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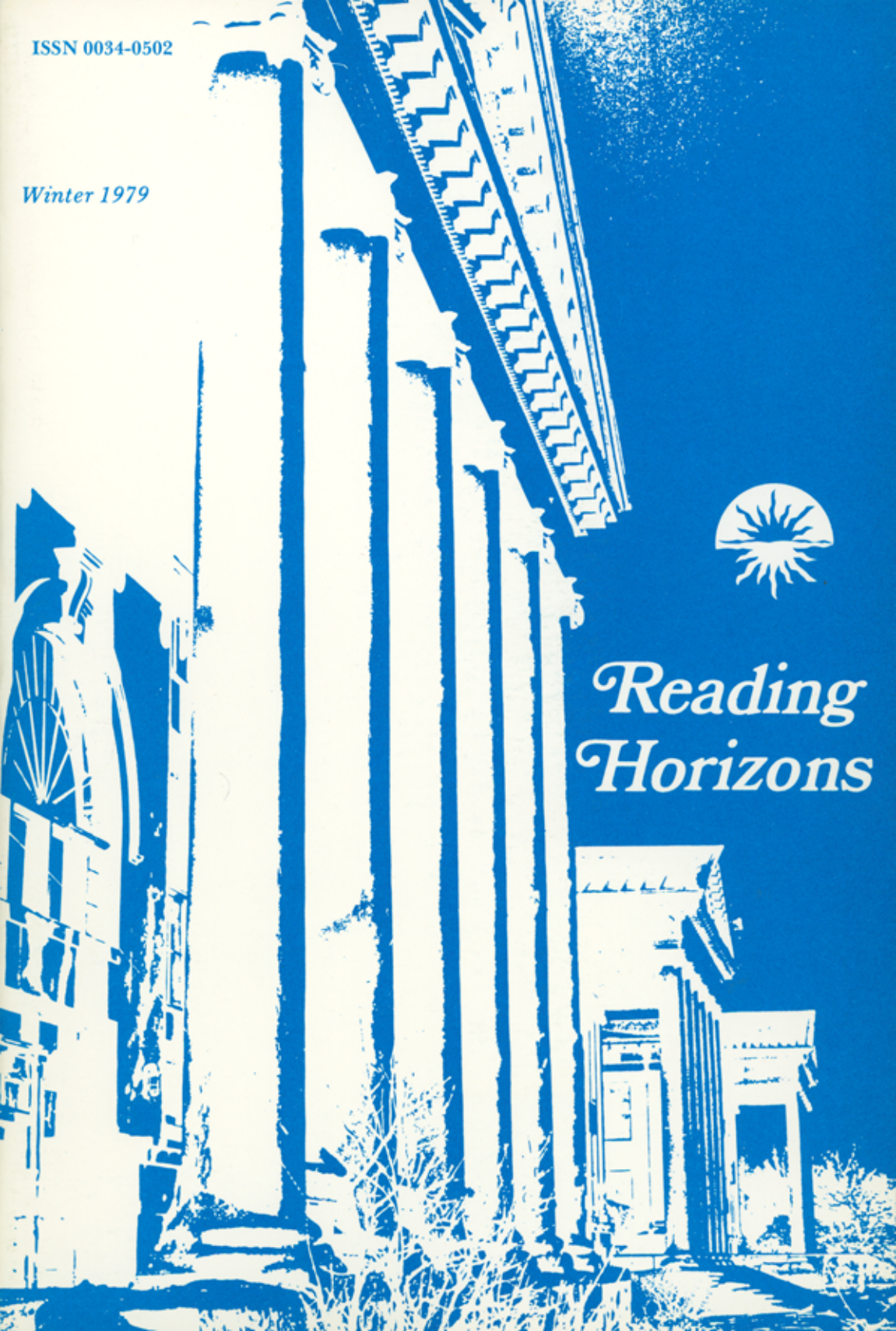


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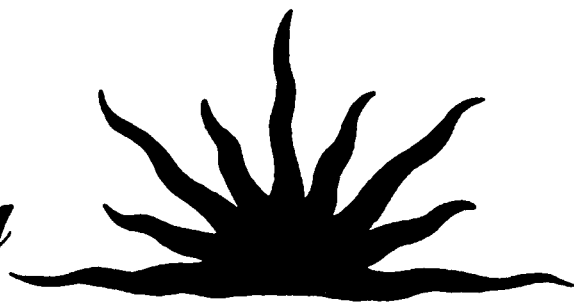
# *Reading Horizons*





# Reading

# HORIZONS



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NUMBER 2

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT



### SO WHAT IF JOHNNY CAN'T READ

**Donovan Russell**

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION, NORTH CAROLINA

*Editor's Note -- We believe the viewpoints expressed by Donovan Russell deserve your careful attention. If you have a rebuttal to offer, we will be glad to hear from you. Since Dr. Russell brings an impressive educational career to his writing, his ideas are not to be taken lightly.*

Back to the basics! State Legislatures and Boards of Education have been jumping up and down in the last few years because "Johnny can't read." Educators have been put on the spot by everyone including parents and members of Congress because Johnny is so different from the Johnny that made this country great. And until people across the land began jumping on the "we are overtaxed bandwagon" there were special funds appropriated for reading projects every thirty seconds or so. As usual, politicians managed to use the issue in the service of their careers.

Being a how to do it society we have taken the typical approach of quantity. "Let's put more resources behind this. Let's re-emphasize our commitment." We are not very good at looking beyond how to do something. We are not very good about asking why and why not questions.

How important is it that Johnny be able to read like his Mom and Dad? Does Johnny have something that we don't know about? Is reading unimportant to Johnny because he is ahead of us in some way? Or are we so out of touch with our children's world that we just can't communicate with them about reading or anything else?

Being an avid reader, my personal bias is that it's a crying shame that Johnny can't read or doesn't choose to read. But that's a moot point. If we don't get beyond sentiment we haven't solved anything. Maybe it's not such a shame. Perhaps we are the handicapped ones and just don't realize it.

Our kids have been growing up in a vastly different world from the one you and I experienced as youngsters. Since the day of entering the crib they have been exposed to non-stop electric media. Their senses must be different than ours. In a way their environment has been much richer than ours. They have, no doubt, developed sensory capabilities that are foreign to us. Indeed we may be the impoverished ones. Now, how does an impoverished teacher get across to a more fully developed human being? Perhaps we are asking a lot when we demand that youngsters come down to our sensory level in order to learn how to utilize one sense (the visual) in isolation from the others.

What are we asking when we try to get our students interested in reading? We are asking them to employ the visual sense apart from the others. We are asking them to become interested in sterile symbols. We are

asking them to see products on paper, of a process that has already happened. To the kids of today this must be an unreal, irrelevant, and anemic approach. To our kids this must be an amazingly artificial and unnecessarily specialized approach to the world of knowledge. Indeed the tools we ask them to employ limit knowledge to a single dimension. We must seem as simple to them as they seem myopic to us. They are probably silently incredulous at our asking for visual solutions in a multi-sensory world. They are probably silently outraged that we would have them segregate the senses and screen out that which is not dependent upon visual learning.

I'm sure the mysterious gestalt of our young people is threatening to us. After all we are proud of our rigorous specializations built on sense separation. After all we are proud of the precision and exactness of our knowledge and of our approach to gaining new knowledge. We act on the basis of understanding not intuition. Seeing is believing.

Our blurry eyed youngsters are a puzzle to us. They appear uninterested in intellectual discipline as we know it. They have no understanding of uniformity, of order, of standard, and of completion. They pursue the strange, the non-standard, the mythical, the non-intellectual, and the unknown. We see them as never emerging from adolescence. But maybe they grow up long before we know. Maybe they are precocious in ways that we'll never understand. Maybe our willingness to probe their world, as worthy, is causing us to continue attempts at educating them which are deprived and limiting.

The world of non-stop media into which our young are born must have a profound effect on sense lives and mental processes. Non-stop media has called upon our young people to use all of their senses at once. Perhaps they have a capacity for sensory interplay and instant synthesizing that we can never have. Perhaps they are engaged and involved in a now world that we can only visit as short-term spectators. Is it any wonder that our broken and fragmented approach doesn't touch them?

### *About the Author*

Donovan Russell did his Ph.D. at Cornell University. He has studied at the Universities of Maryland, Rochester, New York, and at UNESCO in Paris. Dr. Russell has just completed a comprehensive study of education in North Carolina. He has served as Regional Adult Education Project Leader for Cornell University, Director of Reorganization for Prince Edward Island, and Executive Director of the Canadian Federalist Organization. Dr. Russell has also worked as a School Principal in Canada, teacher in New York and Maryland and Master at Stanstead College in Quebec. He has written for many journals and magazines.

# A PSYCHOLINGUISTIC LOOK AT THE INFORMAL READING INVENTORY PART II: INAPPROPRIATE INFERENCES FROM AN INFORMAL READING INVENTORY

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In the previous issue of *Reading Horizons*, we expressed concern with the widespread use of what is typically known as the informal reading inventory (IRI). The major problem, we argued, is that many versions of the IRI encourage teachers to look primarily at the quantity of a reader's errors, rather than at the quality. Such a procedure may lead teachers to underestimate children's reading strengths and/or to prescribe inappropriate skills lessons. Another problem is the various phonics, sight word, and word analysis tests that often accompany the IRI. Doing well on such tests does not necessarily indicate that a reader is good at processing connected text, or vice versa. On the one hand, some readers who are good at analyzing and recognizing words, have difficulty getting meaning from what they read, while other readers who are good at getting meaning are not so skilled at analyzing or recognizing isolated words. It is the latter group whose reading ability is often underestimated with an informal reading inventory, as well as with most other kinds of assessment.

In this article we propose to discuss in more detail the kinds of inferences that may be inappropriately drawn from an informal reading inventory. This discussion should strengthen the rationale for our approach to analyzing a reader's miscues (errors) and determining what kinds of instructional approaches might be appropriate for that reader (see the preceding issue of *Reading Horizons*).

## 1. *A Reading Diagnosis Checklist*

When using an informal reading inventory, then, the teacher needs to keep two basic principles in mind:

1. The quality of a reader's miscues is more important than the quantity.
2. Apparent problems in word recognition or word attack skills may often be better interpreted as the result either of a *good* use of context, or a failure to make good use of context, (depending, of course, on the particular miscue).

To illustrate what this might mean in actual practice, let us examine

various observations and inferences that the teacher is invited to make in using the Reading Diagnosis Checklist from Frank May's *To Help Children Read* (1973, p. 130; Reprinted by permission of Charles F. Merrill Publishing Company). See Figure 1 here. We will work from the inferences that the teacher is directed to consider, bringing in the various observations as they are relevant:

a. *Basic sight words not known (Item 12).*

Observing that the child sometimes substitutes one basic sight word for another and/or that the child sometimes omits basic sight words, the teacher might conclude that the child does not know these words. Such an assumption may be unwarranted, because the child may be reading for deep structure, the basic meaning, and not for surface structure, a precise reproduction of the words of the text. An example would be if the child said *roof* for *house* in reading the sentence *Jane's father was on the house* (see our previous article). Another example is *older* for *other* in *The other seals knew better*, where the preceding story context made it clear that the "other" seals were all older. Good readers often make miscues which bear little visual or phonic resemblance to the text word but which preserve the meaning in context. The following examples show the substitution of one function word for another, a pattern typical of good readers (see Goodman 1973; some of our examples are from this source):

their	It
White men came from the cities.	That took us about an hour.
A	might
The circus man made a bow.	"You may be right."
about	
Peter the pony ran around the ring.	

In addition, good readers sometimes omit function words that are not structurally necessary:

omitted
She made her own paints from the roots.
omitted
but after a month we saw that nothing was growing.
omitted
Mr. Tully beat me more often and more cruelly than
omitted
Mr. Coffin had done.

Similarly, good readers sometimes insert function words that are structurally optional:

the
Billy feasted on roast corn . . . .
up
it was enough to wake the dead.
that
They told him he had been foolish to plant sesame . . .

Type of Error or Problem

Level of Reading Passage

Observations	Pre	Pr	1	2 <sup>1</sup>	2 <sup>2</sup>	3 <sup>1</sup>	3 <sup>2</sup>	4	5	6
1. Word by word reading										
2. Incorrect phrasing										
3. Mispronunciations										
4. Whole-word omissions										
5. Partial omissions										
6. Repetitions										
7. Reversals										
8. Whole-word insertions										
9. Partial insertions										
10. Substitutions										
11. Punctuation ignored										
Inferences										
12. Basic sight words not known										
13. Guessing at words										
14. Weak in phonic analysis										
15. Weak in structural analysis										
16. Weak in contextual analysis										
17. Comprehension poor										
18. Nonstandard dialect										
19. Punctuation not understood										
20. Needs help on phrasing										

Comments:

In each of the above examples, the meaning is preserved even though the surface structure is altered. The child made *good* miscues, and we are not justified in assuming that the child did not know the word printed in the text. Instead, we should assume that the child is reading in phrase or clause units rather than word-by-word, reading for meaning rather than for accurate reproduction of the words of the text. And since the getting of meaning is presumably the goal of reading and of reading instruction, we would do well not to lead the child away from this goal by insisting that every detail of the text be rigorously preserved. When the child has become generally proficient at getting meaning, *then* we can demonstrate the need for attention to detail in reading certain kinds of materials—directions, applications of various kinds, legal contracts, and so forth.

b. *Guessing at words (item 13).*

Observing that the child sometimes replaces the text word with a word that looks and sounds radically different, the teacher might conclude that the child is guessing at words. Again, however, we must look at the quality of the “guess.” A reader who has been taught to use the total context will make educated guesses or *predictions* about what is to come next. If these predictions preserve the essential meaning of the text, or if they are disruptive of meaning but are self-corrected, the teacher has little cause for concern. Examples of such good miscues might be *roof* for *house*, *baby* for *child*, *bird* for *canary*. Note also the following example, where the child makes a miscue at the end of a line, then corrects her miscue when the next line of text reveals the error of her prediction:

saw  
I first saw Claribel when I was working in my office.

The miscue *saw* for *was* is not a habitual association for this girl, nor is it merely a “guess”: it is a reasonable prediction, based upon sentence structure (a past tense verb is needed), upon meaning (an appropriate extension of “I first *saw* Claribel . . .”), and upon minimal attention to letters and sounds. When the following line failed to confirm this prediction, the girl corrected *saw* to *was*. A similar miscue from the same student is the following (both examples are from Goodman and Burke, 1972):

heard  
Instead, there was a lovely song.  
I looked up and had my first view of Claribel.

The miscue *heard* was again a logical prediction, based on meaning (the lovely song was obviously heard), sentence structure (a past tense verb was called for), and minimal attention to letters and sounds. Obviously this reader is making use of good reading strategies, not merely guessing at words.

Note that if we were to look at these last substitutions without reference to context, we would indeed assume that the child was guessing – or, in the

case of *saw* for *was*, that the child was showing a habitual confusion of words or reversing letters. By examining these miscues in context, however, we can see that they are good quality miscues, stemming from productive reading strategies.

c. *Weak in phonic analysis (item 14).*

Observing that a child sometimes sounds out words but ends up with the wrong word or a non-word, the teacher might conclude that the child is weak in phonic analysis. Examples which might lead the teacher to such a conclusion are the following (all the examples are from the same child):

beaches

the children sat on little benches in front of the teacher . . . .

expert

Every day except Friday, . . .

souts

The sandy shore rang with the happy shouts and cries

of the village boys and girls.

ramped

The boys repeated everything the teacher said. . .

Seeing such miscues, the teacher may be tempted to conclude that the child needs more work with phonics. Examining the words in context, however, we see that the problem may be *too much* phonics, or rather phonics with too little else. The miscue *beaches* made some sense in the total context, but the miscue *expert* for *except* does not even fit grammatically; the non-words *souts* and *ramped* show that the child is attending to grammar (the plural *-s* and the past tense *-ed*), but not to sense.

An extensive study of over 6,000 one-syllable and two-syllable words among 9,000 different words in the comprehension vocabularies of 6- to 9-year-old children revealed 211 separate spelling-sound correspondences. Of this total, 166 correspondences occurred in fewer than ten words out of the total set, while 45 correspondences occurred in fewer than ten words (Berdiansky et al. 1959, as reported in Smith 1973). Thus even if it were possible for beginning readers to master all 166 "rules," how would they know whether any given case represented a rule or an exception? (If this sounds far-fetched, try to explain how you know the pronunciation of *ho* in the following words: *hot, hoot, hook, hour, honest, house, hope, honey, hoist, hog* (Smith 1973). Clearly phonics can supply only a clue, an approximation to how the word is pronounced. The child who made the miscues above needs to learn to *predict* what is coming next on the basis of what he has read so far, then use phonics as one means of confirming or correcting the prediction. *More* phonics will simply make the child an even poorer reader than he already is, because it will force him to pay even closer attention to small details and lead him away from a concern for meaning. Indeed, at the junior high and high school level, the poorest readers are often those whose miscues show the *closest* letter-sound correspondence to the text word (Goodman 1973). Such readers come close to sounding out

the word, but because they are using phonics almost exclusively, they get neither the word itself nor the essential meaning of the material being read.

d. *Weak in structural analysis (item 15).*

Observing that a child omits or alters grammatical endings, a teacher might conclude that the child is weak in structural analysis. One thing the teacher should realize, however, is that readers who are predicting will need to use grammatical endings only to confirm or correct their predictions, not as an isolated tool for word analysis. Take for example the following sentences, and try to predict what regular grammatical ending would probably occur on a word that fits in the blank:

All the \_\_\_\_\_ will be there.

He is \_\_\_\_\_ his dog.

That car is his \_\_\_\_\_.

He \_\_\_\_\_ it yesterday.

Using context, we will naturally predict a plural *-s* or *-es* for the first blank; a present participle *-ing* for the second blank; a possessive *'s* or *s'* for the third blank; and a past tense *-ed* for the last blank. Of course, the actual word might be irregular in its form, but the prediction is essentially correct and the ending (if the word is indeed “regular”) will merely confirm our prediction. Context is often enough to make the grammatical form clear – and we are not seriously hampered when we have to use context following the word in question, because our eyes are typically about four words ahead of the word we are focusing on, and our brain can make use of this *following* context in identifying a word! Have a friend read the sentence *There were two tears in her dress* and see whether or not the word *tear* is pronounced correctly. Once beginning readers are able to recognize at least some words on sight, even they tend to read ahead – unless the instructional program discourages this productive strategy and forces readers to focus on individual words.

Since a word's grammatical function is often made clear by context, it should not be surprising that these grammatical endings are sometimes omitted in certain varieties of English. In particular, many speakers of Black English and many speakers who come from a different language background (e.g., Spanish) may omit from their speech the noun possessive and the noun plural ending, the verb third singular and the verb past tense and past participle endings, plus some others like the adverbial *-ly*. The meanings associated with these endings are signaled by context, either by context within the same sentence or by the larger communicative context. In reading, then, we may find such miscues as the following (for more examples, see Goodman and Buck, 1973):

Finally the keeper③ gave up looking for him.

George found a nice cozy spot to sleep under the elephant③ right ear.

It go③s fast.

He live① in the Zoo.

Usually such miscues reflect not a loss of meaning, but simply the fact that

the child has derived the meaning of the text and recoded that meaning into his own typical surface structure. In one particular study, such "translation" was found to be more typical of the good readers than of the poorer readers, again supporting the observation that good readers are more concerned with essential meaning than with surface detail (Hunt 1974-75). One cannot help suspecting that the poorer readers *are* poor at least partly because they concentrate on surface detail at the expense of meaning.

c. *Weak in contextual analysis; comprehension poor (items 16 and 17).*

Observing that a child makes miscues which do not make sense in context, a teacher might conclude that the child is weak in contextual analysis. The teacher is most likely right. And the child is likely to be poor in comprehension as well as in contextual analysis.

The overriding difficulty is probably that the child is not reading for meaning, not trying or expecting to get connected meaning from the text. Hence the child is not bringing meaning to what he/she reads, not predicting what is coming next, but rather dealing with each word as if it stood in isolation. (Actually most children use at least the preceding grammatical context, making miscues that are structurally acceptable with the preceding part of the sentence; an example is *and* for *can* in the sentence *Spot can help me*.) Poor comprehension and a weakness in contextual analysis usually go hand-in-hand with an overreliance on phonic cues or a tendency to make guesses—either wild guesses or guesses limited to words which have been introduced by the teacher. The child with such a pattern needs to learn to actively seek meaning, to use context *before* trying to deal with the word itself.

f. *Nonstandard dialect (item 18).*

Observing that a child uses immature or dialect pronunciations or that a child omits grammatical endings, a teacher might conclude that such patterns will interfere with a child's comprehension. This is rarely the case.

It was noted above, in section *d*, that a word's part of speech is often clear from context alone, and that speakers of certain varieties of English do often omit certain endings in their speech. It is only logical, then, that a child's reading for meaning might "translate" the written text into the grammar of his or her own dialect (see the discussion above). And of course it is even more likely that immature or dialect pronunciations reflect comprehension rather than a loss of meaning. If a child reads *teef* for *teeth*, we can be virtually certain that he or she has gotten the meaning. On the other hand, if the child normally says *teef* but patiently sounds out the text word and pronounces the *th* "correctly," we may need to check to see whether the word has been understood. In short, then, immature language miscues and dialect miscues usually reflect comprehension instead of interfering with it. Though the teacher might want to "improve" the child's speech, he or she should refrain from doing so during reading instruction.

g. *Punctuation not understood; needs help on phrasing (items 19 and 20).*

Observing that a child seems to ignore punctuation marks and/or to

read word-by-word, a teacher might conclude that the child needs work on punctuation and while some readers *do* need help in reading with appropriate intonation, such help often treats the symptom rather than the cause.

Since our eyes usually are only about four words' ahead of our voice, most punctuation comes too late to signal meaning (this is especially true for the child whose eyes are only one or two words ahead of the voice). The good reader in effect *predicts punctuation* through structure. Take for example the following sentence openers: will the sentence be a statement, or a question?

The \_\_\_\_\_  
 He \_\_\_\_\_  
 Is \_\_\_\_\_  
 Who \_\_\_\_\_

We will naturally predict a statement in the first two cases and a question in the last two cases. Hence periods and question marks serve mainly as confirmations of structure, not as devices to trigger appropriate intonation. The same is ordinarily true for the other punctuation marks; they serve mainly to confirm the reader's prediction of structure or to signal that the prediction was incorrect. A reader who typically makes incorrect predictions may not be reading for meaning.

## II. *Reading for Meaning*

Throughout this discussion of the Informal Reading Inventory, the major themes have been that the purpose of reading is to *get meaning*; that the teacher must evaluate a child's miscues in terms of their *quality* rather than their quantity, deciding whether they do or do not preserve the essential meaning of the text and reflect good reading strategies; and that we must examine miscues *in context* to decide whether they are or are not good miscues. One further point needs to be made: a good reader typically corrects miscues that disrupt meaning, while a poor reader does not. Thus it is absolutely essential to look at whether or not the miscues are corrected. A child on the way to becoming a good reader may still make miscues that disrupt meaning, but he or she may be learning to correct these without prompting or help. This means, among other things, that repetitions can be a healthy sign. A child going back to correct a word will often repeat words and, indeed, the teacher may learn a lot about the child's reading strategies by examining the extent of such repetitions.

## III. *The IRI as a Diagnostic Instrument*

In summary, then, such checklists as the one described above are of dubious value in assessing a child's reading strengths and weaknesses. The teacher attempting to use such a checklist should keep several points in mind. First, the teacher should refrain from supplying words during the reading session, so that the child's independent reading ability can be accurately assessed (this is contrary to the procedure recommended by May). Second, it is crucial for the teacher to analyze the miscues in context,

deciding whether they do or do not preserve the essential meaning of the text. Third, the teacher should be appropriately skeptical about tests that measure a child's ability to recognize or analyze words in isolation, since such tests may overestimate but commonly underestimate a child's ability to process connected text. Given the difficulty of using most versions of the IRI in such a way, it may be more sensible for teachers to merely adopt the kind of procedure we discussed in the last issue of *Reading Horizons*. This particular approach has the advantage of readily enabling teachers to determine what kinds of instructional approaches might be appropriate for a given reader. Most importantly, however, it should help teachers look for children's *strengths* as well as their weaknesses, by keeping *meaning* at the heart of reading instruction.

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# ORGANIZING OBSERVABLE READING BEHAVIORS

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All teachers observe their students while they read. That is part of the job. The question is: How well organized is the observation? For example, when asked for information about the child who is being referred because of a reading problem, what can be said and how logically is it organized? Or, when facing the parent of a child with a reading problem, what information might be reasonable to have at hand?

Within the framework of the current emphasis on "Mainstreaming," how about the reading teacher and the classroom teacher who want to coordinate the reading instruction of the child who requires special instruction? What might the reading teacher look for, and how will she/he organize these classroom observations that seem to contribute to the establishment of a coordinated reading program?

The suggestion here is that both the classroom teacher and the reading specialist use a checklist of observable reading behavior as a device to facilitate the organization of and communication about the classroom reading behavior of the child with a reading problem. Specifically, the Reading Behavior Checklist which follows is meant to serve both the classroom and the special reading teacher as a guide in their attempts to organize their observations of classroom behavior related to the child's reading problem. The RBC has seven sections: oral reading, oral responses to questions about the material read, written and/or workbook type assignments, voluntary reading, behavior when in a learning group, test-taking behavior, and information from records or files.

## Reading Behavior Checklist

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

I.

### Oral Reading

Too Fast	OK	Too Slow
Word-by-Word	Monotone	Expression
Too Many Errors	OK	Without Errors

## II.

## Oral Responses to Questions About Material Read

Does Not Answer When Called Upon	Attempts to Answer When Called Upon	Volunteers Answers
Answers Are Correct Infrequently	Answers Are Correct Sometimes	Answers Are Correct Almost Always

## III.

## Workbook Type Assignments

Almost Never Completed on Time	Usually Completed On Time	Completed Swiftly
Answers Usually Wrong Or Incomplete	Some Answers Wrong Or Incomplete	Few to None Wrong Or Incomplete
Messy Printing Or Handwriting	Could Be Neater	Neat Printing Or Handwriting
Usually Needs Special Help with Directions	Sometimes	Dir. Usually Followed Without Special Help
Frequent Spelling Errors	Some Spelling Errors	Almost No Spelling Errors
Sentences And/Or Paragraphs Usually Incomplete	Sometimes	Sentences And/Or Paragraphs Complete

## IV.

## Voluntary Reading

Does NOT Choose To Read in Free Time	Sometimes Does	Usually Does
Chooses Difficult Books	OK	Chooses Easy Books
Finishes Books Quickly	OK	Does Not Complete Reading Books
Reads on One Topic	Reads on Several Topics	Reads on Many Topics

## V.

## Behavior When In A Group

Frequently Does <i>Not</i> Stay On Task	Generally Stays On Task	Exerts Positive Leadership Role
Disrupts Group	OK	Overly Quiet Daydreams?

## VI.

## Test-Taking Behavior

Completes Test Too Fast	OK	Does Not Complete Tests Usually
Test Must Be Read To Student	Some Sections Must Be Read To Student	Can Read Test

## VII.

## Information From Cum. Records/Tests

Latest Reading Test Score Is Low	OK	High
Absences Frequent	Few	None
Suffers From Chronic Physical Problems	What Is the Problem?	None
Reading Test Scores Have Been Low in Past	Average	High

As can be seen, RBC is in fact a checklist of what can be observed. It eliminates a lot of writing, and at the same time makes certain that a variety of observable behaviors are considered. However, a caution is in order: No checklist should be treated as though it cannot be changed. Indeed, specific situations should demand modification of the RBC as it is presented here. But if the teacher keeps in mind that the purpose of this checklist is to aid her/him in organizing and communicating information about a child with a reading problem, then either use of the RBC as it is presented here or use with modification are appropriate.

# CHILDREN GET READY TO READ

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One of the major concerns of early childhood education has been, and will continue to be, the development of an optimal readiness program for children. (Almy, 1967). It will need to be one that will allow all young children the opportunity to build skills, knowledge and understanding that can serve as a strong foundation for the development of later reading abilities. At present, the emphasis on readiness seems to focus on academic, skill oriented programs which use workbooks and basal readers for teaching these skills. The use of these materials has become so widespread that in most readiness programs the basal workbook provides the core of instruction (Wilson and Hall, 1972). Durkin (1970) points out that even various kindergarten programs have begun to adopt the basal workbook materials. And she emphasized that . . .

. . . It is just this kind of wholesale, unimaginative swing that has engendered opposition to reading during the kindergarten year - oppositions it must be added which rarely distinguish between a method that might be inappropriate and a timing that might be just right, at least for some kindergarteners.

In addition, the misuse and overindulgence of formalized readiness programs have assisted in furthering the misconceptions about reading readiness. Schickedanz (1977), points out that the emphasis on "reading kits and workbooks" in the first grade has led early childhood educators to believe that a discussion of reading instruction in the preschool means . . . "structured skill instruction." Schickedanz indicates that the present reading materials and practices are not totally related to some early childhood educators' thoughts about "*how* children learn and *what* makes children *want to learn*."

The alternative to formalized, skill-oriented programs seems to be based in an experientially based approach to readiness. While an experientially oriented program would certainly be acceptable to many early childhood educators, the authors believe that reading educators would not disagree with the importance of these experiences.

If reading readiness programs are to assist children in getting ready for the reading process, it will be necessary to view children as continuously seeking, acquiring, organizing, retrieving and using information from their environment. It is this interaction with their world that makes it necessary to view the development of readiness for reading as beginning from birth. This paper will focus on the child as constantly involved in information processing. A viewpoint that relates directly to Piaget's theory where learning is conceived structurally as schemes or representations of ex-

periences which become more highly differentiated as learning progresses. (Piaget, 1963).

Recent developments in the field of reading suggest that the pendulum may be already swinging toward an approach that will allow children to learn from real world experiences. In the April, 1977, volume of the *Reading Teacher* a statement on reading readiness was published by a joint committee\* of experts in reading and early childhood education. Their concern was voiced for an integrated real-experience orientation to reading readiness programs.

This concern for an experiential based approach to getting children ready to read is not a new one. Edmund Burke Huey in the *Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading* stated

"It is believed that much that is now strenuously struggled for and methodized over in these early years of primary reading will come of themselves with growth, and when the child's sense organs and nervous systems are stronger; and that in the meantime, he should be acquiring own experiences and developing wants that will in time make reading a natural demand and a meaningful process with form and book always secondary to thought."

Since Huey's statement was first published in 1908, we have some evidence that experts in reading have long been concerned with a child's own experience.

Further review of the literature provides a wealth of information supporting early experiences as a viable readiness program. Berry (1967) indicates that there has been a growing belief that the acquisition of the basic skills early in the child's development is important for success in school. He further states that:

Intelligence and academic achievement are founded upon well-developed information processing systems; that is, a child's ability to read, write, and spell depends upon his abilities to see, hear, feel, speak, and move.

Ploghoft (1959) conducted a study of 56 kindergarten children, half of whom were given training in reading readiness workbooks. The others received training in sequence related activities. The results of the study showed that students using reading readiness workbooks were not more ready to read than the students trained with experiential activities. The author indicates that:

". . . Teachers should not trust to a book or a workbook the job of bringing together the many activities and materials that may be used to provide a complete readiness program for all children."

Similar results were found in Blakely and Shadle's (1961) study of two

groups of kindergarten students. The control group received training in the Scott Foresman "We Read Practice Book" while the experimental group took part in activities which interested the children, (i.e., finger plays; telling a story; displaying pictures; show and tell). The results showed that for the boys in the sample, the experiential approach produced greater readiness for reading than they did the basal, and the basal approach did not increase the girls' readiness for reading.

Two important questions arise as a result of a discussion of early experience. First, what actually happens when the children interact with their environment during these experiences? Secondly, why does this interaction have relevance to the reading process? To answer both of these questions it is important to view the child as constantly acquiring information, and using his memory system to store the information. Further, we must view the child as using the acquired information to construct a model of the world. It is this model which is a compendium of all earlier experiences which serves as a foundation for all future activity. Smith (1971) attempts to clarify this interaction with the world. He indicates that

"Man's appetite for information can be regarded as a constant search for regularities in external events — regularities that both explain the past and predict the future. The regularities economize on mental effort because they humanize experience and minimize the necessity to remember a multitude of individual events; they provide the basis for rules for decoding when two events should be regarded as similar or different."

In essence, the cognitive viewpoint outlined by Smith identified human beings as capable of attending, selecting and organizing information. The important point, however, is that the information which is attended to, selected and organized is that which has the greatest potential for confirming their purposes. Learning, according to Smith, involves the learner generating a hypothesis on the basis of modifications made to his cognitive structure; testing the hypothesis; evaluating the feedback and finally confirming or rejecting the modification of his cognitive structure. An important aspect of this model is that the learner goes beyond present information to hypothesize about the nature of future information. In order to do this effectively he must make use of the knowledge he has learned about his world through his experiences with it.

In approaching an answer to the first question, then, it is necessary to view experiences as aiding the child in developing a theory of his world: a theory which enables the child to predict things about his world. It is these experiences that aid the child in formulating general rules from specific instances in order to predict how events will occur in the future.

What the authors have so far attempted to do is to present a cognitive view of learning. This requires the child to establish categories in his cognitive structure, to develop associations among categories, and define and refine the rules which will assist him in placing events into the ap-

propriate categories. Smith points out that this is done primarily through the child's ability to find the significant differences or the rules that will allow him to assign that event to the category. The differentiation of one category from another is done through the child's establishment of a property list. The property list for the category then becomes the rule.

With any attempt at the acquisition of knowledge there is always a loss of information. This is a result of memory limitations as well as the child's attentional system that is often overloaded. Hopefully, only the least important information would be eliminated by the individual during processing. It is important that the individual be very selective with the information that is processed through his memory system into long term memory. This is because the child's knowledge of the world is contained within the long term memory and any attempt at categorizing new events is highly dependent upon this knowledge.

The model of cognition dealing with the acquisition of knowledge described previously can be directly applied to the reading process. Divesta (1974) strongly proposes that a rich cognitive structure is essential for meaningful reading. He states that

"Since the young child is an efficient assimilator of information around him, he asks questions, explores, translates; he likes to listen to stories and to look at pictures. We can channel his interests during this period of the child's life to help the child build rich cognitive structure."

Divesta suggests that, in the early school years, "structured, rich and varied experiences" which foster the growth of cognitive structures should be emphasized and more formal instructional reading practice postponed until later in first grade.

Divesta's point is well taken. It is these experiences which aid the child in creating organization in his world through the information he receives. It is this information that is organized into categories and relationships which are expressed as rules. The rules aid the child in identifying, interpreting, and predicting. An important aspect of this rule generation is that the rules are related to the significant differences among experiences.

A psycholinguistic model was discussed in detail by Smith. In developing this model he shows that the proficient reader is one who seeks to reduce uncertainty through the application of rules which enables him to assign events (letters, words, meanings) to particular categories. Smith indicates that "the more difficulty a reader has with reading, the more he relies on visual information." He points out that the difficulty is the child's "inability to make full use of Syntactic and Semantic redundancy of non-visual sources of information." The point is that visual items can be identified with a minimal amount of information provided that the child has acquired the knowledge of the redundancy of written language. The redundancy is a result of previous experiences and a knowledge of his language. This redundancy enables him to generate predictions in order to

make identifications during the reading process. In addition to knowing the redundancy in language, Smith indicates that

“A child has to discover the distinctive features of written material, the significant differences by which alternative letters, words and meanings can be differentiated. And the only way he can get this information is to be shown what the alternatives are.”

In summary, early experiences give children an opportunity to generate rules about their world and how it goes together. These rule generations are the forerunners of latter language rule generations that the child will have to make in order to read.

### *Choosing Experiences*

The case for the importance of early experience leads into a further question for teachers to answer: “Of all possible experiences for children, which ones do we provide for them?” Choosing experiences that allow for the individual differences in children requires the teacher to provide broad, diverse and flexible activities in planning programs. There is a wealth of ideas in the literature that can help teachers make these decisions. One such piece of information regarding children’s ability to represent their world has been advanced by Weikart (1971).

According to Weikart, a child’s ability to use symbols as a tool for thinking follows a stage theory that he refers to as the “Levels of Representation.” The four levels of object, index, symbol and sign follow a hierarchal order with the sign being the most abstract in terms of the representation of an idea.

At the object level the child is dealing with real experience and is actively manipulating objects. At the index level the child is familiar enough with the object to recall what he knows about it when he sees only a part of the object. The part serves as a clue to the whole object.

When children are operating on the symbol level they are able to recall the object without having the object or a part of it present. The child can use a symbol to represent the object (i.e., a box becomes a dog). As the child moves through the symbolic level his representation becomes more abstract until he is dealing with two-dimensional drawings or paintings as representation of objects. At the sign level the child is able to use written or spoken words as representation of ideas. This is the most abstract level because the sign bears no resemblance to the idea it represents. If we accept Weikart’s ideas on the levels of representation it is apparent that experiences are critical in helping a child prepare for the reading act.

The levels of representation indicate that teachers should provide opportunities for children to represent their world through various media. Dramatic play, painting, sculpture, dance, block building as well as experiences in the real world allow children to grow according to their own needs.

Schickedanz (1977) suggests that providing children with symbolic props

in their dramatic play can help in fostering reading. Symbolic props are materials that contain words or invite children to create their own words. Signs for buildings, traffic signs, menus, etc., all bring words to the dramatic play of children. Teachers providing props for children can enhance the children's play and stimulate their use of language.

Raths (1971) has suggested criteria for designing "Worthwhile Activities." Two of his criteria, allowing children to make choices and allowing them to share their findings, seems particularly important for advancing readiness. A child who is able to choose from varied activities in a room is more likely to have his needs met than a child who is constantly responding to directions from a teacher. He will draw information from the activities that will be most useful to him.

Children who are given the opportunity to share what they've done will need to find new words to describe their experiences and representation and then foster their development of language. In addition, this sharing serves to build self-concept because a child will recognize that the teacher and his classmates value his work.

The teacher's role with young children is not one of presenting a total new readiness program but, rather, according to Heilman (1972), an attempt to synthesize new experience with the previous experience children have had. Teachers have to make judgments about what each individual child needs to get ready to read. To do this a teacher needs to be aware not only of the attributes of a child who is ready to read, but also the activities in her class that will best further those attributes.

Each child makes sense of activities in a more or less sophisticated fashion depending on the prior learning he brought to the situation. It's not important that they all do an activity to the same degree of sophistication, as long as they provide each child a chance to become more proficient. In a good kindergarten most of the activities that take place during the day help a child to develop his readiness for reading.

In order for teachers to choose wisely in providing readiness experiences for children, it is probably necessary for them to switch from a view of teaching young children to one of helping children to learn. This switch will serve to focus teacher decisions that are based on what children need on a day to day basis rather than on preconceived notions about what will be taught on a daily basis without regard to children's needs.

Fortunately many good Early Childhood programs have for years been focused on meeting individual needs. Unfortunately, many people in Early Childhood have not fully understood how the experiences help children form the basis for later reading instruction. This lack of understanding has hindered teachers of young children because of their propensity for the formalized, structured, skill-oriented programs that are finding their way into nursery and kindergarten classrooms. In many areas the quest for excellence in skills has overshadowed children's basic needs and in fact have ignored those needs.

A good Early Childhood curriculum where children are actively involved in their learning is the most complete readiness program for each

child because it is personalized for the child rather than being designed for a whole group. There may be times when certain children can benefit from some of the skills presented in a specific formal program, then, it may be appropriate to have that child do more exercises or activities. But placing all children in a formal readiness program ignores the wealth of knowledge, skills and understandings that have accumulated before their entry into school.

If we accept the Developmental Levels of children's growth advocated by some experts in the field, it would appear that Karlin's (1975) interpretation of Piaget's views of how to introduce reading to children is extremely valid. He points out that Piaget's work has been used to support the idea that children should not be introduced to activities directly associated with the reading task. However, children should participate in the type of activities advocated in this paper for it is these activities that form the foundation for later success in reading.

The Review of Research supports the notion that providing opportunities for children to develop rich experiences prior to beginning reading is essential. Taken one step further, the research points out definite links between these experiences and the development of cognitive structures which provide the basis for comprehension. It is with this understanding in mind that the authors of this paper advocate that providing a "background of experiences" be viewed not as a cliché, but in a more serious light with the understanding that it is these experiences that enable the child to develop cognitively.

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# ISSUES AND TRENDS: IRA NATIONAL CONVENTIONS, 1962-1977

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During the past year several writers have provided insights into the history of reading theory, instruction, and organizations (Chall, 1977; Jerrolds, 1977; Morrison and Austin, 1977; Robinson (Ed.), 1977). Data from such materials capture the developmental dimensions of reading research, programs and curricula.

The International Reading Association national convention reflects interests of many reading experts and practitioners in the U.S. as well as in some foreign countries. Comparing several convention programs during a specified time frame will allow one to identify major issues and trends in the field of reading.

This article is an analysis of national IRA conventions spanning the years 1962-1977. It is an attempt to assess past directions, which may in turn affect current as well as future reading concerns.

## METHODOLOGY

Four representative conventions, spaced at five-year intervals (1962, 1967, 1972, and 1977) were selected for in-depth examination. All data used in this study were gathered from advance programs published in *The Reading Teacher*. A topical categorization scheme was developed on the basis of a content analysis of the titles of all meetings open to the general public. A total of 99 topics were identified by this method. Related topics were later combined to facilitate data analysis.

The topical categorization scheme was used to classify the specific topic(s) identified in each meeting. In some cases more than one topic was identified. For example, "Throwing a Lifesaver to Content Reading Through Peer Tutoring" was classified by two topic categories: (1) content reading skills, and (2) volunteers, tutors, or paraprofessionals.

The amount of time devoted to a topic was also noted. In cases where two or more topics were identified for a meeting, an equal amount of time was assigned to each topic. In the above one-hour session, each of the two topics was tallied as 30 minutes.

Other categorization schemes were devised to record information about the lead speaker of each meeting. Here the assumption was made that the lead speaker either organized the meeting, or was selected as the person best suited to introduce the meeting's topic(s). Information gathered on these speakers included their professional affiliation, the IRA region they represented, and their sex.

A total of 775 meetings conducted during the four conventions were classified according to these various schemes. Findings of the study centered around several key questions. Responses to these questions were provided in

terms of each convention year so that comparisons could be made among the various years.

#### Research Questions.

1. How many topics were included?
2. What was the total convention time, adding times of all individual meetings?
3. How many new (not included in previously examined conventions) topics were introduced and what percentage of the total convention did they represent?
4. What was the median total time spent on each topic?
5. What percentage of total convention time was spent on the 10 topics allotted most time?
6. What percentage of lead speakers were from the various institutional categories?
7. What percentage of lead speakers represented the different IRA regions?
8. What percentage of lead speakers were male and what percentage female?

### SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

These research questions were answered by computer analysis of the data. Relevant information was organized in various tables keyed to the specific questions. A complete set of these tables is available, upon request, from the author. The following conclusions were supported by these data tables:

- *More time was devoted to further analysis of previously introduced topics than to new topics during the 1972 and 1977 convention years.* The total number of topics introduced during each convention (1962 - 40 topics; 1967 - 68 topics; 1972 - 69 topics; 1977 - 86 topics) continued to expand, but the number of new topics declined considerably. The 1977 meetings included 86 topics, the most of any previous year; however, only nine new topics were introduced.
- *The median total time spent on each topic as well as the total convention time greatly increased from 1962-1977.* The total convention time approximately doubled every five years (1962 - 105 hours; 1967 - 270 hours; 1972 - 403 hours; 1977 - 819 hours). Likewise, the median amount of time spent on each topic doubled from 1962-1972 (1962 -  $1\frac{3}{4}$  hours; 1967  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours; 1972 5 hours) and increased by almost a half from 1972-1977 (1972 - 5 hours; 1977 - 7 hours). This increased time parallels the general growth of IRA membership, which more than doubled in the past 10 years (Chall, 1977).
- *Prior to 1967 the elementary students topic received more emphasis than the secondary students topic. Following this year, however, the secondary level predominated.* The increased convention time spent on secondary school concerns is evidence that educators perceived a need for greater improvement at the secondary level.

- *Minority student concerns were among the list of topics receiving most convention time during the 1972 and 1977 conventions.* This finding may be due to a general concern for equal educational opportunity for all learners. The recurrence of the remedial or learning disability students topic in 1977 may also be a result of PL 94-142 legislation.
- *The topic of comprehension was given more time than any other topic during the 1977 year. Prior to this year comprehension had not appeared on the list of topics allocated most time.* This spotlighting of a fundamental reading skill is also a focus of several recent research and writing efforts during the mid 70's.
- *The language experience method continued as a popular topic in three of the four convention years [1962, 1972 and 1977].* This finding may parallel educators' continuing interest in the importance of language-based instruction.
- *Competency or performance based instruction continued to gain attention during the 1977 convention after being introduced in the 1972 meetings.* This comes as no surprise if one considers the fact that several states have passed some type of competency based legislation, while others are debating the issue.
- *Volunteers, student or parent tutors, and paraprofessionals were among those who played an important role in the teaching of reading in the mid 70's.* Current reading programs encourage individualization of instruction which often can require additional personnel to work with students or assist in material preparation. School budgets, however, have experienced staff cuts rather than expansions. The logical solution is to involve others in the teaching-learning process. The 1977 convention provided information concerning these alternative assistants.
- *The topic of research design and reports of research studies increased from 1962-1967, but dropped sharply after 1967. On the other hand, for the first time in 1977, practical classroom instructional procedures received a substantial percentage of time.* A perusal of articles published in the 1977 issues of *The Reading Teacher* as compared to those in 1962 issues confirms this trend.
- *The majority of lead speakers were from universities or four-year colleges each year, with the exception of 1972, when local school districts provided the majority.* This increased participation of local school personnel could not be fully explained on the basis of data gathered in this study.
- *Lead speakers from the federal government were given a greater percentage of time in the 70's than in earlier years.* With fundings available from the federal government in the early 70's for such programs as Right to Read, this trend seems quite logical.
- *The East coast continued to dominate the other IRA regions as it provided most lead speakers each year, despite the convention's changing locations, in regions other than the East.* This region has also continued to provide the greatest percentage of general IRA members. Exempting years during which a given region hosted the convention, the percentage

of speakers from other regions seems rather stable. The South East region shows the most steady growth, though.

- An attempt to avoid sexual discrimination was substantiated by the nearly equal percentages of male and female lead speakers in the 1977 convention. During this slightly more than half of the speakers were female, compared to previous years when the percentage of males exceeded females.

### SOME ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS ON THESE FINDINGS

The fact that the IRA convention as well as the organization as a whole continues to grow at a rapid rate is evidence that educators are truly committed to the field of reading. When and where the national convention's growth finally will level off is difficult to predict, but the peak has not occurred yet. Sometime in the next few years, however, the convention will reach maximum size out of necessity. There are currently only a handful of cities that can house this annual event. But, the excellence of the convention certainly will continue.

It is gratifying to see that a trend toward quality, in-depth investigation of previously introduced topics now seems to be stressed rather than a superficial coverage of an excess of new topics each year. By devoting more time to a smorgasboard core of topics, several speakers provide a variety of viewpoints, thus offering the audience a wider scope of information.

It is clear that the IRA national convention recently geared itself to the immediate needs of the practitioner. The focus of attention is away from the ivory towers of learning toward the nitty-gritty concerns of those on daily classroom firing lines. The convention is now a mecca for persons seeking practical teaching ideas and procedures. What a fantastic inservice program!

The increasing number of speakers from other institutions beside the four-year college or university is proof that local school districts, state agencies, the federal government, etc. also have valuable information to present. A greater input from these sources also indicates a genuine interest and excitement in sharing ideas with other concerned educators. This spreading enthusiasm is visible to anyone attending the national convention.

The decreased emphasis on research and theory is somewhat puzzling, however, because the reading education profession actually conducts more, rather than less research each successive year. But the decreased convention time devoted to research may indicate that researchers do not translate their studies into many useable suggestions for the practitioner. Convention participants, for example, may feel that their time is better spent in a session providing concrete ideas about how to improve students' comprehension, than in a session merely outlining the relationship between syntax and comprehension. Perhaps researchers need to devote more than just the last few minutes of their presentations to meaningful teaching implications.

A stabilized focus of attention past the elementary level of reading

instruction is encouraging. Educators now concur that “learning to read” and “reading to learn” should be emphasized well into the secondary years. The 1976 National Assessment of Educational Progress also confirms a need for improved instruction at the secondary level. There the reading concerns, of course, touch all subject-area teachers, not just the reading specialist.

Three cheers for the newly emerging emphasis on comprehension. For too many years we “phonicized” our children to the extent that many became beautiful word callers rather than individuals who read. Hopefully this attention on comprehension will continue in the conventions to come.

Applause also goes to the recent trend toward many sessions devoted to the needs of minority students, including gifted, learning disabled, and bilingual learners. Indeed, America is a pluralistic nation, and its children attend school with many diverse needs. The needs of those other than the average, developmental readers are now a stable focus of the IRA national convention.

Finally, it will be interesting to see if competency or performance based instruction topics continue to hold a popular slot in the upcoming conventions. If this interest is only cyclic, as are many topics in education, these topics may not appear on the most popular list during the 1982 year. By that time there probably will be some new panacea presented to solve the problems faced by reading educators.

One gains a better understanding of contemporary reading concerns by examining the short-term issues and longer-term trends raised in previous years. As one realizes what was emphasized previously, these insights provide a perspective from which to better examine current situations. Records of the IRA national conventions are an excellent source that provide a more complete sense of history concerning the field of reading.

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# OVERSKILL

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A very wise person once conjectured about the relative merits of teaching children individual sounds in isolation before allowing them to speak. Only after a child had demonstrated mastery of phonemes (sound units) could s/he be allowed to advance to morphemes (meaning units). Thought units ('I' units or sentences) would follow. Under such a highly structured, individualized learning program, students could easily learn to say, "I hate school," by the end of second or third grade (depending on intelligence, socio-economic status, and motivation of course).

This analogy may be stretched to absurdity, but the author cannot help but notice a similar phenomenon in reading instruction—training in skills, subskills, strategies and techniques ad nauseam. This may be due in part to the "Back to Basics" movement, although the emphasis on "accountability" may also have contributed by causing administrators to seek out ways to *document* progress in reading instruction.

There appear to be two basic problems with the emphasis on skills instruction which some commercial reading programs and proponents of the "Back to Basics" movement seem to support. Such an emphasis fragments the reading process into minute shards and assumes that the students will be able to reassemble them into a meaningful whole. However, how often have reading teachers seen children who know phonics and structural analysis, but who read word by word, with minimum comprehension? Many children never really grasp the point that all of the "skills" are supposed to help them attain meaning.

Second, even if a child should somehow acquire all of the "skills" and be able to integrate them into a functional system for obtaining meaning, what is there in his/her experience with "reading" which would encourage him/her to read *after* reading class? In other words, what good are skills if they won't be used?

Furthermore, many students may not even be given the opportunity to apply their "skills" during reading class. Allington (1977) reports that an informal survey of students indicated that the average number of words read in context during a secondary remedial reading lesson was 43. The rest of the class was spent on "skills." As Allington says in the title of the article, "If they don't read much, how they ever gonna get good?"

The author does not propose the elimination of "skills" in reading classes. Certainly there are strategies and competencies which will make reading more efficient for students. However, many programs and teachers have scrambled their priorities in favor of easily recognizable, teachable, measurable, and reportable skills, at the expense of the more ephemeral and less specialized areas such as appreciation and overall fluency. The author knows a secondary reading teacher who tried Uninterrupted

Sustained Silent Reading (Hunt, 1970) fifteen minutes per day in her corrective reading class. She was delighted with the results and felt that more would be desirable, even to the point of spending the entire class period on silent reading, if the class so desired. However this has not been done because, as she put it, "How could I get away with calling that teaching?" Instead, the majority of each class period is still spent learning "skills."

Reading is a process which can and should be improved by practice. Just as one is not likely to improve one's singing solely by studying musical theory, one will not significantly improve reading by practicing phonics and structural analysis *alone*. Reading teachers must fuse everything into a meaningful whole, providing students time and encouragement, as well as an observable model, to read for their own purposes. Perhaps then, the needed "skills" can be taught individually or in small groups, as a need for them becomes apparent to the teacher *and* the student.

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# **AID FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL: EVALUATE CLASSROOM READING PROGRAMS**

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Most school systems require the principal of a building to make judgments about the quality of each teacher's instructional program as part of a process of rating teachers. Since reading instruction is generally conceded to be the most important part of the elementary school curriculum, there is frequently concern for evaluation of that component of the school program.

When required to evaluate reading instruction, however, many principals have stated that they do not always know what constitutes a good reading program. Because of the necessity for administrators to be generalists rather than specialists in the curriculum area, many principals express concern at their lack of the in-depth knowledge in the area of reading needed to judge teachers fairly and to spot weaknesses in programs that should be corrected. Information presented in this article will provide the administrator with guidelines to aid him/her in the evaluation process.

Although many types of reading programs are currently being used nationwide, more teachers use a basal reader approach to reading instruction than any other type of program. For this reason, the information presented below is intended for use in evaluating teachers' implementations of basal reader programs. However, much of this information can be used, either as stated or in a modified form, with other approaches to reading instruction.

A lesson as thorough as the one that has been suggested below will frequently take more than one class period to complete. Teachers evaluated based upon this information should be encouraged to aim for such a thorough and well-balanced program even though it may require more than one class period of instruction time. Often teachers hesitate to devote so much time to one lesson for fear of not covering all lessons in a book or all books by the end of a school year. Principals can be instrumental in alleviating worries about whether a certain set of materials is completed on a given date by emphasizing the importance of the quality of instruction and not merely the quantity of materials covered. Such an emphasis could eliminate the necessity of remedial instruction for some children. Throughout the present article, the term "reading lesson" will not mean a single class period, but the complete, well-balanced lesson as suggested in the description which follows. This type of lesson often takes two to three days to complete.

Two pairs of researchers, Harris and Serwer (2) and Chall and Feldman

(1), found that regardless of which approach to reading instruction was used, if teachers were well-trained in the use of that particular approach and that if their teaching behaviors were characteristic of that specific approach, pupil achievement was higher. If this is so, then teachers using a basal reader approach, and principals evaluating those teachers, need to be aware of the techniques and procedures characteristic of any basal reader approach to reading instruction.

Often, reading instruction is unsuccessful because it is not carried out in the manner in which it was intended to be put into practice. For example, it is unfortunately assumed by some that using a basal reader approach to reading instruction consists solely of oral reading of the stories in a book with no discussion or extending lessons related to the material read. When pupils then fail to achieve, the lack of achievement is blamed upon the approach rather than upon the incorrect implementation of the approach.

Authorities in the area of reading spend many months planning a careful sequence of well-balanced lessons based upon sound research to form the core of a good basal reading program. Teachers should be aware of the planned content and techniques for a lesson and the reasons for including these. This is not meant to imply that teachers should be slaves to manuals or to the dictates of publishing companies. Undoubtedly, there are activities suggested in some basal reading programs which research has shown to be less than helpful in fostering reading achievement. The thoughtful, informed teacher will ignore such suggestions. It does mean, however, that teachers should have sound reasons for deciding to eliminate any aspect of a lesson. For example, sometimes teachers decide that only the literal type of comprehension questions listed at the end of a lesson will be used. Interpretive and evaluative questions are eliminated because "they take too much time." This approach is not conducive to raising the quality of children's understanding of materials they read. The suggestions below will give the principal guidance in regard to which areas are too vital to exclude.

It should be noted that all items suggested will not take place every day. The amount of time the teacher is able to spend with each reading group precludes this. It is almost always necessary to spend more than one class period on each complete reading lesson. On any given day he/she observes a reading group the principal should see some of the practices described and should see almost all of the practices if he/she returns to observe the same group for two or three days in succession.

Finally, the description presented here pertains only to formal instruction in reading. A program that prepares students to read well and extensively will include time *each* day for students to read independently in materials of their own choice, time for the teacher to read aloud to students, and time for students to share their experiences with books through oral discussions, writing, and other activities.

### *The BIG 5 in a Basal Reading Lesson*

1. *Preparation for reading* Suggestions for preparing students to read a

given selection are generally found in teachers' manuals which accompany basal reader programs. Examples of these are suggestions such as using specific questions that require students to associate previous knowledge with information in the story or activities such as pointing out a story's setting on a map. The procedure of preparing students to read is frequently neglected, but should not be since this preparation is often important to a student's successful comprehension of the story. By carefully selecting suggestions from the manual, time devoted to this portion of the lesson may be brief.

2. *Guided silent reading* – Silent reading should usually precede oral reading in each lesson. Questions may be asked *before* the student reads various parts of the story to help him/her establish a purpose for reading. Questions asked *before* a student reads often aid his/her comprehension. The questions asked afterward may only *test* the student's comprehension.
3. *Discussion* – Comprehension questions asked of the students after the story has been read should include all levels of questions, that is, questions which require literal, interpretive, and evaluative and creative responses. A literal question requires the student to recall information that has been stated in the text. A question that calls for an interpretive response requires the student to infer, draw conclusions, see cause-and-effect relationships and engage in other kinds of thinking that go beyond a simple memory response. Questions that require evaluative and creative responses do not have single correct answers, but allow the student to offer an opinion or make and defend a judgment. An example of such a question is "Do you think Doug would be a good person to be given responsibility for an important project? Why or why not?"
4. *Oral re-reading* – Occasionally the teacher may plan for an entire selection to be re-read orally after silent reading has been completed. More frequently the teacher will have the students re-read only selected parts of the material. In any event, oral reading should be included in the lesson often enough for the teacher to assess the growth and accuracy of each student's knowledge of sight vocabulary, decoding skills, and strategies important to successful reading.
5. *Reviewing skills, concepts, and strategies* – Several types of exercises may be included in a thorough reading lesson. Over the period of two to three days usually required for this type of reading lesson, all or some of the following areas should be covered. Frequent omission of any of these areas may be detrimental to the reading growth of some students. (a) Sight vocabulary—exercises to insure that students will later have recognition of new words that have been introduced in the story may be included. Activities of this type are especially helpful if they are carried out in a contextual setting. (b) Decoding skills and strategies – practice in the use of some phonetic and structural analysis skills, and especially in the use of context clues, is important to student's continual growth in reading. (c) Meaning vocabulary—attention should be given to

meanings of unfamiliar words. (d) Comprehension opportunity to engage in various levels of comprehension should be included in the reading lesson. (e) Other types of activities and exercises may be included.

Sometimes exercises from teachers' manuals can be adapted so that students may carry out the activities independently. If this procedure is used, the teacher should discuss the first one or two questions or activities with the students before they work the exercises independently. Usually written work or independent work of this type should not be assigned unless the teacher plans to check the work. Sometimes checking of completed work can be accomplished as a group activity with the students checking their own papers or can be arranged so that the students share the work they have produced with another student. Periodically, the teacher should check each student's work individually.

If students have workbooks that accompany the reading series, and if time is short, they may occasionally do activities and exercises found in the workbooks in lieu of exercises suggested in the teacher's manual. If this procedure is used, the teacher should work through some examples with the students before they are assigned to work independently and the assigned work must be checked.

If exercises are occasionally carried out as independent work, this procedure can be alternated with doing the exercise on the chalkboard or with the reading group working together orally on an activity. As teachers become adept at designing their own high quality reading activities, these activities may be substituted for less interesting exercises found in some teachers' manuals . . . if the teacher-made activity accomplishes the same purpose.

In order to teach a thorough reading lesson, the teacher should usually plan to spend more than one class period working on each selection or teaching unit.

A further suggestion to the principal is that he/she distribute copies of the above description of a well-balanced reading lesson to teachers *at the beginning of the year*. As a part of their strategy to eliminate failure, Nagel and Richman (3) state, "If you want somebody to learn something, for heaven's sake tell him what it is!" It is assumed that the purpose of evaluation is improvement. Making teachers aware of specific practices upon which they will be evaluated, allows teachers to work toward these goals.

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# CHILDREN'S RECOGNITION OF WORDS IN ISOLATION AND IN CONTEXT

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The extent to which young children use, or should use sentence contexts as cues to word recognition is an unsettled issue. It is clear, on the one hand, that there are inherent limitations in this cue system to its successful use for this purpose (Groff, 1975). Also, the notion that beginning readers "have little else on which to rely" for word recognition except context cues, as offered by Karlin (1971, p. 145) has also been demonstrated as false. To the contrary, the research on word recognition suggests that these young children use letters as the main cues for word recognition from the time they first begin to learn to read (Groff, 1974).

## *Context Cues in Beginning Reading*

The empirical evidence on the degree to which the use of context cues by beginning readers helps them identify words seems to present other contradictions. For example, Goodman (1965) found that first-grade children could read in a story context 62 percent of the words they previously had misnamed when attempting to read them as isolated items in word lists. He found the second-grade children in this study could read in context 75 percent of the words they previously had misnamed in isolation. Martin (1970) also found that second-grade children made significantly fewer errors in naming words when these were presented in context rather than in isolation.

However, in opposition to this finding, Singer, et al (1973) discovered that first and second grade children found isolated words easier to read than a) words plus pictures, b) words in sentences, or c) words in sentences plus pictures, in that order. As well, in his study, Biemiller (1970) showed that teaching first-grade readers to rely too soon or too intensively on context cues created an undesirable dependence on this cue system. He concluded that "The child's early use of contextual information does not appear to greatly facilitate progress in acquiring reading skill. The longer he stays in the early, context-emphasizing phase [of reading development] without showing an increase in the use of graphic [letter] information the poorer reader he is at the end of the year," (Biemiller, 1970, p. 95). Then, Chester (1972) discovered no significant difference in the ability of pre-reading first-grade children to learn to read words taught in isolation as versus words taught in oral sentence contexts. In her tests of children of first-grade age Francis (1972, p. 116) also found that these "children were more ready to recognize similar words or letters than whole word frames." This was due to the difficulties in their initial reading, she concluded, difficulties which for these children "obscured perception of the major

structural features of sentences, particularly where appropriate cues come rather late in the sentences." It has been found, too, that the value of context cues for beginning readers depends on the spelling predictability of the words being taught. To this effect Hartley (1970) found that if a list of words with minimal phonemegrapheme differences are taught, as would be the case with *hen*, *ten* and *men*, the presentation of such words in a sentence context has a depressing effect on beginning readers' learning of them. Her evidence suggests that when minimal spelling contrast words, such as *hen* and *pen*, are taught that one need not attempt to teach the use of context cues for their recognition. The evidence that normal beginning readers read words in sentences orally in a "shopping list" fashion, that is, one-by-one without the pitch stress and juncture sentences (Hochberg, 1970; Clay and Imlach, 1971), also disagrees with the implications of Goodman's (1965) findings on this matter, cited above. It is clear that the majority of the research on this issue so far does little to support Goodman's contention that the process of beginning readers' learning to read parallels that of their learning to speak in that this reading skill "is also learned from whole to part, from general to specific" (Goodman, 1975, p. 629).

### *The Present Study*

Considering the unsettled nature of the findings regarding the relationship of the use of sentence contexts for word identification by beginning readers, further information seems needed. To this end I had twenty-three first-grade pupils and twenty-five second-grade pupils individually read aloud isolated words from a graded word list (LaPray and Ross, 1969). Previous to this reading I had acquainted myself with these socio-economically middle class children by visits to their classrooms where I helped them with their seat work, and told them stories.

At the point in this first reading at which these children misnamed five words from the graded list that was used, they then read aloud five different sentences which contained the five misnamed words in question. It was hoped the simplest kinds of sentences possible were designed for this purpose.

In keeping with this objective the sentences used in these readings were made up exclusively of monosyllables (except that some of the text words from the graded word list were polysyllabic, of course). These were monosyllabic words common to both the basic word list prepared by Hillerich (1974), his "Starter Words," and to that by Johnson and Majer (1976), their "Basic Vocabulary: First Grade Words." In this respect the list of 154 words used to write these sentences thus were believed to represent the least difficult reading task possible for the purposes of this study.

The simplicity of these sentences was further maintained by a control over their length; they were only from four to six words in length. Moreover, they were written as kernel sentences with transitive verbs and their objects, unless the graded word that had been initially misnamed required that a transformation type of sentence be written. This was necessary, of course, whenever the graded word was, for example, a negative, an adjective, an

interrogative, or when relative clauses or reflexives needed to be written. Samples of the sentences (the misnamed graded word given in italics) are as follows: The mensee the car. The men *work* on the car. The boy went home *quietly*. I like school *since* I came. The man *wrecked* his car. He did *not* want the car.

It was found that the first grade pupils in this study read correctly in these sentence contexts only 17 percent of the graded words they had previously misnamed while reading them in isolation. For the second-grade pupils so studied, this figure rose to 36 percent. Only two of these twenty-three first-grade pupils recognized in sentences three or more of the five words they misnamed in isolation. For the twenty-five second-grade pupils this figure was six.

Table 1 demonstrates in another way the effect of sentence contexts on the word recognition of these children. Shown here are the percents of words misnamed in isolation that were later recognized in sentence contexts as each graded level of reading difficulty. For example, 12 percent of the *preprimer* level words misnamed by first-grade pupils were later recognized in sentence contexts. For the misnamed words at the *primer* level for these pupils this was 9 percent, and so on.

Table 1  
Percents of Misnamed Words Recognized in  
Context at Graded Levels of Difficulty

Grade	Preprimer	Primer	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
1	12	9	20	70				
2	*	66	22	50	50	45	80	0

\*No graded word was misnamed at this level.

To properly interpret the data in Table 1 it is likely the words misnamed at graded level II by first-grade pupils, and those at graded levels primer and V by second-grade pupils should be disregarded. This involved only ten, and three and five words, respectively.

### Conclusions

The following conclusions seem warranted from this study of first- and second-grade pupils' abilities to read correctly, in highly-simplistic sentence contexts, words they had previously misnamed in isolation:

1. The small percent of previously misnamed words later read correctly in very simple sentence contexts by the first-grade pupils studied here acts to confirm previous research findings which indicate that even simple sentence contexts are of little value for word recognition by these beginning readers. This evidence, when taken as a whole, suggests that first-grade teachers of reading need not be overly concerned when their

pupils fail to use cues from sentence contexts for word recognition. While the findings of this study do not invalidate the recommendation (Groff, 1977) that context cues should be taught concurrently with phonics for developing word recognition skills in beginning readers, it does appear that for a period in beginning reading it is normal for these pupils not to make much use of sentence contexts, even very simple ones, for this purpose.

2. By the second grade, however, pupils show much greater success (over 100 percent greater success in this study) in the use of simple sentence contexts for the recognition of words. The degree to which sentence contexts contribute to word recognition by first- and second-grade pupils may be less, however, than Goodman (1965) has reported. From this it is obvious that continued research on the relationship of context cues for word recognition by beginning readers is needed.
3. There does not appear to be a close relationship between the graded level of reading difficulty of misnamed words and beginning readers' abilities to later recognize such words in sentence contexts. That is, one might assume that as misnamed graded words grow in reading difficulty beginning readers would find them increasingly difficult to successfully recognize in sentence contexts. The results of this study do not bear out this assumption, however.
4. The discovery of the limits of sentence contexts as aids to word recognition by beginning readers under certain circumstances, as set forth in this study, should not be thought of as a negative criticism of sentence contexts for this purpose, of course. Any method of presenting words to these pupils that will increase the percent of their correct word recognition by the degree found in this study obviously is to be recommended.

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# STAFF DEVELOPMENT IN READING: WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

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The author interviewed Dr. Ira Aaron (University of Georgia), Dr. Harold Herber (Syracuse University), Dr. Wayne Otto (University of Wisconsin) and Dr. Robert Ruddell (University of California at Berkeley) during the IRA convention held in Miami in 1978. Dr. Roselmina Indrisano (Boston University) and Dr. Olive Niles (Connecticut State Education Department) were interviewed in their respective offices several weeks later.

They were selected based on these criteria: a) their prominence in action staff development research, b) their contributions to the recent literature in the field, c) their leadership roles in the International Reading Association, and d) their representation of a geographic cross-section of the country.

The term "in-service" has been employed to encompass the planned activities for the instructional improvement of professional staff members (Harris and Bessent, 1969). It has been used to describe a multitude of activities, from the selection and development of instructional materials, to designing a new curriculum, to public relations.

Staff development, as it exists in 1977, became a reality as certain signal events occurred in the federal government's interest in educational research and development. Since the N.D.E.A., the Cooperative Education Act, the E.S.E.A., the Right-To-Read, and more recently, teacher training centers, competency and field-based programs, staff development activities have steadily increased.

As trends continued to support its need and project it into the future, staff development should be more effective than ever before. In an effort to discover the dynamics constituting effective staff development experiences, six experts were asked several questions.

**Q. #1** Has staff development changed in the last ten years?

**Dr. Aaron:** I suspect it has changed some, but mainly in terminology. Almost everything that we once thought of as in-service work, I would consider to be staff development.

**Dr. Herber:** I see an increase in the need and the recognition of the need for staff development that has come probably as a result of the diminishing availability of new positions in education. But I don't see that there has been any great difference in the activity.

**Dr. Indrisano:** In the last ten years we have seen the inception of programs that are field-based. Earlier activity tended to be a series of

courses, whereas more recently we have initiated field-based programs which can be part of degree granting programs.

Dr. Niles: Yes, I think it's very different. There is much more recognition of the importance of it. School systems are beginning to recognize that broad-based staff development is not very effective, that what teachers want and need is specificity, more of a rifle approach and less of a shotgun approach.

Dr. Otto: I would say there is more inclination to provide formally for it, because of unionization if for nothing else. Where in-service used to be an after school affair, now it's a carefully planned affair because it may even be called for in a contract. Because it costs more, it's valued more.

Dr. Ruddell: I don't think there has been a great deal of change in recent years. There are very distinct restrictions on finances on schools. In addition there is a knowledge vacuum present in the area of staff development. A third reason is the overload found in a public school where you've got a person in charge of staff development but also charged with a half dozen other responsibilities. On the brighter side, there is potential for change and I think you can find certain programs that could be viewed as model programs for staff development.

Q. #2 Is there any difference between a change agent operating in an educational setting and one operating in another setting, such as industry?

Dr. Aaron: The difference is that the person who has to work with teachers has to be constantly considering the youngsters that the teacher is going to be working with. You could have a successful operation and kill the patient. In industry you may be dealing only with one level, the person who is making the product. I believe the leader in staff development in reading has perhaps a more difficult job.

Dr. Herber: I can't imagine so. I think it's like reading, as I view reading. It is applicable across all disciplines. The process is essentially the same; what differs is the substance to which it applies. What you are trying to do is apply the principle of showing people how to do what they want to do, giving them as much help as you possibly can . . . It seems to me that regardless of the discipline, the area of human endeavor, that principle would hold.

Dr. Indrisano: I am not an advocate of the industrial model for education. Industry has the thing as its goal; education has the human as its goal. I do not mean to suggest that there is no place for the literature on change. Teachers are adult learners and we have sometimes used the principles of pedagogy rather than andragogy in staff development. The change agent's role is to assist the client, not to impose change, but to facilitate it.

Dr. Niles: Graduate schools of education, when they are training people to do consultant and supervisory work in education, should find somebody who has some knowledge of management techniques. Hopefully, it would be somebody who knows education. It needs to be done, however, because more and more people in supervisory or consultant positions are being expected to be change agents.

Dr. Otto: Yes, I think there is a difference. A change agent in education has to be more sensitive to all community needs because of the funding mechanisms. Also, the agent must be sensitive to the fact that we are not dealing with a tangible product, such as in industry, where people can see exactly what change is occurring.

Dr. Ruddell: There are similarities and differences. Similarities such as encouraging staff when quality efforts are present, and providing opportunities for staff to interact with the individuals who are assisting in the design of the in-service efforts leading to change. The big difference between industrial and educational settings is the definite authority hierarchy that's established in many industrial settings, inhibiting communication. It is extremely important to incorporate teachers and employees in the in-service process and provide options to allow them to self-select in in-service situations. This is in distinct contrast to a set hierarchy of staff relationships that discourages any degree of interchange.

Q. #3 What is the primary purpose of staff development?

Dr. Aaron: The primary purpose would be to help teachers, administrators, and other educational workers to do a better job of helping youngsters learn to read. The ultimate purpose ought to be pupil improvement in reading.

Dr. Herber: I would say the main purpose is to have teachers study what they do so that they can develop more efficiency and effectiveness in what they do. Also, to develop independence of outside sources as rapidly as possible, so that they can take over their own staff development.

Dr. Indrisano: To increase the competence of teachers and, in the case of highly competent teachers, to update information, to share recent knowledge and research. The process depends upon the person's own stage of development.

Dr. Niles: I think that the purpose of staff development should be to come as close as possible to meeting individual, self-identified needs. If they are good teachers, they know what they need. In-service education should meet these needs that they recognize at whatever time the staff development is to occur.

Dr. Otto: Planning and self-help . . . the need is to identify *local* needs and then to focus staff development to meet these needs. The fact is that as often as not the resources are available locally – no need to look elsewhere for the messiah!

Dr. Ruddell: The major purpose of staff development is to enable the teacher to become more effective in the classroom, to more effectively meet the needs of the youngsters. The key to successful in-servicing work is found at the local site level, building around the needs identified by teachers. An in-service program providing constant interaction and feedback to teachers requires high quality leadership at the local school site, budgetary support for release time and strong administrative support at the central and local school office level.

Despite their widely differing backgrounds and tendencies to emphasize different aspects of staff development, the six experts stand on common

ground in several major areas. They dispel any notion of the “expert from afar” as an effective staff developer, eschewing this in favor of utilizing local talent. While acknowledging the necessity of promoting competency, they lean heavily on the side of human resource development and facilitation. They echoed each other in recommending a staff developer who, according to Dr. Aaron, “could work well with people.” Summarily, they concur with Dr. Otto’s succinct description of the characteristic of an effective staff developer: Empathy!

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# MINIMAL COMPETENCIES IN READING FOR SECONDARY CONTENT TEACHERS

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In discussions among secondary reading teachers you are almost sure to hear the statement that every teacher should be a teacher of reading. This is a recurrent theme of reading conferences and the vigor with which an author espouses this end is one of the criteria by which secondary reading texts are judged. On paper or as a conference theme this is a wonderful concept. In reality though it seems at best difficult to achieve and at worst represents tremendous naivete on the part of reading educators.

Most teachers in secondary schools recognize the problems that poor reading ability causes their students. The difficulty that these students have in dealing with the concepts and practice materials transmitted via the printed page is a continuing source of concern to secondary teachers regardless of content area. Teachers try to deal with these problems in a number of ways and to be honest we must also say that at times the press of the day-to-day regimen saps one's strength and the students are left to their own abilities with the hope that the poor reader absorbs some of the information through osmosis.

While recognizing the difficulties that the reading abilities variable presents, most secondary teachers do not aspire to be reading teachers. If math teachers wanted to become reading teachers they would do so. The same holds true for science teachers, social science teachers, English teachers, etc. Those that are interested in becoming reading teachers should be encouraged to do so, for their content area background represents a tremendous resource. For content area teachers who lack this desire, however, no good will come of attempts to convince them that reading skills are any more critical than their content area skills. They chose a specific content area because they were interested and, in many cases, extremely talented in the transmission of its concepts and vagaries. Any attempt to compromise the integrity of their content area to teach reading will be met with resistance. As Duffy has so succinctly observed, "every teacher a teacher of reading . . . when quoted pugnaciously to a group of . . . content teachers, will create more antipathy than sympathy" (1975, p. 4). We feel that a reasonable alternative proposition is that content area teachers become increasingly aware that student reading ability represents an important variable in their instruction and that they consider this variable when designing instructional strategies. Additionally, content teachers should become aware of the role that the secondary reading

teacher can play in helping them meet the reading needs of their students, within the structures of their discipline.

We recognize the role that reading must play in a student's education. We also feel that it is questionable practice to say that students don't need printed material to succeed in any class. This assertion is in effect saying that whatever students need to know about a discipline can be taught them now and that the state of a discipline is such that what is taught today will stand them in good stead as long as they live. Teachers, more so than most, realize the foolishness of this assumption, but yet unprofitable educational practices continue.

### *Teacher Preparation*

The secondary teacher has traditionally been prepared as a content area specialist. This method has emphasized knowledge acquisition rather than knowledge transmission. Generally, contact with the College of Education has been limited to methods courses with depressingly little emphasis placed on the major teaching method and learning resource used in secondary schools; reading.

When we speak of reading in this context we are obviously not speaking only of decoding, for most secondary students are competent decoders. Nor are we speaking only of comprehension since the assumption that if only students could comprehend they would learn, denies the need for good teachers. Rather, we are speaking of reading as an instructional variable that must be considered in the *planning* stages of instruction.

To effectively incorporate reading variables into instructional differentiation the content area teacher needs to develop a minimal level of competence in several areas. The four primary areas are: 1) understanding the reading process, 2) assessing student abilities, 3) assessing print material, and 4) techniques for differentiating instruction. While by no means comprehensive the following list of competencies offered in each of these areas will provide the content area teacher with entry level skills. These competencies were drawn from experiences developing and revising CBTE curricula in reading for content area teachers (Allington, 1974; Bader, Strange, Merkley, 1973). We have pared the list to the essential core components, those abilities the students identified as essential.

### *Understanding the Reading Process*

Keeping in mind these are only entry level competencies, we feel that in order to understand the reading process a content area teacher should:

1. recognize the roles of print, purpose, semantics and syntax in gathering meaning from print
2. understand the relationship between reading ability and their content area

### *Assessing Student Abilities*

To provide a minimal level of competence in assessing student abilities the teacher should:

1. understand the philosophy underlying norm referenced, criterion

- referenced, and informal assessment instruments
- 2. develop a strategy for examining assessment data with a particular emphasis on interpreting test results
- 3. become familiar with commonly used tests of reading ability

### *Assessing Print Material*

Because print material is used in nearly every content area class the teacher should:

- 1. understand the concept of readability and familiarize himself with the administration and interpretation of a readability formula
- 2. identify patterns of writing employed by authors in content area texts
- 3. identify key vocabulary in content area texts
- 4. familiarize himself with the CLOZE procedure to determine student's ability to process information as presented in texts
- 5. assess text suitability for meeting pre-specified content objectives

### *Instructional differentiation*

The teacher who demonstrates the previous competencies has made progress. However, gathering and storing information does not automatically improve instruction. The effective teacher incorporates the information gathered into a plan for instructional differentiation. At an entry level the teacher should:

- 1. employ such techniques as the Directed Reading Activity, as needed, in content area lessons
- 2. develop study guides for a content area text
- 3. identify strategies for teaching key vocabulary at different levels
- 4. identify and establish comprehension goals for content areas
- 5. develop a strategy for meshing content goals, comprehension goals, and student's needs/abilities
- 6. employ multiple and/or multilevel texts to meet instructional goals
- 7. familiarize himself with the advantages and disadvantages of other differentiation techniques: SQ3R, prequestioning, advance organization, etc.
- 8. identify the role of the secondary reading teacher in aiding both teachers and students in meeting educational goals

### *Summary*

The competencies outlined above are entry level skills designed to improve content area instruction. Every teacher is not a teacher of reading but every teacher at times employs print material in the instructional process. Unfortunately as Burnett and Schnell (1975) have pointed out, "it is easier to address the issue of how to teach reading directly than it is to prepare teachers to teach reading indirectly as it relates to content area instruction." (p. 547) However, because of the pervasive use of print materials in our educational process, secondary educators must have a certain facility with various aspects of the reading processes. Teaching content through reading requires educators to be prepared to assess print

material and student abilities and to then differentiate instruction based on assessment.

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# **SOCIAL READINESS: THE NEGLECTED AREA IN READING**

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First and foremost the classroom must be viewed as a social setting where the child interacts with teacher and peers. Thus, while preparing the child for reading and other academic activities, the teacher should not only consider the intellectual, emotional, and physical readiness of the child, but the social readiness as well. Too often this area is overlooked when the readiness of the child is being determined.

## **Development of Social Readiness**

The development of social readiness is the result of the experiences of the child. The home environment makes one of the greatest contributions to the child's social readiness because the quality of the relationship with parents molds the behavior of the child, and this behavior influences the rapport the child will have with teachers and peers.

Some overindulgent parents baby their child. Subjected to parental pampering, the child might develop strong dependency ties which can create problems when he enters school and must be away from parental contact for a large portion of the day. A child from this type of home is a "victim of oversolicitousness" (Schubert & Torgerson, p. 42).

The child from a strict environmental background can also have problems adjusting to school. Some parents espouse the philosophy that children should be seen but not heard, and the child is taught to be quiet at home. When the reticent child starts to school, he is expected to interact with the teacher and peers. By improperly attempting to implement this interaction, the teacher could cause severe shyness and withdrawal which must be overcome before the child can socialize with others, express his own ideas, and fully profit from instructional opportunities.

On the other hand, where parental discipline is lax, the child is not likely to possess the self-control which is necessary for maximum growth in learning to read. Without the needed self-control, the child creates problems for himself, his teacher, and his peers.

A child from a broken home may have difficulty developing the social skills which are necessary for academic success. In most cases, the home environment is unstable for a period of time before separation or divorce. The child may have been unwanted, rejected, unloved, and possibly abused, which would not promote conditions for optimum social development. The broken home has the greatest impact on the child when "the cause of the disruption is one about which the family is ashamed, such as illegitimacy or imprisonment" (Harris, p. 41).

Whether the child lives with his natural parents, a single parent, or foster parents will determine his environmental experiences. By living with natural or foster parents, the child would probably have more opportunities

to interact socially than a child who lives with a single parent. The single parent situation affords only one person with whom the child can communicate; and, in most instances, there is little time for this interaction.

Foster parents can give the child the same opportunities for social development as natural parents. However, a child might resent foster parents; this resentment may cause deep social and emotional stress even though the foster parents sincerely love and care for him.

Contact with other children also has an effect on the child's development. The number and ages of siblings greatly influence the child. Research has shown that "the smaller the age difference (between siblings), the greater the likelihood of sibling help (with reading)—particularly when the next older sibling is a girl" (Durkin, p. 136). If the child comes from a large, close family, he may have already developed the social skills that are needed for functioning in academic activities. On the other hand, if the child comes from a small family where there are large age differences between siblings, or if he is an only child, the opportunity for the development of social skills may be limited.

The child's social skills could have been developed in play school or nursery school. These experiences with other children his own age could enable the child to acquire the important social skills of sharing, cooperating, taking turns, and verbally interacting with others.

Nevertheless, the child may enter school without having had any experiences as a member of a group as large as that usually found in the typical classroom. A child with this limited background may overreact in the classroom—with shyness or aggressiveness. Consequently, the child must be dealt with diplomatically. If he is shy and withdrawn, he must be given security. If he is bold and overly aggressive, he must be taught to share and cooperate with other children and respect their rights.

Although a specific experiential background does not dictate a particular social outcome, the behavior of the child does reflect the impact of these experiences. As a general rule, the environment provided by the natural parents coupled with good nursery school or play school experiences is recognized as being the most socially beneficial to the child.

### Social Readiness

In order to determine if the child is socially ready for reading activities, the teacher should look for the following characteristics:

1. The child should listen attentively when a peer or the teacher is talking. Good listening is a major social skill and is essential for the development of auditory discrimination and the application of phonics.
2. The child must work harmoniously with his peers by sharing instructional materials and taking turns. Very soon in school a "child's individual pursuits are gradually abandoned to make way for more social enterprises" (Russell, p. 83), and "the ability to participate actively and cooperatively in group activities is . . . (an) extremely important aspect of social development" (Harris, p. 40).
3. The child should speak in sentences which are readily intelligible to

other children and to the teacher. In other words, "a child must be able to use and understand language" (Smith & Johnson, p. 72). The child should frequently engage in oral conversations with other members of the class, and the communication should be pleasurable and should increase in frequency as the child grows socially.

4. The child should be able to comprehend directions and respond accordingly. Effective learning, in most cases, is dependent upon the child's ability to follow instructions given to him by the teacher.
5. The child should assume responsibility for correctly utilizing and replacing materials and equipment used in the classroom.
6. The child should be able to maintain self-control in situations involving social, physical, and emotional conflict; and, by so doing, the child will accomplish perhaps one of the most important prerequisites to success in reading. The child who does not have this self-control may resort to antisocial behavior which can disrupt classroom activities and can result in rejection by peers on the playground.
7. The child should be able to plan, pursue, and conclude assigned tasks successfully. Following through with assignments and completing tasks are important academic and social traits.
8. The child should be able to satisfy his personal and academic needs in a socially acceptable manner, whether working by himself or in a group. However, the child should "be free to be himself within the confines of the group or class in which he works" (Stauffer, p. 158).

The age and maturational level of the child will determine the degree to which the above characteristics will be developed. Of course, the more precocious child would develop the skills sooner.

### Recommendations for Reading Teachers

After determining the areas in which the child needs further social development, the reading teacher should make plans for this growth. There are some basic actions that should be taken by the teacher to promote social development.

1. The teacher should provide many opportunities for success in order for the child to develop a sense of security in the classroom.
2. The teacher should give the child opportunities to interact with other children under the teacher's controlling influence. This gives the child a chance to "come out" if he is shy, or to display his "best" behavior if he tends to be overly aggressive. In relationships with other children, the child should learn to compete without becoming belligerent, to conform without losing his creativity, and to compromise without losing his integrity.
3. The teacher should give the child responsibilities which are within his ability range.
4. The teacher should plan many activities whereby the child can speak in front of a small group or the entire class, but the child should never be forced to do so. For the shy child, this should be a gradual process. The teacher should gain the child's confidence; and, over a period of time,

the teacher should encourage him to interact with others. For the overanxious "chatter box," a group activity may provide an opportunity for him to learn to listen.

#### Summary

Though often underemphasized, social development is an important and integral part of reading readiness. The reading teacher must be aware of the social skills needed for productive growth in reading and the techniques involved in developing them. The teacher must take an inventory of the social development of the children in the class and plan for each child's socialization in those areas where a need is indicated.

Social liberties in the classroom are given for the development of each child and are restricted when behavior becomes detrimental to the welfare of the individual or the group. The classroom represents a module of democracy; its atmosphere must promote optimum conditions for social growth and learning within a structured setting. Every child must possess or develop the social skills necessary for making the most of the educational process.

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# TEACHERS' ABILITIES TO JUDGE THE DIFFICULTY OF READING MATERIALS

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One issue confronting any teacher of reading is the critical problem of the "match." Placing students into an appropriate difficulty level of reading material seems to be an important antecedent of effective reading instruction. Chall and Feldman (1966) explain that teachers' abilities to select appropriate reading materials for children vary and that the accuracy of these selections has a definite effect on achievement.

## *How Well Do Teachers Judge The Difficulty Level of Materials?*

Studies of teachers' abilities to assess the difficulty level of reading materials have been conducted, but the conclusions from these studies appear to be somewhat mixed. Reports by Chall (1958) and Carver (1974) indicate that teacher ratings of materials tend to be quite accurate and reliable. On the other hand Rakes (1973) examined the abilities of 43 randomly selected Adult Basic Education (ABE) teachers to assess the reading difficulty levels of 29 frequently used ABE texts compared to a criterion established by readability formulae. He concluded that "there was no evidence to indicate that subjective ABE teachers' estimates of readability were accurate means for readability assessment."

Jorgenson (1975) conducted a study on teachers' abilities to judge the difficulty of reading materials. The judgments from this sample of 84 elementary teachers were compared to a criterion of publisher placement in a leveled set of informal reading inventories from preprimer to fourth grade. In general the teachers' judgments were not particularly accurate. For example, only 21 of the teachers accurately judged the fourth grade passage, while 33 teachers felt that the fourth grade passage was sixth grade difficulty level or higher. Jorgenson attributed what little accuracy was found to teacher expectancy based on the reading ability of the students in their own classroom. He also noted that teacher experience was potentially one significant factor affecting accuracy of judgment.

Teachers' abilities to place students into materials appropriate to their reading ability are at least somewhat suspect based upon past evidence. Even if the teacher is able to accurately assess the students' reading level, he or she must still be able to assess the difficulty level of the materials to be read in order to make the appropriate match. Finding the appropriate level of reading materials for any student is confounded by at least three problems. First, many studies, such as those reported by Roe (1970) and Rodenborn and Washburn (1974), suggest that the material in leveled texts often differs significantly from estimates of difficulty based on readability

formulae and other measures. This indicates that even if a teacher is able to make an accurate assessment of a student's reading ability and places a student into the corresponding level of a basal reader the critical match may not be made. Second, much of the reading required of students is not done from leveled texts. Sources such as newspapers, trade books, magazines, and comic books do not have predetermined readability levels. In fact, most of the functional and recreational reading done by children is from non-leveled sources. Therefore, the teacher must necessarily make judgments about the difficulty level of many reading materials. Third, in trying to make judgments about the difficulty level of reading materials teachers occasionally use readability formulae. However, the formulae are generally too time consuming for use by the teacher, who is confronted with the need to make numerous judgments about reading material daily, and the formulae themselves often yield differing results. McLeod (1962), Rakes (1973), and Guidry and Knight (1976) represent three of the numerous studies in which the inconsistency of the formulae is noted.

Teachers need to make a great number of relatively accurate judgments about the difficulty level of reading materials. The ability to make these judgments is necessitated by inconsistent placement of materials by publishers in leveled texts, the great amount of reading done outside of leveled texts, the time-consuming nature of readability formulae, and the lack of consistency in the results of such formulae. Unfortunately, the ability of teachers to make judgments of difficulty is somewhat suspect.

#### *What Factors Affect A Teacher's Ability To Judge Materials*

Based on results from the previously cited Jorgenson (1975) study, it seems both possible and plausible that teaching experience has an effect on the teacher's ability to accurately judge reading materials and thus make the critical match between student and material. Another factor which may affect the teacher's ability to make judgments about reading material is the amount of training the teacher has had in the area of reading instruction. Hopefully the teacher with more training in reading will be more knowledgeable about reading and thus will be more able to judge the difficulty level of materials. While this relationship between training and knowledge cannot be assumed to be absolute, results of studies reported by Kingston, Brosier, and Hsu (1975) and Koenke (1975) indicate that the generalization does hold. In the Kingston study undergraduate elementary education majors *without* reading training, undergraduate elementary education majors *with* reading training, elementary classroom teachers, and reading specialists differed significantly in their performances on the Inventory of Teacher Knowledge of Reading (Artley & Hardin, 1971). The mean scores of undergraduates with reading training and elementary classroom teachers were very similar (54.45 and 54.11) respectively; but undergraduates without training scored significantly ( $p < .001$ ) lower, while reading specialists scored significantly ( $p < .001$ ) higher. Koenke (1975) found similar results using the same instrument to assess the knowledge of undergraduates and experienced teachers.

Considering the suggested relationship between training in reading, knowledge about reading, and the ability to judge the difficulty of reading materials; and considering that there appears to be some relationship between amount of teaching experience and the ability to judge the difficulty levels of reading material; the present study was conducted to answer two questions:

1. Do individuals with more training in teaching reading and more experience in teaching reading make more accurate judgments about the difficulty level of materials than do individuals with less training and experience?
2. Do individuals with more reading training and teaching experience differ from those with less training and experience in the criteria used for making judgments about the difficulty of reading materials?

## METHOD

### *Materials*

Six reading passages were selected to represent difficulty levels from grades one through six. A passage selected as "representative" of a grade level met three criteria. First, it was found in a leveled basal reader text. Second, the Fry (1968) readability estimate agreed with the publisher placement. Third, the Spache (1953) readability formula for passages at first through third grade level or the Dale-Chall (1948) for passages at fourth through sixth grade level agreed with both the Fry estimate and publisher placement. Each of the six passages was duplicated and assembled in booklets which were counterbalanced to control the effect of order of presentation.

A fifteen-item questionnaire was also developed. It contained items pertaining to the importance of various criteria for judging difficulty of reading materials. The fifteen items were constructed to reflect three factors:

1. The difficulty of individual words in the passage.
2. The syntactic complexity of the passage.
3. General stylistic patterns of the author.

Each of the three subsets contained five items, and considering the limited number of items the subset reliabilities were adequate ( $r = .67$  to  $r = .81$ ). Subject responses were scored on a likert scale format. For example:

The number of complex clauses in the passages was,

1	2	3	4	5
Not considered	Of limited value	Of some value	A valuable consideration	A very valuable consideration

After the subjects had rated the passages and assigned a reading level to each passage, they were given the questionnaire. Both the passages and the questionnaire were administered to the subjects in groups. All work was completed during the administration session.

### *Sample*

Subjects ( $n = 100$ ) were selected and placed into one of four groups ( $n = 25$ ). Group I was comprised of undergraduate students having no training in elementary education and no teaching experience. Group II was comprised of certified elementary school teachers having one three-hour reading methods course and one to three years of teaching experience. Group III was comprised of certified elementary school teachers having one three-hour reading methods course and four or more years of teaching experience. Group IV was comprised of elementary reading specialists having twelve or more graduate hours of reading training and more than two years of classroom teaching experience. It was felt that these grouping patterns would reflect a combination of the reading training and teaching experience variables.

### *Data Analysis*

Two different dependent measures for accuracy of judgment were computed. The first measure was the number of correct or "on-level," judgments made, with a total possible score of six correct judgments for each subject. A one-way ANOVA by groups was computed for this measure. The second measure was the total difference between the judged difficulty level and the actual difficulty level for all six passages. This measure was viewed as more "forgiving" than the first because a "near miss" was differentiated from a response which was "way-off." For example a third grade passage judged as a fourth grade passage resulted in a score of one, while a third grade paragraph judged as sixth resulted in a score of three. On this measure a low score reflected greater accuracy. A one-way ANOVA by groups was also computed for this measure. Responses on each of the three subsets from the questionnaire were analyzed with one-way ANOVA's by groups.

## RESULTS

There were no significant differences in the mean number of correct judgments for the four groups. An examination of the means presented in the table under "factor one" indicates that there was very little actual difference between any of the four groups.

Group I, undergraduate students with no training or teaching experience, were the most accurate judges while Group III, classroom teachers with four or more years experience were the least accurate judges. The results on difference scores between the judged difficulty level and actual difficulty level of the paragraphs also yielded no significant differences. Once again,

Means and Standard Deviations for number of correct judgments (factor one) and for difference scores between judgments and actual difficulty levels (factor two).

	<i>factor one</i>		<i>factor two</i>	
	X	SD	X	SD
Group I	2.40	1.35	5.16	2.48
Group II	2.12	1.27	4.80	2.12
Group III	2.04	1.37	5.12	2.18
Group IV	2.32	1.15	4.88	2.28

there was extremely little actual difference in the mean scores for the four groups (see table, factor two).

Responses to the questionnaire yielded the following information. The four groups did not differ on their perception of the importance of the difficulty of individual words as contributed to overall difficulty of the passage. The difference in the four group means on subset two, the importance of the syntactic complexity, was significant ( $p < .05$ ,  $F = 3.65$ ,  $df = 3,96$ ). Group I viewed syntactic complexity as less important than did group IV. The difference in the four group means on subset three, the importance of general stylistic patterns of the author, was also significant ( $p < .01$ ,  $F = 4.54$ ,  $df = 3,96$ ). Group IV viewed author's general style as more important than did the other three groups.

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Results pertaining to accuracy of reading difficulty judgments are discouraging. It is disconcerting to note that there was no difference between the judgmental ability of experienced reading teachers with 12 credit hours of graduate training and undergraduate students with no reading training or teaching experience. This lack of difference was demonstrated in both the number of correct judgments measure and the degree of difference between judged level and actual level measure. It may be concluded from the present data that the combination of years of teaching experience and course work in reading instruction did not have an observable effect on the ability to estimate the difficulty levels of children's reading material. These results tend to support previous findings of Russell and Merritt (1951), Jongsma (1972), Rakes (1973), and Jorgenson (1975).

There is little solace found in the results from the questionnaire. Although there were significant differences in the importance placed on two of the three criteria for judging difficulty these differences must be

interpreted cautiously. It appears that experienced teachers and reading specialists simply placed higher values on all the factors than did less experienced teachers and undergraduate students. In effect there was no differential strategy applied for judging based on the importance of any one of the factors. This is particularly evident in that the differences in perceived degrees of importance did not translate into any differences in actual judgmental ability. From the results of this study it appears that teachers may have a great deal of difficulty making the critical match between student and reading material due to a lack of ability to estimate the difficulty level of materials. This problem would persist even if the teachers had accurate information available about student ability. These findings raise even more concern in light of two previously cited factors: the inconsistency of leveled texts in terms of difficulty, and the fact that much of the reading done by students is not from leveled texts. Therefore, teachers' inability to make these judgments becomes all the more critical.

Considering the evidence (Kingston, et. al., 1975 and Koenke, 1975) that individuals with more training in reading are more knowledgeable about reading, it would appear that this knowledge did not facilitate the ability to judge the difficulty of reading materials for the subjects in the present study. It is possible to infer from this that the additional training in reading received by group IV, and to a lesser degree groups II and III, did not prepare these teachers to judge difficulty levels of reading material. If, as is suggested by Chall and Feldman (1966), the ability of the teacher to make these judgments is important to student achievement then it would appear that some modification in teacher training would be helpful.

It is our contention that training in estimating difficulty levels of reading materials is deficient in reading training programs. We feel the training that does exist generally centers on the use of readability formulae. It is doubtful that teachers can practically transfer this skill to the applied situation of making numerous judgments of difficulty on a regular basis. Two suggestions for modification in teacher training programs would seem helpful. First, teachers need to become familiar with factors which *influence* difficulty rather than with formulae that *estimate* difficulty. Learning to recognize differences in vocabulary, sentence structure, idea density and author style, would seem to facilitate this judgmental ability. Second, the approach as to estimating reading difficulty reported by Singer (1975) and Carver (1976) might prove useful. These techniques involve a rapid comparison of a passage of unknown difficulty to a set of passages at specified difficulty levels. These techniques hold particular promise, because they are both quick enough for teachers to use and they seem to build a "model" of varying difficulty levels in the teacher's mind.

Teachers need to improve their ability to estimate the difficulty level of reading materials. This ability should be fostered in both preservice and inservice reading training. It is hoped that teachers will be better able to match students to appropriate learning materials if they are able to make judgments about the difficulty of the materials children read.

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## PROFESSIONAL CONCERNS: BETTER READING THROUGH PARENT TEACHING POOLS

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*Professional Concerns is a regular column devoted to the interchange of ideas among those interested in reading instruction. Send your comments and contributions to the editor. If you have questions about reading that you wish to have answered, the editor will find respondents to answer them. Address correspondence to R. Baird Shuman, Department of English, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Urbana, Illinois, 61801.*

Many teachers of reading are familiar with Delwyn G. Schubert through four of his widely distributed books in the field of reading: *A Dictionary of Terms and Concepts in Reading*, *Readings in Reading*, *Improving Reading Through Individualized Correction*, and *Improving the Reading Program*. Others know him better through filmstrips which he has written such as "Developing Effective Reading-Study Skills," "Teaching Reading with Games," and "Words-Words-Words." Dr. Schubert is Professor of Education at California State University, Los Angeles, where he was named Outstanding Professor of the Year in 1973.

In this contribution, Professor Schubert outlines a highly practical means for involving parents in reading instruction with youngsters. The popular press of late has drawn attention to the need for parents to become involved in helping with their children's education. Such articles as "Parents Are the Key," which appeared in *U.S. News and World Report*, September 12, 1977, and "How to Help Your Kids in School," which appeared in *Better Homes and Gardens*, November, 1977, have received considerable attention. Professional journals have also scrutinized the desirability of involving parents as much as possible as adjuncts in the learning process.

Professor Schubert outlines a practical program which can easily be implemented in any school. It is a program which should capture the imaginations of parents and should aid substantially in the learning process.

Harold's parents have been informed that their son is doing poorly in reading and that he is in need of extra practice at home. Such practice, it is

assumed, should take the form of oral reading under careful scrutiny. With this in mind, Harold's father proceeds as follows:

"All right, Harold, we're going to do a little reading today. Your teacher says you need it. Start here."

The boy begins reading aloud but almost immediately encounters a strange word. He stops. "You don't know that?" asks the father, "Why, it's simple. I knew that word almost before I started school. Everybody knows it. The word is what."

At this point Harold's father wonders about his son's intelligence. But by now the boy is stumped again. Much to the father's dismay, the same four letter word is involved.

"For heaven's sake, I just told you that word a couple of seconds ago. Can't you remember anything? It's *what*. That's what it is. Do you hear me? *What!*" By now father is really disturbed. As he ponders the situation, his eyes move ahead to the next paragraph where he is surprised to see the troublesome pronoun occupying an initial position. With apprehension, he awaits, asking himself, "Will he know it now, the third time?"

When Harold fails to recognize the word again, father loses all control. He slams the book on the table and shouts, "How can you be so stupid? You still don't know what's *what!* Didn't I tell it to you over here and up there too? I can't believe it. You must take after your mother's side of the family!"

Needless to say, the reading session just described came to an abrupt end with Harold in tears and with his father fuming. Why did it have to end this way?

Most of us know from experience how very difficult it is to teach a loved one. Emotional bonds stand in the way of instructional success. How, then, can parents function successfully as reading tutors or helpers?

While serving overseas in an administrative capacity with the United States Air Force Schools a decade or more ago, the writer suggested to a number of concerned parents that they form a parent-teaching pool under the guidance of several interested teachers. The plan was implemented. But instead of working with their own children, the parents provided assistance on an exchange basis. For example, Captain Brown devoted an hour twice a week to reading with Major Jones' son while Major Jones reciprocated by reading with the Captain's daughter. A number of wives were members of the pool and they served in a similar capacity. The three teachers who volunteered their services met weekly with the parent-teaching pool. They answered questions, provided diagnostic insights, furnished suitable books, and suggested practice materials and specific reading games. In addition, they made a number of general suggestions such as the following:

1. Sit to the right of the child if you are right-handed and to the left of the child if you are left-handed. This seating arrangement makes it easier to follow the reading and permits your taking notes without getting in the child's way.
2. If for any reason a book proves uninteresting or distasteful to the child, return it for another.
3. If the book selected proves too difficult (the child should know on sight

at least 95 percent of the words and should be able to demonstrate a fair understanding of what is read), return it for another immediately.

4. Take turns during oral reading. Don't have the child do all the reading.
5. Stop reading occasionally and discuss the story. Ask questions that will stimulate the child's interest and will involve him/her in the story. For example: "What do you think is going to happen next? Do you think Bill should have punished his dog for running away by locking him in a closet? Do you know anyone who has done something like that? What would you have done had your dog run away?"
6. If you or the child becomes impatient or restless, take a break or cut the session short.
7. Give praise whenever it is deserved.
8. Keep a list of unknown words which seem important for the child to know. Incorporate them into word games such as Wordo or Word Rummy.
9. When the child encounters a word he doesn't know, try these approaches:
  - a. Tell him/her what the word is immediately. This is particularly desirable when the story is impelling and there is danger of destroying the child's interest by too many interruptions.
  - b. Encourage the child to skip the word and read the rest of the sentence. The context may provide needed clues.
  - c. Point to where the word may have appeared elsewhere in the story and ask what it is.
  - d. Ask the child, "Do you know another word that begins the same way?" Although it is not recommended that a parent teach phonics, it is safe and helpful to ask this question because it may enable the child to discover a valuable word recognition clue – the sound of the initial consonant or consonant blend.

The parent-teaching pool approach was successful and the results reported were very gratifying. Teachers who became involved were enthusiastic and were convinced that parents can be of great value as reading helpers if they work with children other than their own.

At the present time there is a great need for parent involvement with the school. Many parents in school districts throughout America would like to have their children receive extra help in reading. They want to assist and are willing to expend time and energy to do so. Teachers should capitalize on their concern by forming parent teaching pools similar to what has been described in this article. With proper guidance from interested teachers, a swap-a-child tutorial campaign can become an invaluable asset to any reading program.

# BUILDING AN EFFECTIVE REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS

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At the present time there is much attention being given to the requirement that high school seniors must demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in basic skills before they are allowed to be graduated. Some articles which have appeared in various popular journals indicate that there may be over 25,000,000 functionally illiterate adults in this country. To the embarrassment of school officials, many of these persons possess high school diplomas and have made satisfactory grades in English, History, and other content subjects where reading skills are a necessary part of course activity.

Though many state legislatures have legislated competency laws, there has been a disappointing amount of attention and funds directed to meaningful and effective remedial reading programs for those who have failed such tests. The major purpose of this article is to provide the reader with some salient guidelines for establishing a remedial reading program which will be useful and innovative and will meet the exact instructional needs of those students who need prescriptive help for overcoming specific deficiencies in such important areas as word attack, comprehension, and study skills.

## *I. Select students for remedial training who can be helped and who want to be helped.*

In many instances, students are directed to remedial reading classes because they are reading "X" number of years below grade level. An important question should be kept in mind when decisions of this nature are made: "Does this learner have the potential for developing the skills which will bring him up to grade level in reading?" One method of estimating reading potential is through the use of the Bond and Tinker formula<sup>1</sup> which involves the procedure of taking the I.Q. times the number of years spent in school (excluding kindergarten) and adding the number one. For example, Joe, a tenth grader, enters school in September with an I.Q. of 90. His estimated reading level potential could be determined by taking .90 times 9 and adding 1. The result is 9.1. Let us assume that his reading achievement test scores are at about the ninth grade level. Even though he is reading a year below grade level, he is reading at about his potential level and probably should not be placed in a remedial reading class.

The following case study illustrates an example of a student who *would* be an ideal candidate for remedial training.

"Henry H. (not his real name) was administered a Stanford-Binet by a reputable examiner with a resultant intelligence quotient of 105. He had been referred to the clinic by the school counselor since he was a tenth grade student who could barely read eighth grade level materials. His home life appeared stable and his attitudes toward school and possible reading improvement were positive. The results of the standardized and informal tests administered by clinic personnel revealed that he was deficient in vocabulary and structural analysis. After a visit with his parents, the writer discovered that he had been ill during much of his third and fourth grade years and had missed some of the basic reading skills which are taught at those levels. The tentative judgment was made that he never learned the skills and, therefore, he was a reading "cripple" because of it.

Since Henry's level of intelligence was in the high average range and there were no complicating factors, the decision was made to accept him for remedial training at the clinic. After three months of intensive instruction, he read at the tenth grade level and was able to read class level materials with much success."<sup>2</sup>

In essence, school administrators and reading teachers need to think in terms of the reading *potential* of the student and not just the number of years of reading retardation. The proper selection of candidates for remedial instruction may well be the key to the success or failure of a remedial program.

II. *Appoint professionals to direct the program who have appropriate academic training and experience.*

No reading program can be useful unless the teacher and/or director has been trained for his/her assignment. Persons employed for such positions should possess the competencies and skills which are listed in the 1978 edition of *Guidelines For The Professional Preparation of Reading Teachers* which is published by The Professional Standards and Ethics Committee of the International Reading Association. If such persons cannot be employed because of lack of funds or other reasons, the establishment of the formal remedial program should be delayed until such individuals can be employed.

III. *Purchase materials and equipment which will meet the individual needs of the students to be served.*

In many instances teaching materials are purchased before a secondary remedial program is established. The mass purchase of machines and boxes for increasing reading speed should be avoided until a considerable body of data is collected which demonstrates that reading rate is a significant

problem. For such aids to be effective, they should be obtained *after* a careful needs assessment has been made of each student's reading strengths and limitations.

It should also be remembered that there is no one teaching material which is so far superior to all other products that it should be used to the exclusion of all other devices. Despite the "cure-all" advertising claims of some companies, there is no one machine or box which can be used to correct such widely divergent skill limitations such as phonics, critical reading, vocabulary, reading speed, and comprehension. Students learn through the use of various modalities, thus, any tool which emphasizes a single modality cannot be suitable for use with large numbers of students.

IV. *Employ various techniques which will motivate the students to want to read.*

Motivation cannot be secured in isolation from regular remedial instruction.<sup>3</sup> A secondary student who has had a long series of discouraging, unsuccessful reading experiences presents a special challenge to even the highly trained reading specialist. The remedial specialist needs to try to find the learner's reading interests, use appropriate teaching methods based on actual reading needs, and employ only those tools which have a good chance of resulting in reading growth. Since poor concept may be a problem with this type of student, significant attention should be given to any progress which may be demonstrated. The learner should be aware of his/her present reading strengths and what prospects may be present for further reading growth.

V. *Plan a program of continuous evaluation to monitor the value of teaching materials and strategies.*

Since there are literally hundreds of different types of teaching tools available, a careful analysis of the most useful aids should be made. Unfortunately, too many remedial reading programs have been established in recent years which emphasized the employment of one piece of hardware, one box of skills sheets, or a single teaching method. While these aspects may be helpful for a few students, they are not defensible for use with large numbers of adolescents with widely varying learning modalities. If programs are to be viable, an individual teaching plan should be devised for each person enrolled for remedial courses. Commercial and informal evaluative techniques should be utilized on a daily basis to substantiate or refute any plan or material which is presently a part of instructional programs.

### *Summary*

Due to the large number of disabled readers which appear to be present at the secondary level, a useful, well devised remedial reading program should be established for these students. Two of the key ingredients in such an endeavor are the *proper* selection of learners and the appointment of well qualified professionals to direct the effort. A careful analysis should be made regarding the purchase of materials which will meet the exact in-

structional needs of the students. Serious attention should be given to the promotion of motivational techniques which cause each person to want to read. A well developed evaluation component should be established to monitor the relative value of materials and teaching methods which are employed with each student.

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# WE SUGGEST

*Eleanor Buelke*

Turner, Janet, and Pew, W. L.

*The Courage To Be Imperfect*

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Throughout the course of history, there have been those who have coupled courage with creative insight and intelligence and, in so doing, have altered the direction of that course. The more that others learn about the circumstances under which persons dare to risk being "incorrect," and their strengths and knowledge, the stronger others may become in steadfast commitment to a staunch, consistent portrayal of their convictions. This book about Dr. Rudolph Dreikurs and his work bring him to life, illuminating and animating his concept of man as "purposive, ever striving for growth, value, and meaning in this world, and self-determining in his movement through life."

The social upheavals we are witnessing today, in which traditional values are being challenged, often abandoned, had been quite accurately predicted by Alfred Adler in Europe more than half a century ago. It is his socially based, holistic view of mankind, in which life is seen as an evolutionary process, as movement, growth, and change, that Dreikurs transplanted to the logical setting of the democratic institutions of America. Most of the significant schools of psychological thought flourishing in the United States today are based on Adlerian views of human development and functioning, developed and refined by Dreikurs into a teachable system, with pragmatic applications in all forms of human interaction.

Part I of this volume tells of the life of Dreikurs from birth in Vienna, through his youth-to-manhood years and medical training there, in a time of social ferment and prejudice towards Jews, into his experiences and association with Adler and his pioneer work in social psychiatry. It concludes with his departure from Vienna in 1937 as political events began to cause increasing restrictions upon professional activities and individual freedoms. With this step, he had assured his survival from the holocaust soon to follow in Europe, to become part of the wave of "illustrious immigrants," many of Europe's greatest scientists and intellectuals who were to escape the madness of Hitler by coming to America.

Part II related Dreikurs's many difficulties as he attempts to establish himself professionally in a rather overwhelming, English-speaking milieu in the Chicago area. Constantly fighting to maintain his optimism and zeal in transplanting the Adlerian model of psychiatric treatment against growing influence of Freudian psychoanalysis, he is shown to have great courage in the face of persistent disappointment and setback. Through his work at Hull house, with schools nearby, and in hospitals in and around Chicago,

he begins to widen his activities and sphere of influence, continuing to lecture, to write, and to act against prevailing doctrines for improvement of individual and group behavior. He never wavers in his advocacy of health programs aimed at prevention of mental illness through public education and community psychiatry, rather than the inappropriate doctrines of behaviorism and psychoanalysis, both of which Dreikurs considered to be counterproductive to principles of democracy. The decision he ultimately makes, to focus his tremendous energy on the "formidable and entrenched institution of American public education," has had far-reaching consequences. It has left long-range effects on educational practices throughout our country. At that time, it was to change the thrust of his professional career.

Part III follows Dreikurs in his work directly with teachers and educators. His subsequent lectures, writings, participation in many psychological associations, and personal contacts as a teacher in Chicago Medical School have influenced thinking and attitudes in many social and educational institutions here and afar. He had always been a step ahead of his time and, today, remains a major contributor to the fields of psychology and psychiatry, to teacher education, and to the self-respect and personal dignity of countless mothers, fathers, and children who benefit from his conceptions of humanistic counseling and therapy.

Some practical statements of Dreikurs's philosophy have implications for teachers with students of any age:

1. Change in behavior is the only reliable clue to real self-insight; self-deception results because our opinions about ourselves are based on "thoughts, desires, and emotions [and] fail to give sufficient consideration [to] our *actions* to what we *do*;"
2. To understand behavior is to be fully aware, not only of the facts, but also of their relationship to other ideas and facts, and, also, to the implications; only realization of implications gives a solid basis for practical action;
3. Establishing the real problem situation can be done more quickly through feedback received from the one with a problem than from endless fact-gathering about the situation;
4. Problems should be viewed as stemming from *interpersonal*, rather than *intrapersonal* difficulties; with treatment through the practice of confronting children in a frank, noncondescending discussion of purposes for the behavior;
5. All behavior is purposeful; misbehavior of children has one or more of four distinctive goals: (1) to gain undue attention; (2) to demonstrate power or defiance; (3) to seek revenge or retaliation; or (4) give up in complete discouragement. Knowing which goal is operating for a specific behavior may give insight into its seriousness and indicate how to handle the situation;
6. In a relationship, love is fine and necessary, but respect is even more important. The best combination is love and respect. Love is the consequence of a good relationship— not its cause; and

7. There is a necessity for all to live together as equals, with dignity for all, instead of engaging in deadly rivalry and competition for power or superiority.

Throughout his years of work in America, Dr. Dreikurs held to the belief that it is “the people who will ultimately decide whether we ameliorate or exacerbate the social problems and uncertainties we face,” and that the “only practical solution is greatly to increase the psychological understanding and skill of the citizenry, particularly parents and teachers.” On two separate occasions in his speaking, he counseled his listeners with the following potent phrases:

. . . the persons most capable of acquiring real self-knowledge are those who have the “courage to be imperfect” to risk making mistakes, to risk the uncertainty of living and doing, thereby overcoming their own safeguarding tendencies toward self-deception.

To be human does not mean to be right, does not mean to be perfect. To be human means to be useful, to make contributions not for oneself, but for others— to take what there is and to make the best out of it.

Insight into their real selves, fortitude to function at their best regardless of what it is, with joy in the functioning, resolution to make contributions for others—these are vital concepts of goals sought by courageous teachers everywhere, for themselves and for their students.

# THE THREE R'S: READING, RITING AND RADIO!

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The radio presentation is a communication vehicle that provides input to our reading programs through the use of pupil-teacher initiated audio taped presentation, commercially prepared transcriptions and through local and network originated radio broadcasts.

Many radio programs are intended for general public audiences, but increased use is being made of this medium to offer special groups of listeners specific kinds of programs.

Let us take a look at some of the advantages, some of the strengths of radio.

- \* Radio is universal. It transcends cultural and geographical distances. Radio programming can be translated into many languages, thus bringing about a more effective system of communication among listeners from diverse geographical, cultural, ethnic, and racial backgrounds. For instance, a group of pupils from one of Chicago's Polish communities could produce and record an audio program reflecting their ethnic, cultural and religious beliefs. This presentation could be exchanged with a recorded presentation developed by black students, enrolled in a similar grade in a rural, southern community.
- \* Radio has qualities of immediacy for it reflects current issues and events. Pupils could listen to recorded presentations that simulate the first landing of astronauts on the moon. Spin-off activities for these programs require pupils to research related topics and subsequently write reports or produce related learning materials on man's exploration of outer space. The implications of these related activities on a comprehensive language arts program appear obvious to the professional teacher involved in ongoing reading programs.
- \* Radio is flexible in that it is adaptable to many program approaches: i.e., dramatizations, panel discussions, interviews, forums, or narrations.
- \* Radio presentations can be programmed rather inexpensively. The financial cost for producing these programs does not require large funds. Audio presentations do not require the costly equipment or the ornate trappings as sound/motion picture film and television presentations. The recording of information on tape can be achieved easily and inexpensively on your personal or the school's open-reel or cassette recorder/player system.

The following focuses on planning and organizing scripting experiences that are not only essential for the professionally produced program as presented on national network radio, but also to classroom oriented

programs: those programs produced in a school's classroom or its media center. It is the development of these locally produced presentations that offers increased teacher and pupil involvement.

Examples of some plays and stories that lend themselves to adaptation to classroom productions in the early elementary grades are *Gingerbread Boy* and *The Three Bears*. For middle-school pupils, *The Night Before Christmas* or *The First Thanksgiving* are suitable. For high school or adult levels, *The Mystery of the Mad Maltese* and the writings of Mark Twain, Robert Louis Stevenson, Washington Irving, just to name a few, abound with adventure and humor.

There is a wealth of pre-recorded transcriptions that is available as evidenced by the thousands of titles listed in the *Educators Guide to Free and Inexpensive Transcriptions* and the *NICEM Guide to Pre-recorded Tapes*. These are valuable sources for locating and identifying appropriate pre-recorded instructional materials.

As a note of caution, several of the more elaborate dramatizations, prepared by some commercial manufacturers and industrialists have been criticized by educators as promoting a particular product or politicizing certain points of view. It is best to review any critiques available to you or preview all commercially prepared transcriptions before classroom use to ascertain what implications are inherent in the content of the programs.

How do locally produced presentations offer a greater involvement on the part of teachers and pupils? Young learners, with the guidance of the teacher, or a related instructional specialist, plan and present programs of their own interests. These programs can be presented live, or taped and replayed at a later time. They may be presented to a small, select group of pupils by cassette playback units. They may be presented over the school's public address system. In some cases our locally produced radio programs are "aired" over an educational or commercial broadcasting station.

The content of a school originated production can be instructional or entertaining, or a combination of both. Regardless of the content, or the manner of dissemination, the procedures for scripting and producing radio programs are similar.

Using the scripting activity to motivate pupils to write is an easy task if the writing activity has an apparent, meaningful purpose. Pupils will write when they have something to say and when they feel that someone will appreciate or learn from what they have written. Pupils will involve themselves in constructing a radio script, if they feel that the script will result in a presentation and will be used in a meaningful and credible way.

A few teachers have discovered the radio programming activities as scripting and production creates a new dimension of providing creative language development and increased pupil sensitivity. Also, teachers have discovered that they have created a new role for themselves. They are builders of word imagery and leaders in interpersonal communication.

The use of radio broadcasting and its related production techniques will encourage imagination and creativity while evoking qualities of inventiveness and teamwork among teachers and pupils. Scripting activities

and the subsequent application of production techniques will give pupils a greater appreciation for the efficacy of this medium.

In order to initiate the scripting activity, teachers should organize their pupils into groups to perform the several activities that are involved in radio production: that is, planning, writing, organizing, directing, and acting. Teachers will have to demonstrate how to sit or stand before the microphone. They will have to determine how words should be spoken and emphasized in order to elicit listeners' empathy and understanding. Teachers even have to demonstrate to pupils how to avoid intrusive noises, such as rustling papers as they read successive pages of their scripts.

More effective presentations will evolve when there is a team effort among pupils and teacher(s). The primary function of the teacher is to suggest and to guide. The teacher will suggest sources of information, appoint different pupils to perform specific tasks, and make the arrangements for broadcasting or taping facilities. The teacher might assert a prerogative for being present and making corrections and suggestions during the final editing of the script.

A good idea, thoroughly considered, is important, but a good idea is not enough. Your radio presentation will not come to life until your ideas have been translated onto paper – a script. Even then, the best planned and organized script, if given an uninspired performance, will come over as trite and dreary.

The teacher's responsibility does not end with a well-developed idea and a soundly constructed script, or even the proper casting of characters. The teacher's responsibilities focus on all aspects of the production, from the very first germ of an idea to the final gestured sign of "CUT" given at the conclusion of the production.

A first phase in scripting is to encourage pupils to make up their own stories – stories from their real or their worlds of fantasy. Pupils will have to define characters, describe locations, and delineate the periods of time in which the plot is to take place. As pupils proceed with their scripting activities, they should consider if the inclusion of special sound effects would significantly improve the impact of the program; i.e., musical scores, crowd noises, thunderstorms.

What are some of the pitfalls that will negate the quality of a script? The following are a few common deficiencies as evidenced from a review of several commercial and educationally oriented scripts that were rejected from production:

- A. Lack of proper research or study about the subject
- B. Poor organization of dialog
- C. Poor writing style
- D. Lack of consistency in the development of a plot
- E. Unsubstantial or incongruous plots or themes
- F. Inadequate character development
- G. Improper use of sound effects and musical scores
- H. Ineffective editing techniques

As teachers and pupils plan and organize radio presentations, they must keep in mind that everyday speech should be the guide for words that will be used and the manner in which they will use them.

In order to assist pupils in the scripting activity, teachers must attempt to cluster what is to be said in short phrases, and reduce ideas so they are logically developed and easily understood. Teachers should help pupils avoid stating their thoughts and expressions in lengthy and complicated statements. Why? Listeners have to take all the information as it comes. Seldom does a listener have the privilege to stop the presentation at a particular point, or refer to previously stated information for further clarification. Therefore, our young scriptwriters must develop a script that not only grabs and holds the listeners' attention but assures that the words are clear and the meaning is understandable.

Pupils who have received no instruction in organizing their thoughts and expression will seldom write for a purpose. It is important for teachers to guide pupils in writing with an objective in mind. Pupils must be able to arrange their thoughts and expression effectively in order to use the many words and phrases necessary for them to present diverse and sophisticated ideas and concepts. Writing skills, combined with an accurate discernment of the spoken word, form the foundation for improving pupils' writing skills.

Since reading and writing are both discriminating communication acts, the skills pupils develop through planned and organized writing activities provides a foundation for reading. As the pupils discern an order or sequence in composing and stating their thoughts, so increases the probability for a sequential development of reading skills. Therefore, many experiences useful in developing readiness for initial writing instruction also help prepare the pupil for the prescribed reading lessons and experiences they will meet later. Some examples of writing activities are to present, in a forceful way, the main ideas; to create a visual image; to present relationships between persons and things, and to summarize information.

Combining the teaching of reading with an audio-related activity is helpful and enjoyable. For example, pupils can be given pictures of specific characters, or things, along with accompanying information and sounds. Then, as they listen to *Peter and the Wolf*, for example, pupils will hold up pictures of each instrument as it is played, or a picture of each character and a card displaying the name of each instrument and/or character in the story.

Some techniques that should be considered in script construction are:

\* Use descriptive words where possible but use them with care. Visual imagery is created only through the spoken word. Therefore, images must be sketched for the ear alone. However, too many descriptive words will tend to cause the presentation to appear flowery and ornamental. Do not drown your thoughts and expressions in flourishes of rhetoric.

The use of vaporous statements and flowery passages will bombard your listeners with lofty and eloquent expressions. If your objective is directed toward acquainting listeners with sublime and majestic oratorical comments rather than establish a meaningful thought or idea, then flourishes of rhetoric are in place. However, if you want to communicate an idea as concisely and briefly as possible, then simplicity of word and succinctness of dialog are in order.

For example, if your purpose is to present a mythical fairy tale directed towards pre-school or primary grade pupils, then a loftiness of words and an eloquence of graceful expressions are appropriate at certain points in the script. But, if your presentation is to be geared toward pupils enrolled in a vocational or occupation education program, then you would want to be practical in your selection of terms and direct in your use of expressions.

\* The level of vocabulary, the concepts being presented, the pacing of information, and the level of word density must be suitable to the understandings and discernments of the intended audiences. That is, if the program is to be directed to pupils enrolled in the primary grade levels, the originators and presenters of the presentation should select concepts and words that are within the comprehensions of young learners. Of special note, pupils' listening vocabularies are generally their largest and the speaking vocabulary is usually the second largest. Therefore, it seems permissible that spoken words in the audio presentation can exceed the pupils' speaking, reading and writing vocabulary ranges. When it becomes necessary to use an unfamiliar word, the word should be accompanied with a short description or definition carefully woven into the fabric of the script.

\* When broadcasting or recording the presentations, pupils should be encouraged to talk or read in a natural way and speak with meaning. Intonations and inflections are also important in communicating a certain mood or a particular feeling. The presentation's rate should flow in a natural pace so that listeners will feel comfortable with the pace of the information and the density of the thoughts being presented. All attempts should be made to avoid long and encumbered sentences as well as short, jerky and static phrases and expressions.

Another quality that should be encouraged is that pupil/presenters should strive to achieve a personal and informal conversational style. The following approach was used with considerable effect:

"Good afternoon! I'll bet you can't guess what we are going to bring to you today. It is still in our series of space explorations and it has to do with an astronaut named Neil Armstrong. Does anyone want to suggest what this program will be about? If you think that it is about the first man on the moon, then you are right."

In the above approach, the mood had been established. The listeners' attention had been sought through appropriate questions. Also, there was conveyed a subtle message to the listeners that the presenter was talking directly and only to them.

\* Try to create an atmosphere of immediacy: a quality of the "here" and "now." Make your presentation a personal and intimate experience. To maintain the personal approach, you might present additional rhetorical questions or statements as: "Would you like to go to the moon?" "Perhaps, one day you will be able to work in a space station." "Under present conditions, would you want to spend your summer vacation on the moon?" Queries of this kind add a personal resonance to the presentation as well as presenting qualities of the "here" and "now." The qualities of intimacy and immediacy also facilitate listeners' involvement and identification with the characters, experiences and activities inherent in the program's content.

\* Use reinforcing statements and redundant activities where applicable. These are valid ingredients for successful radio programming. A major objective for using radio programs is to provide supplemental learning activities and expand the instructional input on a particular unit of instruction. Teachers and pupils can improve the radio program's communication qualities by restating an idea in another way or offering another experience or activity in addition to those suggested through the program's presentation.

Reinforcement and expansion of information becomes a legitimate function for incorporating audio presentations. Since the scriptwriter controls the presentation of information through the scripting activity, a judicious use of redundant information can be incorporated to suit the learning styles of intended groups of listeners. For example, if an objective of the presentation is to communicate to listeners that atmospheric space lacks sufficient quantities of oxygen essential for sustaining human life. Therefore, life sustaining devices could be suggested that would support human life during outer space travels. Subsequently, listeners should be encouraged to become involved in a post-presentation activity to determine various options that man could use to maintain life-support oxygen during space travel. Additional research and readings would add much to the pupils' knowledge and understanding of human travel in outer space.

\* The script must contain information on everything that is to happen during the presentation of the program. A well-planned and developed script assures that all persons involved with the production and the subsequent presentation of the program will provide information on not only his or her function, but of the others as well.

As the teacher and pupils review the first draft or rough copy of the script, they may find it necessary to pencil in some additional lines, comments or instructions. This is called “Mechanizing” and comments and instructions usually add to the betterment of the script.

The purpose of writing in these mechanizing instructions is to provide supplemental information that will improve the quality and the continuity of the program. The final draft of the completed script must contain all that is to happen, when it is to happen, and to whom and with what effect. In other words, if it is not in the final revision of your script, it should not be in the final program.

At this point, let us review a portion of a finalized draft of a script that displays evidences of mechanized instructions.

KING JOHN (Pouting like an adolescent). There! (rustle of papers) take your paper!

BARONS (Cheers).

MARY JAME Sir Ritchie you're so wonderful!

RITCHIE (Tossing it off). Oh, it was nothing . . . ! Gentlemen! (As if springing a dramatic piece of information) Gentlemen! We shall call this— (louder than the rest) the Magna Charta!

BARON I Three cheers for Sir Ritchie!

ALL Hurrah for Sir Ritchie! Ritchie! Ritchie! (Simultaneous cross-fades into:)

MISS LUDLOW (Fading in, overlapping). (loud) Ritchie! (louder) Ritchie!

RITCHIE Huh? (Coming to) Yes, Miss Ludlow?

MISS LUDLOW Will you stop day dreaming long enough to answer the question I just asked?

RITCHIE (Grouping). Why . . . uh . . . uh . . . (Timidly) King John . . . ?

CLASS (Laughter).

MISS LUDLOW (After laughter subsides). In fourteen years of teaching. (light humor in tone). that is the first time a pupil ever told me that King John invented the sewing machine?

CLASS (Laughter). (Electric bell rings, scrape of feet).

MISS LUDLOW Wait, class! (raised teacher's voice - students' voices in background) For tomorrow, study Chapter Eight in your General Science book. Class dismissed. (Hurried shuffle of feet. Immediate babbling of released kids).

(Music: Bridge . . . segue into “Inside a Kid's Head” theme).

Excerpt from Lawrence, Jerome and Robert E. Lee. *Inside a Kid's Head*.

Since radio communicates in a single medium, the speaking rate can be more rapid than that of a motion picture film or the dialog in a television production. Motion picture films and television presentations contain multisensory approaches. That is, the messages are channeled through two or more senses. Since the listener is using only the *one* sense to receive radio

messages, words can be presented at an increased rate—120 to 160 per minute. Of course, this also depends on whether the presentation is a dramatization or a news broadcast or whatever.

In estimating the amount of actual broadcast time that will be necessary to present the script, we can use as a general rule of thumb that twenty typewritten lines usually equals one minute, or approximately three seconds per line. However, a better means for measuring the timing of a script is to read aloud and in the manner as it would be presented during the actual broadcast. Of course, it becomes obvious to us that all that has been said about timing is contingent on a variety of factors, such as, the reading levels and word recognition skills of the pupils making the presentation.

It is sometimes necessary for the teacher to take a direct leadership role in gathering the materials; the information and facts that are to be used in organizing an interesting presentation. However, the teacher and pupils must cooperate in organizing the materials and outlining the script for the program. The teacher's role is to provide the guidance and resource information for these classroom radio productions.

Pupils can help to establish the level and pace that information should be presented. Pupils are in an advantageous position to suggest ways the program should be organized and developed since they are in a closer position to understand and empathize with the intended audiences to whom the presentation is to be made.

What are some ways for teachers and pupils to disseminate their locally produced radio productions? There are several. Let us look at a few of them.

The school's public address system is a viable channel. The public address facility can be a kind of closed-circuit broadcasting resource from which classrooms can transmit their presentations to every class in the school, to selected classes, or to a single classroom.

In some instances, some locally produced programs will extend beyond the school's public address system and will be aired over a local commercial or an educational broadcasting station. In other instances, some of our productions will not have the dissemination range of even the school's public address system. In these instances, the presentations will be recorded on audio tape and the information will be played back through the recorder's playback system. The scope and quality of the program that you and your pupils will develop will determine the range of dissemination the program will be given.

Sharing personal experiences through aural expressions and writing is motivational, and can easily be related to reading instruction. Like most adults, children tend to be interested in themselves; they enjoy talking, writing and reading about their own experiences and ideas. The interrelatedness of these language activities and the need to use language skills and abilities in scripting a radio presentation also makes the production of an audio presentation easy to relate to vocabulary study, spelling, and writing as well as composition, sequencing of ideas, and organizing thoughts and expressions.

However, the alert teacher of reading will find many more ways to relate reading instruction to radio production and presentation techniques. The activities that you will uncover will top the suggestions in this article, because you will relate your production and presentational techniques to your particular students and your specific instructional unit.

The most important consideration that should be given at the conclusion of the production activity is if the program assisted in the attainment of prescribed instructional goals. If it did, then your purposes are achieved, your missions attained.

# QUICK REVIEWS

## *Homer Carter Reading Council*

Arlin, Marshall and Garry Roth, "Pupils' Use of Time While Reading Comics and Books" *American Educational Research Journal*, 15 (Spring 1978) 201-216.

Teachers who want to teach reading with comics might take a look at the results of this experiment in elementary school. The conclusions overwhelmingly favor books over comics. The authors caution schools against commercially prepared comic-based reading motivation programs.

Bursuk, Laura, "Let's Teach Reading Better: 20 Specific Suggestions for Lessons," *Academic Therapy*, 14 (November 1978) 219-222.

After reading articles which exhort us to be better teachers of reading, it is refreshing to find a practical list of helpful thoughts on precisely how we may become more effective as reading specialists. The list of ideas is no less valuable if we accept them as reminders of principles we already know.

Dunlap, William P., and Martha Brown McNight, "Vocabulary Translations for Conceptualizing Math Word Problems," *The Reading Teacher*, 32 (November 1978) 183-189.

Here is a way that reading personnel may give useful ideas to the teachers of math. The authors take the readers through the steps which lead to "seeing" the means for solving the problems.

Feitelson, Dina (ed.) *Cross Cultural Perspectives on Reading and Reading Research* (IRA Book #427), International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware, 201 pps.

This volume is a contribution to the neglected area of examining the reading process outside the confines of a single culture or language. Included are samplings from the program of the Sixth World Congress on Reading held in Singapore.

Freeman, Evelyn B., and Charles H. Wolfgang, "A Piagetian View of Reading Readiness," *The Reading World*, 18 (October 1978) 72-80.

This article reviews the traditional approaches to beginning reading instruction, then employs research results to support the usefulness of viewing beginning reading processes within a Piagetian

framework. The authors further present implications for teaching as derived from the theory.

Graham, Aldyth, "The 3Cs Method of Teaching Beginning Reading," *Academic Therapy*, 13 (March 1978) 447-453.

The author explains a method of helping students bridge the gap of seeing the relationship between visual symbols and speech sounds. This is the "Connectionist Cue Concept."

Jongsma, Eugene A., "The Effect of Training in Miscue Analysis on Teachers' Perceptions of Oral Reading Behaviors," *The Reading World* 18 (October 1978) 85.

The author concludes that training in Miscue Analysis helps focus teachers' attention on readers' strengths as well as weaknesses, and that it makes teachers more analytical perceivers of oral reading behaviors.

Lee, Grace E., and Allen Berger (compilers) *Learning Disabilities with Emphasis on Reading: An Annotated Bibliography* (IRA Book #332) International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware, 52 pps.

One of the issues in reading education concerns the role of learning disabilities. This compilation is an effort to diffuse the heat of the issue and bring some light to the subject. The entries reflect papers appearing in some fifty periodicals; twenty proceedings; and approximately fifty monographs, dissertations, theses, and reports to federal and state agencies.

Lunstrum, John P. and Bob L. Taylor, *Teaching Reading in the Social Studies* (IRA Book #856), International Reading Association, 800 Barksdale Road, P.O. Box 8139, Newark, Delaware, 92 pps.

In this new publication, the authors examine the factors affecting reading problems in social studies classes, and propose strategies for improving both motivation and reading comprehension. They provide suggestions for matching student abilities to the measured difficulty of materials. They further explain and illustrate techniques and strategies for improving reading comprehension.

Shore, Bernard, and Paula Riegel, "Teaching Reading to the Child With Perceptual Deficits," *Academic Therapy*, 13 (January 1978) 337-343.

The authors describe the procedures they have developed for

working with children who have major impairment in visual memory and discrimination, or who have deficits in auditory and visual perception. The techniques presented incorporate visual, auditory, and kinesthetic modalities and can be utilized with any linguistic program.

Shuman, R. Baird, "Teaching Teachers to Teach Reading in Secondary School Content Classes," *Journal of Reading*, 22 (December 1978) 205-211.

Shuman, feature writer for READING HORIZONS (Professional Concerns), discusses many ideas, techniques, and approaches for meeting the varying reading and study skills needs of students in subject matter classes. His most telling points are made in convincing thoughts on the absolute necessity for teachers to *want* to help students become more adequate readers in their courses.

Sloane, Barbara, and Jane Waxenberg, "Beginning the Year With Poetry" *Learning*, 7 (Aug./Sept. 1978) 81-83.

Two junior high teachers describe in this article their ways of helping students feel the value and depth of words in writing various kinds of original poetry. Their conclusion is that all students can learn to like poetry when they create it instead of reading about it.

Stauffer, Russell G., "The Dimensions of Sound Reading Instruction," *The New England Reading Association Journal*, 13 (Fall 1978) 27-37.

It seems to be Dr. Stauffer's special ability to pack a great number of provocative ideas and principles into a limited space of pages. For a person with such an impressive background to draw on, putting thoughts succinctly requires unique genius. This article is highly recommended for all reading teachers.

Talmage, Harriet, and Herbert J. Walberg, "Naturalistic, Decision-Oriented Evaluation of a District Reading Program," *Journal of Reading Behavior*, 10 (Summer 1978) 185-195.

Don't let the title of this one turn you away! In this excellent report, the authors describe the process of pilot testing five basal series in four grades in sixty classes. The data derived and the conclusions reached should provide many schools and administrations with valuable ideas and information. Since the research was conducted with great care, the findings are not only interesting but highly significant.

Tibbets, Sylvia-Lee, "Wanted: Data to Prove That Sexist Reading Material

Has an Impact on the Reader," *The Reading Teacher*, 32 (November 1978) 165-169.

The title says it all; the author has opened the door to further debate. Her article indicates a sincere attempt to return to reason and a degree of objectivity in relation to an overheated topic.

Vitro, Frank T., "In Defense of Intelligent Intelligence Testing," *Academic Therapy*, 14 (November 1978) 223-228.

In a guest editorial, the author uses common sense and cogent reasoning to reopen minds that have been closed by the many charges against IQ testing. Whatever the reader's final attitude after reading this article, he or she will have been led through some well-expressed logic.

# NEW MATERIALS

*Jillonne Adams*

WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

Crestwood House has recently published a set of fourteen books to catch the interest of the pre-teens. Reviews of several of these books follow. Crestwood House, Inc., P.O. Box 3427, Mankato, MN, 56001.

*The Loch Ness Monster*, by Ian Thorne, illustrated by Barbara H. Furan, p. 47.

This is the amazing history of the Loch Ness Monster. Obscure facts and hazy photographs make one wonder if the Monster could be a relative of the extinct dinosaurs. Ages 9-12. Well written!

*UFO's*, by Ian Thorne, illustrated by Barbara H. Furan, p. 47.

This book covers the possibilities of UFO travel and existence, and defines the different types of flying objects seen. The book includes both the explained and the unexplained cases. Readers are allowed to make up their own minds are UFO's real? Might we have space visitors? Ages 9-12.

*Surfing*, Jerolyn Nentl, p. 31.

Reading this book will introduce you to the skills involved in surfing. One will learn some of the complexities, such as the three basic shapes of waves, and how the tides affect the surfers. Ages 9-12.

*Bigfoot*, by Ian Thorne, illustrated by Barbara H. Furan, p. 47.

This book explores the possibilities of Bigfoot's existence. Descriptions of the evidence add intrigue and excitement to the book. Sightings of huge "hairy people" have been reported in the Pacific Northwest, Himalaya Mountains, and other parts of the world. Ages 9-12.

*Kite Flying*, by Dorothy Childres Schmitz, p. 32.

Besides giving a brief but interesting history of kites and kite flying in the world, the book describes the construction and uses of kites. Illustrations are especially well done. Ages 9-12.

The above Crestwood House books are edited by Dr. Howard Schroeder.

*Sequential Skills Development Activities in Reading*, by Verna Norha and Victoria Luepke. Published by T. S. Denison and Company, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota. PPs. 174-Bk I, 148-Bk II. \$7.95 per copy.

The two books in this series book contain multi-level activities which would be especially well received in an open classroom situation. Book I is basically phonic analysis activities, while Book II deals with vocabulary development and comprehension. Tutors and teachers' aides would find this material helpful.

*North American Indians*, by Frank Fox and illustrated by Rita Warner. Troubadour Press, 385 Fremont, San Francisco, CA, 94105. p. 30.

A printed passage on each left page gives a brief factual history about the illustration of an Indian tribe on the right hand page. The book is to be used as a coloring book. While teachers would doubtless find this excellent supplementary material, the illustrations are extremely intricate, and coloring them would be most difficult. The book is best described as appealing to the gifted child, since the publisher lists it as being for Grades 3-5.

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