips can the teacher offer to this type of reader? Before discussing specific advice, let me explain three key points to bear in mind regarding the ESL reader. First, he/she needs a context for all reading experiences. Learning the meanings of isolated idiomatic expressions will not help the student learn to recognize, understand, and use these items. Therefore, contextualizing reading experiences is essential to the success of the ESL reader's experiences. Second, materials that have immediate practical value will prove most useful to the reader. Studying the history of the U.S. Congress, for example, will probably not be as immediately useful as reading and understanding the classified advertisements section of the daily newspaper. Third, this reader's high motivation level, necessitated by the desire to read for survival in an unfamiliar culture, should be kept in mind. This high motivation level, necessitated by the desire to read for survival in an un-

familiar culture, should be kept in mind. This high motivation level often makes it possible for the ESL reader to progress more quickly than other readers in learning and using reading skills.

Now for practical tips. Structural analysis skills are important to the reader's progress because he/she needs to actively engage in prefix, root, and suffix analysis when meeting unfamiliar words in context. Learning the highly unpredictable system of negative prefixes (e.g., *in*valuable, *non*violent, *un*happy, *ir*reparable) and learning Latinate forms borrowed into English (e.g., *con-, ex-, ad-, counter-*) are prerequisites to becoming skilled in word analysis. The student can practice this skill by underlining unfamiliar words with negative prefixes or Latinate parts of hypothesizing about their meanings by using context clues.

The student also needs to engage in sentence structure analysis. Since the English word order differs from that of many other languages, the ESL reader needs to develop "decoding" skills to determine underlying meanings from surface forms. An excellent practice drill which the teacher can initiate is the underlining and identification of sentence parts:

Subj. Verb Ind. Obj. Dir. Obj. Prep. Obj. Prep. Obj.
The father gave his daughter five dollars for an evening at the movies.

Once the student has learned this "decoding" skill, he/she can apply it to high interest reading materials of his/her own choosing. A second useful type of sentence analysis is the interpretation of newspaper headlines. Deletion of words and inversion of word order often make headlines hard to decipher, but the student can learn to understand them by rewriting them in more traditional sentence form, as follows:

Legislators to Push for ERA Extension	Members of the U.S. Congress are going to support an effort to allow more time for the passage of the Equal Rights Amendment.
Packers' Start the Best Since '68	The Green Bay Packers football team, which has just begun a new season, is having the most successful winning season since the 1968 season.

Teaching the ESL reader the "headline decoding" skill has, it is clear, both practical value and high interest level for this type of reader. Thus, it is a skill which can be easily taught, learned, and used.

SQ3R (Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Review) can prove indispensible to the student when reading daily newspapers as well as textbooks. By studying headlines, introductions, subheadings, and conclusions of articles or essays or chapters, the student can get the Big Pic-

ture before actually reading the article more closely. The reader can also apply the surveying skill to such materials as college catalogues and course descriptions, where his/her goal is to understand general principles before studying particular details. After surveying, the reader can follow through with the SQ3R method by turning headlines and subheadings into questions and reading to find answers.

Skimming and scanning, related to SQ3R, should also be part of the ESL reader's daily practice. Skimming ads in newspapers simply to see what is for sale and what it costs can help the student figure out a budget as well as practice specific reading skills. Skimming the college schedule of classes to see what courses are offered can give an overview of departmental emphases. More importantly, such exercises help create self-confidence in one's ability to read for key words and ideas rather than to read slowly, word by word.

Study skills can be easily incorporated into the reader's daily experiences within the classroom setting, where the teacher can help him/her learn and practice test-taking and essay-writing skills. The teacher's explanations of the principles underlying objective as opposed to subjective tests can provide the ESL student with valuable background information which he/she might not encounter when talking to other students. Learning study skills, then, can be helpful to the ESL student in a variety of ways.

The final skill which the ESL reader needs to learn is the critical reading skill, that is, reading with a healthy skepticism as well as reading for enjoyment. Besides helping the ESL reader learn to read skeptically, the teacher can use newspaper and magazine articles to explain commonly used patterns of essay organization, such as process narration, informative exposition, and critical analysis—patterns which the student will eventually want to incorporate into his/her own writing.

Since critical reading also involves reading for pleasure, ESL readers should be encouraged to read not only difficult textbook and essay materials but also more relaxing kinds of materials, such as *Reader's Digest* first-person narratives. *TV Guide* program synopses, and newspaper comic strips.

The preceding discussion has offered an overview of the ESL student's daily reading needs as well as some suggestions for teachers to use in helping the student meet those needs. Reading is by no means a passive skill for the non-native English speaker at an American college or university. Rather, it is a skill that requires active involvement and the ability to enjoy as well as learn. We, as teachers, play an important role in helping this kind of student prepare for, adapt to, and succeed in the college classroom environment.

GIFTED READING PROGRAMS: UNCOVERING THE HIDDEN POTENTIAL

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Within the last decade there has been a noticeable increase in the attention afforded the special segment of the school population termed "gifted" by reading educators. This interest has been engendered in part by the availability of Federal and State funds set aside for gifted instruction. Even with the rising concern for improved reading instruction of the gifted student, the questions arise as to whether the applied methods of identification used to affirm "giftedness" are indeed adequate and if reading instructional programs initiated for these students meet their highly specialized needs.

From its earliest inception the term "gifted" has undergone change. The traditional view of the gifted child was that he should be identified by his superior performance on intellectual measures. Included in this view was the notion that the gifted child should be able to develop his academic potential without any special help by the school. Because of this feeling, few programs for the gifted were available prior to 1969. However, since the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education amendment of 1969, more efficient attempts at identifying the gifted and creative child have been initiated and new academic programs have been developed. As a result of this act, the definition of "giftedness" has broadened from its restricted equation with a superior IQ to encompass children who have the potential to develop creativity and acquire and master knowledge (Isaacs, 1971). However, most methods of identification based on this enlarged definition continued to rely heavily on standardized tests to determine giftedness. The result of the emphasis on standardized tests was the identification of a vastly disproportionate number of gifted who belonged to the dominant culture. If the objective of the identification procedure had remained simply to recognize those who achieved well in the educational/intellectual arena, then, the reliance on standardized test scores may have been sufficient evaluation. Yet, in the last several years the trend has been to enlarge the definition of "giftedness" even further.

Tongue and Sperling (1976) report that current projects provided by the U.S. Office of Education are moving away from measures of IQ and

the restricted academic notions of IQ to a more functional method for identifying the gifted child.

The new gifted may be individuals from the dominant cultural or sub-dominant cultural group, and may be present educational/social achievers or potential achievers. The "dominant culture" individual is defined as that person who possesses the qualities and characteristics held in esteem by the dominant or controlling cultural group. "Sub-dominant cultural" individuals, conversely, are those persons who do not possess the qualities which are considered important by the controling cultural group and who must, therefore, operate outside the realm of this dominant group in accordance with their own varying set of cultural standards. As the definition of gifted has broadened, so, too, must the identification procedure be broadened to place less emphasis on standardized tests or academic accomplishments.

In the effort to develop an evaluation procedure that could serve all cultural groups and provide sub-dominant cultural students with an equal chance of being recognized as gifted, it would appear that a technique as free from acculturation as possible would be the primary goal. The problems associated with such an effort are not easily overcome, however. Not only are such "cultural-free" evaluators of "giftedness" at the very least, extremely difficult to develop, but also standardized testing has been a readily available means of evaluation that may not be easily given up by teachers in lieu of less familiar, more subjective and possibly more time-consuming methods of evaluation. The move away from the total reliance on objective methods of evaluation to determine giftedness must take place if reading educators are to identify and provide appropriate instruction for sub-dominant culturally gifted students.

The paradoxes of the present identification procedures for giftedness can be clearly demonstrated by a comparison of reading skills to giftedness. Research has shown that most gifted students identified by conventional means are verbally gifted individuals with well-developed vocabularies. Further, many gifted students read early and avidly and perform better on reading skill tests. The question becomes, therefore, whether these characteristics can be used to separate the gifted from the non-gifted or if, in fact, the criteria for giftedness generally employed have favored the more accomplished readers. Certainly, most standardized tests are exercises in silent reading, and these test/scores would be weighed in favor of those who already possess the necessary reading skills. Further, those of sub-dominant cultural groups who may lack the reading skills in Standard English but still have the underlying intellectual, emotional, social skills associated with giftedness have little chance of success on such tests and, consequently, have little chance of being considered gifted. When dealing with sub-dominant cultural students, therefore, it becomes necessary to expand the base for evaluation in the identification process to rely most heavily on effective subjective measures.

Presently, it appears that reading programs for the gifted tend to operate merely as rewards for children who have demonstrated above average reading skills rather than as programs to stimulate gifted students from all cultural groups who may or may not possess exceptional reading ability as demonstrated by standardized means. This has occurred primarily because of the complexity of already existing identification models which limit the identification of the gifted to children who have the ability to perform well on standardized test measures or demonstrate superior reading ability in the classroom.

The authors believe that the first step in the establishment of an effective reading program for the gifted is the adoption of a more adequate system of evaluation which fits all cultural groups and the development of the reading program upon this improved system.

The purpose of this article, therefore, is to present a practical model for the Identification of Gifted Students that can be applied for dominant cultural or sub-dominant cultural individuals and a simplified observational checklist which will enable classroom teachers to evaluate personality factors which researchers have shown are characteristic of giftedness.

Models For Identifying the Gifted

A survey of the research literature describes various models which have been developed for the identification of gifted children.

Even though there has been an attempt by researchers to reduce the importance of intelligence, in the identification of the gifted it has remained an important aspect of these models. New models, in addition to IQ, include emphasis on personality traits, the child's capacity for learning, as well as other behavioral characteristics. While tremendous progress has been made in expanding the narrow traditional definition of gifted, the authors believe that because intelligence tests are a relatively quick way of identifying children with superior ability, school programs will continue to weigh intelligence heavily in selecting the gifted child, unless a more workable model is made readily available.

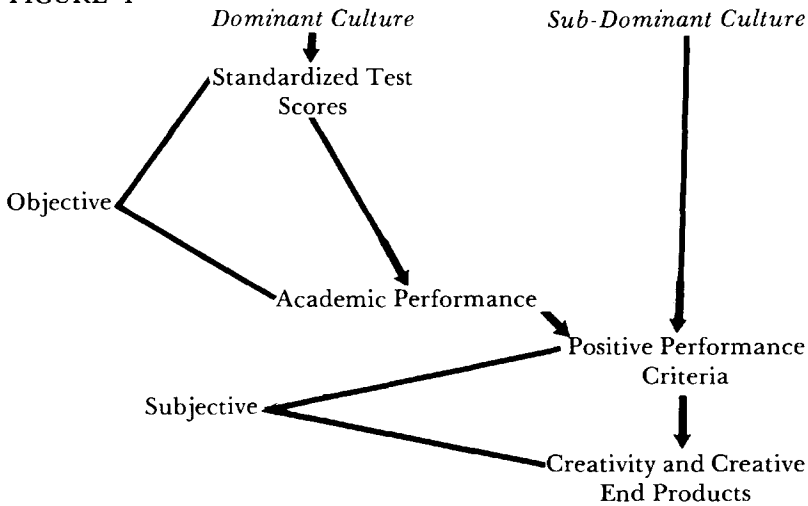
While intelligence test scores may identify children from the mainstream of society's dominant culture, it is surely less than adequate for children from culturally different backgrounds. Witty (1951), in discussing the gifted child, explains that "giftedness appears in many different forms in every level of society."

Since it is not unusual for children who are outside of society's dominant culture to do poorly on standardized instruments, the authors strongly suggest that the traditional method of using intelligence testing to identify gifted children of sub-dominant cultural groups may not be appropriate. Since items on these intelligence tests measures are verbally loaded with items that require direct and enriching experiences related to the dominant culture, children from culturally different backgrounds often tend to do poorly. These children may, however, be truly gifted because of their ability to operate creatively within their

own cultural environment. Regardless of the culturally different child's ability to function creatively in his own environment, in our society the gifted is that child who possesses abilities that are valued by the mainstream culture (Boothby, 1977). The authors of this paper contend that a more practical model of identifying the gifted is needed.

Figure 1 shows the model presented by the authors of this paper. This model combines both objective and subjective type data for approaching the identification of the gifted child. The model also differentiates the kind of data that should be collected on children from dominant and the sub-dominant culture groups.

FIGURE 1 –



Flow Chart For the Identification Process Of Gifted Students From Dominant Cultural and Sub-Dominant Culture Groups

In the previous flow chart for the identification of sub-dominant cultural and dominant cultural gifted students, the horizontal dimension of cultural background is vertically compared to the objective and subjective components in the identification process. Culturally, individuals are assigned either designation of "Dominant Culture" or "sub-dominant culture."

On the vertical axis, components of the identification process for giftedness are divided into objective and subjective criteria. The objective components, which include the areas of Standardized Test Scores and Academic Performance, are those criteria of a more factual or empirical nature, which are related more directly to normative evaluation. Students culturally dissimilar from the normed population should be

evaluated in terms of more valid criteria. However, even for the dominant cultural group, the objective components should be considered only the first step in the identification of the gifted. Giftedness should not be determined solely on the basis of an objective test or grade related data for any cultural group. There must be consideration of more subjective components as well, if the identification process is to be a valid one.

As indicated by the identification chart, the value placed on the subjective components in the identification of giftedness is even more weighted for students in sub-dominant cultural groups. While the objective criteria in the identification process generally provide the evaluator with an analysis of the academic achievement, such criteria do not allow for systematic observation of the on-going intellectual processes associated with giftedness. Those aspects of the individual's personality that can be described as contributing to positive performances in intellectual endeavors are collectively referred to in the model for the identification of the gifted as "Positive Performance Criteria."

Positive Performance Criteria	*Creativity and Creative End Problems*
1. Ability to communicate ideas and feelings by verbal and non-verbal means.	____Has command of a large vocabulary ____Uses words fluently and creatively ____Dramatizes through use of body language and facial expressions ____Is quick to respond ____Demonstrates a flair for dramatic or oral presentations ____Is eager to relate experiences ____Expresses ideas with clarity
2. Ability to interpret ideas and feelings communicated through verbal and non-verbal means.	____Is sensitive to the thought and ideas of others. ____Can interpret body language or facial expressions. ____Displays sympathy or empathy towards others ____Appears sensitive to the discrepancy of behavior in others ____Appraises quickly and frankly new and unfamiliar people or situations
3. Adaptive behaviors characteristic of cultural group.	____Displays a keen sense of humor

	____Demonstrates "survival" skills by manipulating positive forces and overcoming negative forces in the environment
	____Is resourceful and can come up quickly with an alternative
	____Possesses a sense of adventure
	____Learns from experiences and seldom repeats mistakes
	____Shows a degree of flexibility when situations call for change
	____Accepts responsibility for actions
4. Heightened interest in the arts.	____Demonstrates an awareness of and appreciation for the environment
	____Is involved in a variety of hobbies or has a broad range of interests
	____Appreciates various music and art forms
	____Reads avidly in a wide area of subjects
	____Produces creative visual expressions
	____Uses color and form dramatically or uniquely in art
5. Physical capability and adaptability	____Has few physical and sensory defects or has compensated adequately for whatever defects are present
	____Is physically robust, stronger and healthier in appearance
	____Has well-developed psychomotor skills
	____Has received recognition for physical accomplishments
	____Displays a great deal of energy and vitality
6. Emotional/social leadership	____Manifests self-confidence
	____Has a position of leadership within cultural groups, Ex.: club or gang leader

	____In uncontrolled situations, assumes authority naturally ____Displays emotional maturity ____Demonstrates social ingenuity ____Is generally gregarious, outgoing, friendly ____Has an individualistic personality that stands out from the group
7. Appropriate application of Convergent/Divergent processes	____Arrives at a logical concluclusion based on given information ____Sees the plausible yet unique alternatives of a given situation ____Adept at selecting, organizing, and retrieving information ____Able to expand information beyond what is given ____Displays a keen sense of historical time and can sequentially organize information ____Pays close attention to detail in the analysis process ____Can transfer learning readily from one situation to the next ____Is able to formulate the similarities/differences, the comparison/contrasts, and the causes/effects of objects, ideas, and situations
8. Persistence or commitment to task	____Establishes goals that are realistic though challenging ____Demonstrates determination in the fulfillment of goals; tenacity ____Is self-disciplined, independent ____Displays persistent curiosity ____Has a long attention span
9. Energetic response to challenging experiences.	____Produces works that have a freshness, vitality and uniqueness

	____Often initiates the search for information
	____Desires to learn rapidly
	____Creates new ideas, substances, processes and mechanical devices (inventor)
	____Is willing to take a risk of failure in new or unfamiliar situations
10. Ability in process-oriented curriculum	____May excel in science and math or other "process-related" curriculum
	____May require less routine drill when learning new skills
	____Seems aware of aspects in the environment that go unnoticed by others
	____Displays some amount of skepticism with new ideas or situations
	____Asks appropriate, thought-provoking questions
	____Evaluates carefully based on accurate observation

These positive performance criteria consist of ten categories of behavior which the authors believe reflect giftedness. In an effective evaluation system, however, there must be visual proof of end-products of creative or positive behaviors that attest to or verify the existence of giftedness. Therefore, the authors have included factors which represent all aspects of the personality which they feel are manifestations of these positive performance behaviors identified as "creativity or creative end products." These creative end products can function as an observational checklist which the teacher can use to determine the presence of these positive performance behaviors.

It is the authors' view that the truly gifted child must demonstrate that his entire personality shows an inclination toward giftedness by some proof that these positive performance criteria exist to some degree. It is unrealistic to assume that a gifted child will demonstrate his giftedness by performing all of the creative end products from each of the positive performance behaviors.

Also, it is necessary to be cognizant of the fact that the creative end products will differ for children from the dominant and sub-dominant cultural groups. For example, the creative end product for social leadership of a child from the dominant culture may be demonstrated by his becoming president of a club. However, the child from a sub-dominant cultural group may demonstrate social leadership by becom-

ing a leader of a gang. Both of these creative end products are characteristic of the child's own culture, and, consequently, any evaluation of the creative end products must be conducted according to the child's acculturation.

It should be noted that the positive performance criteria in the Alexander-Muia checklist present only positive behaviors even though the authors do acknowledge the existence of negative behaviors which may also be characteristic of giftedness.

Conclusion

While there does appear to be a positive movement in reading education toward improved instructional programs for the gifted, the first priority of such programs should be an adequate identification procedure. Though the definition of the giftedness has been broadened in recent years to encompass the sub-dominant cultural or culturally different gifted, most evaluative measures currently in use continue to favor those of the dominant culture. However, all students, whether of the dominant culture or sub-dominant culture, must be given an equal opportunity in an identification method that seeks to evaluate underlying intellectual potential rather than to reward academic success. As an alternative to present identification procedures the authors have proposed a model for the identification of dominant cultural and sub-dominant cultural gifted and have compiled an observational checklist that can be employed by the classroom teacher to affirm the presence of personality factors associate with giftedness. No matter how well staffed, equipped or financed a reading program for the gifted may be, its effectiveness must hinge on the process used to select those who will receive its benefits.

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SPELLING: THE BEGINNINGS OF LITERACY

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There is a growing realization that very young children are aware of the print in their environment. The opportunities for developing this awareness prior to formal education are numerous. Being read to, interacting with print on signs, advertisements, packages and games, naming the letters, and watching Sesame Street and other television shows are just a few of the ways that children's attention becomes directed to the print in our society. Researchers and educators are beginning to explore the nature of the child's interest and knowledge of print prior to instruction.

Recently research in written language has focused on what has become known as "invented spelling." It has been reported that many children express an awareness of print in the form of writing before they know how to read (Chomsky, 1976). Chomsky has suggested that their ability to write is a developmental precedent to reading. In any case, observation has demonstrated that young children use their knowledge of letter names and sometimes letter sounds to accurately and consistently represent sounds (Read, 1971).

Both Read (1971) and Chomsky (1976) report that when writing is allowed to develop without interference from formal instruction, children's spelling attempts are not haphazard nor random. Children between the ages of four and six years old will begin to compose words and messages using their own invented spellings. These spellings are different from traditional spelling but surprisingly there appears to be some patterns of spelling that are systematic and uniform from child to child.

Read (1971) has described the nature of these spellings in depth. He has noted several features that seem to occur uniformally in children's writing. Children will use a letter name to represent certain phonemes. For example, the letter "H" might represent a "sh" or "ch" sound so that branch might be spelled BRENH and fishing would be spelled FEHEG. This particular feature occurs early in spelling development and will persist until the child is introduced and becomes familiar with the standard spellings of (c) and (s). Another feature of invented spelling is omission of nasal sounds before a consonant. Therefore, sing might be spelled SEG or finger could be represented as FEGR. Children may also use one letter to represent an entire syllable as when CMIN might be written for the word coming. Children will also spell long vowels by matching the sound which is heard as when (ey), (e), and (ae) are all

represented with an (a). Therefore, bait, bat, and bet would all be spelled BAT.

In his dissertation Read (1970) discusses the characteristics of the homes of these children. He noted that the main similarity of these varied and diversified children was that parents were generally responsive, interested and expressed enjoyment in the child's activity.

Often children are inventing spelling before they can read. Sometimes they cannot read their messages back. Their enjoyment seems to come in creating the messages and not in interpretation. Children do not seem to confuse this activity with reading. They may write TRN for turn and still read "turn" when meeting it in print.

Transition from invented spelling to standard forms of spelling does not seem to offer problems for the child. As they become more experienced in reading they seem to abandon their earlier forms of writing. Some children change rapidly from one spelling to the other, others use standard spelling from the beginning of their writing experience, while still others use a combination of the two types of spelling before developing a more standard form of spelling.

Paul (1976) has used Read's word to establish the following sequence of invented spelling. Invented spelling begins with the first letter or phoneme of a word representing the entire word. For example, one child represented the word mouse with "M" as he labeled a drawing he had created. The spellings will then progress to the addition of the final phoneme to represent the entire word so the word pen, might be spelled PN. As a child continues to develop in spelling ability the use of some vowel sound to stand for a vowel will begin to appear. And finally, spelling moves to a more standard form.

The early writing and spelling of young children is unkempt and may be hard for adults to decipher. But the message may be found with careful questioning and understanding. Children will often place words over an entire page and not combine them in sentence form. Many times children may place dots between the words to separate the writing. And the division of words may occur at any point. Reversals in early writing are not uncommon and children who are experimenting with writing may break out into the familiar act of picture drawing without warning.

Early writing and invented spelling comes from a spontaneous effort by the children. However as children develop their own spellings they also accomplish a great deal toward their acquisition of literacy. When children construct their own words their attention is directed naturally to letters, letter sequence and the spatial concepts of writing. The children are providing themselves with experience in phonetics, word analysis and letter/sound correspondence as well as practice in composing words and messages. This provides the children with activities that will contribute to their reading behavior.

An obvious educational implication arising from what we know about a child's early writing attempts suggests that many children will

come to school with an organized knowledge of phonological categories and relationships. In the classroom, the teacher must be aware that unique spellings may be due to the child's system of organizing and categorizing speech sounds. The teacher may further recognize the child's abilities by providing opportunities with freedom of expression. In addition, the teacher must feel free to enjoy the child's creations.

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