



# Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts

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Volume 18  
Issue 3 April 1978

Article 18

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4-1978

## Reading Horizons vol. 18, no. 3

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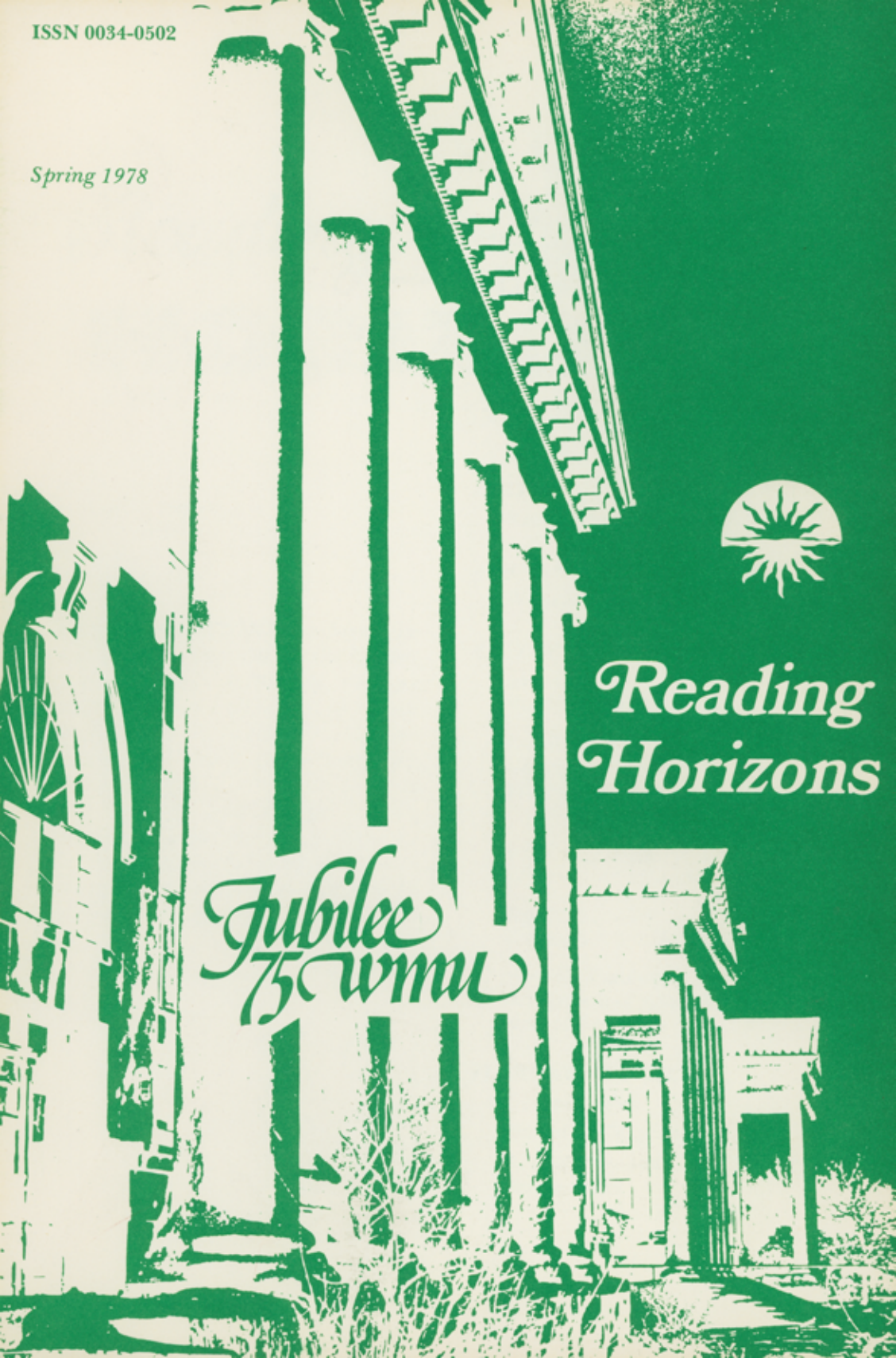
ISSN 0034-0502

*Spring 1978*



# *Reading Horizons*

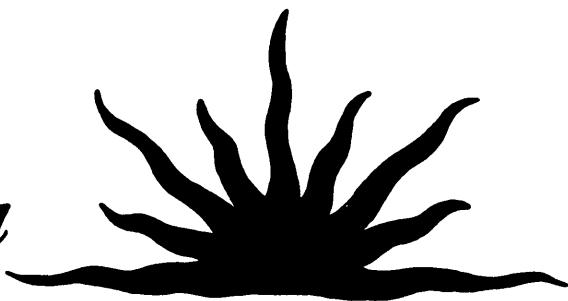
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# *Reading*

# **HORIZONS**



VOLUME 18

NUMBER 3

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### EXPENSIVE ECONOMY

The teachers of reading and the reading specialists doubtless deem it a bad omen that the government found it useful to its own ends to drastically cut the number of *Congressional Records* each representative may mail to constituents. To publicize this curtailment of reports to taxpayers as an "economy move" was a flagrant example of arrogance and shortsightedness.

Just as educational administrators often believe that hiring a reading teacher constitutes a reading program in their schools, our elected government officials mistakenly believe that passing a bill which gives money to schools for reading is a solution to the reading problem in the nation. What schools in our towns and cities need is a constant reminder from our leaders that reading is all-important to a self-governing people.

It appears now that we all need to be reminded that we *are* a self-governing people. Reading reports of what representatives in our nation's Capitol are considering ought to be everyone's business. When our nation was younger, independent newspaper owners jealously guarded their right to receive the *Record*, and regularly told their subscribers exactly what was being done about local, area, and national problems. Now we have lost most of our locally owned independent newspapers, and we are left with news-for-profit enterprises which avoid antagonizing anyone, but do little to inform readers. We are also being lulled into telling our students that television is "instructional," that the banalities we hear are "incisive reports" on our representatives' work in Washington.

The alternative to the *Congressional Record* is a comprehensive written report from each representative to the taxpayers every day on every issue, so that young people can again feel they are closely associated with a government "of the people, by the people, and for the people." Our young people should not be taught critical reading by perusing workbook pages of hypothetical examples. They need to compare statements by real people on current, vital, and urgent issues. They need to recognize the number and the range of problems that face legislators every day of each session. They need to be alerted to the great need for sincere leaders, a fact which is manifested in the pages of the *Congressional Record*.

How could our legislators accept this denial of their need to report to their constituents, without more than a murmur of protest? Have they fallen into the trap of thinking that if homefolks see their faces on television now and then, *that* would convince all of us that they were serving well?

Reading teachers cannot carry the burden of demonstrating the importance of reading without a real gesture of support from our elected representatives. The *Record* is a commitment to the people, it is a solid piece of evidence that a democracy does not hide or conduct its deliberations in secret, it is a line of direct communication with the people who sent legislators to the forum to discuss matters in their stead.



The amount of money being saved by abandoning this service of sending *Records* to concerned citizens cannot be great in a day when "billion" no longer strikes awe in our hearts. One can be more specific, however, in considering the loss to our concept of democracy, when we stop to question the motives of a government which foolishly thinks cutting off the *Record* is of no consequence. In ancient times it was advantageous to have an illiterate populace. Today, it is calamitous. Let us not be guilty of de-emphasizing reading the *Record* by pretending to save money.

Kenneth VanderMeulen  
Editor

# SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR LEARNING CENTERS

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It should be quite clear from the research evidence that successful students tend to plan their work carefully, think ahead, are conscientious, independent, self-confident and recognize the importance of finding suitable conditions for effective study (Entwistle and Entwistle, 1970). Being able to organize, having a good self-image and being flexible are most important traits for students to have. For students that are handicapped in various ways, there is hope. Students can learn academic skills, if they have a good teacher and work to help themselves.

Self-image is a most important characteristic, and superior students have a good feeling about themselves and their work. The concept of self-image is also an important aspect of one's mental health. Healthy people like themselves and find it easy to like others. Underdeveloped students will have traits relating to poor mental health, but these traits can be reversed with the help of a good instructor and some rewarding educational experiences. This will take time. There are no simple solutions.

Teachers should be aware of the research literature that indicates instructing in remedial study skills can improve grades. Only professional study skills people with well developed programs can help. There are many non-effective programs operating in higher education, particularly in the two-year institutions of higher learning.

Individuals involved with study skills courses should know the characteristics of underachieving students and what the research literature says about helping these unique students. It is a fact that many persons charged with the responsibility to administer programs for the underdeveloped are not familiar with the research literature. They do not know what works and what does not work for underdeveloped, high risk students. The fact is that many people engaged with study skills and remedial courses have not read any research literature.

Many administrators do not understand that responsible professionals are required to staff study skills courses. There should be a strong remedial program in every institution of higher education that has an open door admission policy. Study skills training should be taught in conjunction with remedial courses such as reading, if academic performance is to be improved. Administrators should seek the most qualified personnel available to conduct remedial/study skills courses, if they expect to demonstrate the effectiveness of such programs. Unqualified staff members and student tutors cannot significantly help high risk students achieve academic success. A concentrated remedial program staffed with professional personnel

knowledgeable of diagnostic instruments and evaluation procedures are required; remedial programs that do not have qualified professionals are useless according to previous research. Administrators with incompetent personnel should not attempt to deal with high risk students, nor should they make claims of having study laboratories or remedial programs. Academic deceit by administrative charlatans does not help students to graduate; moreover, this behavior by administrators attempts to present shallow, non-effective programs as worthy for student consumption. Such misrepresentation is a waste of money, and violates principles of sound scholarship. Administrators operating remedial programs with no substantive evidence of student progress are derelict in accomplishing institutional goals.

It is recommended that personnel working in study skills laboratories read the literature describing the characteristics of high risk students. Teachers and administrators may not understand that they may be dealing with students who are handicapped in many ways. The high risk student will probably lack self-confidence to do academic work, have low self-esteem and demonstrate frustration while attempting to accomplish tasks too difficult to master. Research with high risk students has demonstrated that improvement may enable the student to graduate, but those who start with relatively higher ability measures are most likely to show the greatest improvement. (Pressey, 1928; Maxwell, 1963 and Tresselt, 1966).

Based on the research, colleges and universities should screen their students and conduct a diagnostic profile for each high risk student entering. Specific remedial treatments should be attempted. Research has indicated that high risk students can be helped to obtain better grades than what has been predicted for them. (Maxwell, 1963; McConihe, et al., 1964; Egeland, et al., 1970; Christ, 1970; Miller and Stillwagon, 1970; Pepper, 1970; Kling, 1972 and Shaffer, 1973). This approach would help the high risk student attempting to earn a degree, and it would lower the attrition rate for colleges and universities. Institutions of higher education in the United States need students to function. Making a concerted effort to retain those freshmen that enter higher education will be reflected in larger enrollments. This benefit should be of particular interest to administrators within higher education, because there will be increased competition for students in the future. Those institutions that open their doors to all students and can demonstrate ways to retain their freshmen until graduation will be considered successful. Under the influence of an egalitarian philosophy, numerous institutions of higher education in the United States welcome all types of students. Those institutions that do not employ professionals to make a proper attempt at upgrading academic skills are being dishonest.

Smith, et al. (1975) did a comprehensive survey of learning centers (reading and study skills programs) in the United States during the fall of 1974, which, they said, had never been accomplished before. The initial survey instrument consisted of 70 questions on administration, budget, staffing, services, facilities, and materials. On October 1, 1974, the survey

questionnaire was mailed to the 3,389 campuses of all 2,783 accredited colleges and universities listed in the 1972-73 and 1973-74 Educational Directory. Of the surveys mailed, 1,258 (38%) were completed and returned. Of all colleges responding to the survey, 61% indicated plans to develop a learning center within the next two years. Seventy-eight percent of all two-year colleges reported having centers, compared with 57% of post-graduate institutions and 43% of four-year colleges. It is interesting to know that 57% of all centers became operational after 1970, and a mere 10% existed before 1960; 61% of all centers before that date were in post-graduate institutions.

The administration of learning centers is a subject of concern. No clearly established pattern of administrative responsibility emerged from the Smith, et al. (1975) report. Learning centers in two-year colleges tend to be administered more frequently by English departments. Centers in four-year colleges and universities tend to be administered by Departments of Education or Counseling. English departments administer the highest percentage (23%) of the study skills centers. Two-year colleges tend to have staff with English degrees in their learning centers, while four-year and post-graduate institutions tend to have staff with degrees in educational psychology and counseling. The smaller the college the more likely its center would be administered by an English department and have a staff with English degrees. The larger the institution the more likely it would have a center administered by education or counseling and have a staff with degrees in those areas (Smith, et al., 1975).

The results of the Smith, et al. (1975) report indicate there is a heterogeneous mixture of disciplines involved with learning skills programs (English, Education and Psychology). Through this mixture there are probably different approaches and methodologies being used to treat the high risk students. Those involved with study skills programs should be aware of the research literature, but unfortunately there are many teachers that are unaware of the unique problems high risk students have. Many of the people teaching study skills courses do not have formal training with study skills strategies. Most study skills teachers learn while on the job, through a trial and error method. This may be a good way to learn, but it is difficult for the students that may or may not be helped while someone is learning with them. High risk students need professional attention, not practice teachers.

Some methods of good study are discovered by mere chance, others through experiments made by individuals in an effort at getting as much done as possible within the briefest span of time, and others are the result of thorough scientific research (Poulsen, 1969). The scientific method offers clues that can be used to improve our technique within certain bounds. Sten C. Poulsen (1969), a Danish study methods researcher, reviewed all the reports on study methods listed in *Psychological Abstracts* from 1927 to 1967 and concluded there were numerous weak research designs and poor studies. Poulsen (1969) said we need more research on study methods, and the research needs to investigate the amount of time students spend on different activities. Poulsen (1969) also noted that unless systematically

exposed to external influence, students do not change their mode of working to any great extent.

Those involved with study skills courses would be doing a service to their cause if they could demonstrate that their efforts do make a difference in helping students. Too often a treatment is applied with no follow-up done to determine if the treatment helped. Knowing what strategies work with different types of students is useful to the professional. Study courses must be tailored to individual needs; diagnostic examinations are required to map an individualized plan for help. Gladstein (1963) claimed to find evidence that a model of good study behavior can be applied to each student on an individualized basis. One must consider personality differences, ability and past achievements (Gladstein, 1963).

Knowing what has helped students can be used to project programs and plan for the future. Good study skills and remedial programs such as reading are expensive to maintain. Qualified professionals are in demand and staff personnel are required to sustain an active learning center.

The best approach for individuals getting started in the area of study skills is to read and understand the research literature. Having a knowledge of the research literature is necessary for a basic understanding of the problems high risk students have. High risk or underdeveloped students are handicapped in many ways. Students need to understand their problems. Teachers must also understand the problem and be able to offer help.

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# HOW DISABLED READERS TRY TO REMEMBER WORDS

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Disabled readers seem to have great difficulty with associative learning tasks which involve word-like stimuli. Sometimes this difficulty appears so severe that it is called "word blindness." Early summaries of the ITPA suggest that disabled readers might have deficits in auditory and visual sequential memory (Seivers, et al, 1963), although these subtests may have little diagnostic or predictive value for reading (Hammill & Newcomer, 1976). Studies of memory tasks with normal learners, involving letters and word-like patterns, indicate that recall is easier when stimuli present familiar patterns, either as pronounceable syllables (Gibson, 1965) or as contextual dependencies (Miller & Selfridge, 1950). Blumberg (1968), studying associative learning tasks, found brain injured children to have the least difficulty in making associations between visual non-wordlike stimuli and spoken words, while having greatest difficulty with visual word-like associations. Bakker (1967) reports that severely disabled readers were significantly poorer than better readers in the recall of meaningful, but not meaningless, sequences.

It might be concluded from these studies that disabled readers have specific difficulty in the recall of meaningful or word-like letter sequences, rather than general difficulty in letter memory. It might also be concluded that visual word-like sequences are not meaningful to disabled readers because they have not learned to shorten the memory task by grouping letters into pronounceable patterns. They may try instead to memorize words one letter at a time, which means that their performance on the recall task would be more nearly like the normal reader's poor performance on the recall of meaningless sequences.

*Purpose.* The purpose of this study was to 1) compare the overall performance of disabled and normal readers on recall of letter sequences (meaningful and meaningless combined), and to 2) examine each group's performance on recall of meaningful as opposed to meaningless sequences.

Meaningful letter sequences were defined as those which are recognizable as redundant spelling patterns, such as om, lup, grel . . . . Meaningless letter sequences were defined as those which are unrecognizable (they would not appear as patterns in English words); i.e., fh, ndw, wjqs . . . .

The research questions were as follows:

- 1) Will disabled readers in classes for the learning disabled (LD) differ from normal readers in regular classes (RC) in their overall ability to recall letter sequences?
- 2) Will the within-group performance of the RC group be markedly superior on meaningful vs meaningless sequences, while the performance of the LD students is more nearly equal on both kinds of tasks?

*Design.* A two-way univariate analysis of variance was selected as the design for the study, and  $p < .05$  was selected as the significance level. The interaction between group and type of stimulus was the question of major interest.

*Description and selection of subjects.* The target population was eight-through-ten-year-old children identified as learning disabled (state guidelines) who were receiving remedial instruction in one of twelve existing LD resource rooms in an urban central Kentucky county. Participating resource room teachers were asked to submit a list of students who were 1) reading two or more years below expectations for grade level, 2) with deficits in word recognition and 3) who could recognize and name letters of the alphabet and read some words by sight.

Using this pool, one child was selected at random from each LD room. The child's sex, chronological age (CA), and socioeconomic status (SES) were recorded. SES was determined by use of an occupational rating scale (Hatt & North, 1964).

Upon completion of the LD subject selection, the regular elementary teacher in whose classroom each LD child was mainstreamed was asked to list students who were reading at or above grade level, not having any difficulty in word recognition, who matched the LD child in sex, CA (within one year), and SES (+ 10 points on the rating scale). In many cases, there was only one child from each regular class who met all of the matching criteria. However, when options were available, the "control" child was selected at random from among the pool.

There were eight boys and four girls in each subgroup. The average SES of each group was lower-middle (range lower to upper-middle). Because LD children were mainstreamed for non-reading subjects with children who approximated their achievement levels, the average CA of the LD group was 9.3, while the average CA of their regular class peers was 8.7. The twelve LD children had an average reading level (basal instructional placement) of 1.1, while the RC students had an average reading level of 4.1.

*Selection of stimulus materials.* The visual and auditory letter memory subtests from the *Group Diagnostic Reading Aptitude and Achievement Tests* (Monroe & Sherman, 1939) were selected as stimuli for the meaningful sequences. Both subtests present sequences of letters containing recognizable English spelling patterns (bo, fow, grel . . .), increasing in length from two to nine letters. Both auditory and visual stimuli were presented and these scores were combined in order to prevent the task from becoming a modality test.



Stimuli for the meaningless sequences were designed by the experimenter for this investigation. Since it was important that they contain no patterns recognizable as syllables in English words, these sequences were composed entirely of consonants. The consonants were drawn at random in sequences which, like the meaningful stimuli, increased in length from two to nine letters (jg, cxz, tmjd . . .). Again, both auditory and visual stimuli were presented and these scores were combined.

A complete list of test items can be found at the end of the text. It should be noted that neither of these two types of stimuli are "meaningless" in the sense that this term was used by earlier researchers (Bakker, 1967), since both can be verbally mediated. The meaningful stimuli, however, are pronounceable and wordlike, therefore subject to the process which Gibson (1965) calls "chunking," or grouping into units to aid recall.

*Presentation of stimulus materials.* In the visual subtests, lower case letters printed in black on white flashcards were exposed to students for five seconds with the instructions, "I will show you a card with letters on it. I will show it to you for five seconds, then put it face down on the table. I want you to write down on this paper the letters you saw. OK? Now, the tricky part is you can't write the letters until after I put the card down. Are you ready?"

In the auditory subtests, individual letters were spoken at the rate of two per second, with students observing the examiner as she spoke. Instructions were to listen to the whole sequence, then write down the letters in the same order they were heard.

All testing was done in a uniform manner, in a quiet setting away from the child's classroom. It was anticipated that the order of presentation might affect the results of the study, since students had short attention spans, and also because they might develop a set for the task. To control this factor, the order of the four presentations was determined independently for each subject by a flip of the coin. Testing on each of the four types of stimuli was stopped after the subject made three consecutive errors. One point was given for each "word" written in correct sequence. Due to the age of the subjects, letter reversals (backwards "s," "b" for "d," etc.) were not counted as errors.

*Results and discussion.* Results of the ANOVA, summarized in Table 1, indicate that there were significant differences between the overall performance of the two groups, and between the two types of stimuli, with the RC group scoring higher overall (12.75) than the LD (8.17), and the performance of both groups combined higher for meaningful (12.50) than meaningless (8.42) material.

Table 1 also indicates that there was a significant interaction between group and type of stimulus material, with the RC group demonstrating better facility with meaningful (15.58) than meaningless (9.92) stimuli, while the LD group's performance was more nearly equal on both types of stimuli (9.42 meaningful, 6.92 meaningless). The nature of this relationship is shown in Figure 1. These results may indicate that the LD students did not perceive frequently-occurring spelling patterns as meaningful material, or that they had not yet developed enough reading

TABLE 1

UNIVARIATE *F* RATIOS FOR TWO-WAY ANOVA:  
TYPE OF STIMULUS (MEANINGFUL/MEANINGLESS)  
BY GROUP (REGULAR CLASS/LEARNING DISABLED)

Source of Variation	df	Ms	F	p
Factor A (stimulus)	1	200.08	32.89	p = < .0001*
Factor B (group)	1	252.08	41.44	p = < .0001*
A x B	1	30.08	4.95	p = < .0313*
Within cells	44	6.08		

\*significant at the  $\alpha = < .05$  level

skill to distinguish between spelling patterns which could be grouped into pronounceable units and those which represented random jumbles of unrelated symbols.

Since the mean raw scores combined auditory and visual stimuli in increasingly longer sequences, the meaningful score of 9.42 meant that the average LD child could recall a sequence of only three or four letters (range 2-5) in a row. The mean of 15.58 meant that the average RC child, who was nearly a year younger, could recall five or six letters (range 4-8) in a row.

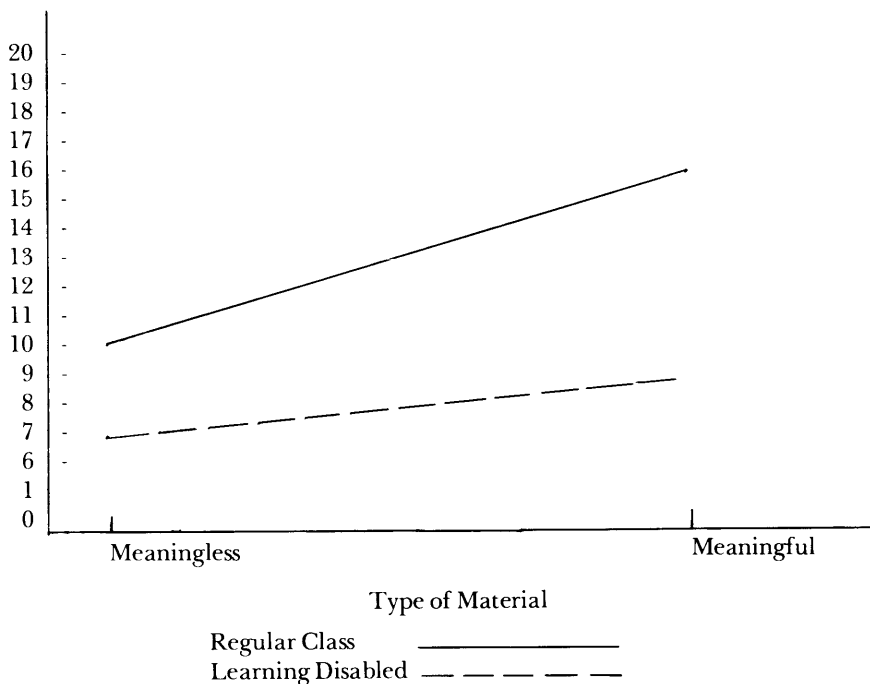
Careful study of individual response sheets indicated three other interesting findings. 1) There was less than expected difference between the groups (RC or LD) in their tendency to reverse letters in writing, with the LD having thirteen such reversals, while the younger RC children had eight. Younger normal learners, then, had nearly as many letter reversals as did this LD sample.

2) The auditory portions were marked by so many confusions in sound discrimination for both groups that the validity of this part of the test might be questioned. In twenty-nine cases the RC, and in thirty-eight cases the LD students wrote down a letter which was incorrect, though auditorially similar to the one pronounced by the examiner (d/e, f/s, j/a, v/b, p/t, c/z, etc.). Although this may reflect a slight variation in regional dialect, it also seems indicative of the need for specific training in auditory discrimination between similar letter sounds. In spite of difficulties with the auditory stimuli, these scores were retained to prevent the test from focusing on a single modality channel. However, if only the visual stimuli had been considered, the RC group's overall mean would still have been 7.05 (8.92 meaningful, 5.17 meaningless), as compared with 4.08 (4.67 meaningful,

FIGURE 1

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND  
ABILITY TO RECALL TWO TYPES OF MATERIAL

Number of "words" Correct

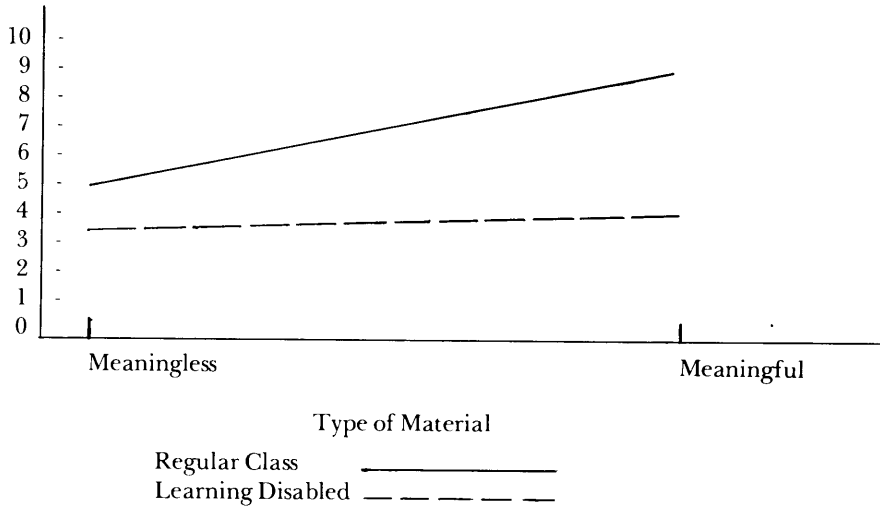


3.50 meaningless) for the LD students, and the similarity between the LD group's performance on meaningful and meaningless material would have been even more pronounced, as shown in Figure 2.

3) Most meaningful recall errors by the RC group tended to resemble word-like sequences ("winry" for "wibry," "kinel" for "kignel," "etoraboka" for "etorakubo," etc.), while many recall errors by the LD group appeared to be random jumbles of letters ("whlb" for "whugg," "afnt" for "afet," "mde" for "malde," etc.), consisting of the first letters or the first and last letters and often lacking vowels. Following the test students were asked to explain their strategy for recalling the sequences. Most LD students who could verbalize what they did reported saying the individual letters to themselves, while the RC students more often said they "tried to make words out of them." Again, this may suggest that even regularly occurring letter sequences are not recognizable as meaningful patterns by LD children.

FIGURE 2

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GROUP MEMBERSHIP AND ABILITY  
TO RECALL TWO TYPES OF MATERIAL WHEN ONLY  
VISUAL STIMULI ARE CONSIDERED



STIMULI USED IN TESTING

<i>Visual</i>		<i>Auditory</i>	
<i>Meaningful</i>	<i>Meaningless</i>	<i>Meaningful</i>	<i>Meaningless</i>
ag	jg	om	fh
bo	yl	lu	yk
nup	nsw	tas	bzc
fow	cxz	mey	ndw
grel	wjqs	flob	tmjd
afet	hbcm	spag	snwv
malde	kglcj	whugg	rxdq
wibry	xdrqc	trome	jslmt
cunerf	vdlfbj	skenar	nkfygh
kignel	mtslng	grevik	kbfygr
smontir	mjnqrhp	alinnar	vjtspnq
doponas	srhbyfd	yaproif	crgyfbk
rilamperp	xkbvjzfw	mafapase	xtjvmlhd
chiolary	ypxmzhgk	squogelt	kfbgrysc
etorakubo	fcqslvnwt	hethoselt	znvglcqsw
snelerith	mjdkqbyp	briagonty	qdskvjrz

*Limitations.* Results should be interpreted with caution, due to the small number of students available, making precise matching impossible and simple randomization inadvisable. Also, I.Q. was neither measured nor partialled out. And, since the nature of the "meaningful" component of the task was so similar to the reading task itself, poorer performance by LD students on this task may be an artifact, indicating a previously noted relationship with the ability to read rather than an underlying deficit. However, since the findings of previous studies with this population have been similar to those in the present study (Blumberg, 1968; Bakker, 1967), and since children similar to those described continue to have extreme difficulty in learning to read, it seems that the problem is worthy of further exploration.

*Conclusions.* Results of this pilot study suggest that 8- through 10-year-old disabled readers in LD classes may differ from younger average-to-good readers, both in their ability to recall sequences of letters and in their ability to shorten the recall task by perceiving recognizable spelling patterns as meaningful groups. Further research on visual letter memory, with larger groups of children, is needed. If these results can be replicated, a case might be made for teaching LD children to recognize as meaningful the spelling patterns which occur with highest frequency in the English language. Overlearning of these patterns might then allow LD students to make automatic responses to visual stimuli, circumventing possible difficulties in visual letter memory and/or letter-sound correspondence.

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# IF THEY TALK WHEN YOU SAY "LISTEN!" AND WON'T TALK WHEN YOU SAY "DISCUSS!" READ!

*Patricia M. Cunningham*

DIRECTOR OF READING  
GRAHAM, NORTH CAROLINA

Time: Wednesday morning during recess, mid October

Place: The Faculty Lounge

Me: I'm really interested to know what kind of activities you teachers out here in the real world do that you think helps improve listening and speaking skills.

Mr. Jones: Why, my children talk all the time; I can't ever shut them up.

Mrs. Black: Kids today just don't listen; if I tell them once I tell them a hundred times . . .

Mrs. McGinchy: My children give oral book reports once a month.

Mrs. Bilco: Yes, and I have Show-and-Tell every morning.

Mr. Bull: Someone's always putting something into the elementary and no one ever takes anything out.

All: Yes, that's right, Mr. Bull. You said it!!

Me: Do you realize that according to some research adults spend most of their time listening and the next largest portion speaking? A very small percentage of adult time is spent in reading and writing and yet we don't give direct instruction in listening and speaking.

(A few moments of reverent silence—the secretary calls from the office and asks for PTA attendance figures and the bell rings signaling the end of morning recess. The teachers leave. Mrs. Bilco and Mrs. McGinchy linger a moment.)

Mrs. Bilco: Well, how do you teach listening and speaking? I have done some of those activities the magazines suggest where you have children listen for different sounds and reproduce different rhythms, but I didn't see where that helped them listen to me any better.

Mrs. McGinchy: Yes, I tried that too one rainy afternoon. It was fun. I know I talk too much and they don't talk enough, but when I let them talk it is chaos! I just frankly don't know what to do.

(Mrs. Bilco and Mrs. McGinchy hurry off to find their children. I flee back to my ivory tower.)

Speaking and listening, it appears, are elusive to many classroom teachers. There are no textbooks or teachers' guides. The many experts, who exhort teachers to include them, either don't tell how or suggest some isolated activities which at best fill up rainy afternoons. What can I tell Mrs. Bilco and Mrs. McGinchy? How does one teach speaking and listening in a structured, ongoing way?

After several weeks of study and thought, I return to the elementary school armed with two tools to fix the speaking-listening breakdown: group discussion and story dramatization. Group discussion is not new nor is the suggestion that it be a daily part of the elementary school program. Likewise, journals and textbook articles prod teachers to use creative dramatics with their children. The problems with their implementation appear to be two: (1) Teachers see them as something added and as not related to what they are already trying to do. (2) Teachers don't know how to "teach" discussion and dramatics.

The issue of "why discussion and dramatics?" is easily answered. Discussion and dramatics can be the structured, planned, ongoing "how" of providing instruction in speaking and listening. The issue of "where and when" is answerable only in terms of the individual classroom schedule. Many teachers, once they have learned how to handle them, use small group discussions as the mainstay of their Social Studies program. Other teachers plan for several discussion periods each week and include them as part of Social Studies, Science or English and they fit the content. This is not expedient; it is proper! To have a discussion, one must have something to discuss. Small group discussions result in increased learning of and enthusiasm for the content of a subject; the increased listening and speaking skills are a bonus!

So far, so good! Mrs. Bilco and Mrs. McGinchy agree that discussions would improve speaking and listening as well as increase content learning. They see that it is not just adding one more thing to the curriculum. Their concern is "How?" How do you get the students into groups? How do you know what to have them discuss? How do you keep them on the subject? How do you handle discipline problems? One "How" at a time, please ladies!

(1) How do you get the students into groups?

Groups for small-group discussion should be heterogeneous but not haphazard. From four to six is a workable number and whenever possible the leaders, quiet children and troublemakers should be divided up between the groups. The teacher should form groups on this basis and then observe them working for a few sessions. She can then make changes on the basis of her observations. Once the new groups are formed, they should probably remain stable over a period of time so that the children adapt to each other and develop some group cohesiveness. The group should meet together in the same place and procedures for getting into groups (moving desks, chairs, etc.) should be practiced until they can be quickly and expediently accomplished.

(2 and 3) How do you know what to have them discuss? How do you keep them on the subject?

These two questions will be answered together because, at least in the beginning stages of small group discussions, they are inseparable. The topic of discussion must be one about which the children have some information and opinions. Discussions are most productive when they follow some common input. This input might be a story they have read or listened to, a television program most have watched, a science experiment, a visit from

an “expert.” The list of inputs in an elementary classroom is infinite.

Once the topic is chosen, the form the discussion takes will be molded by the form of the question. Assume the topic is “Packaging of Foods.” The teacher might say to the small groups; “Discuss the different ways foods are packaged.” Chances are the discussions will be short and the off-subject ramblings long. Imagine instead that the teacher provided each group with markers and index cards and instructed them to decide which foods most of their group liked to eat. A recorder (selected by the teacher for his writing skills) would write each agreed-upon food on an index card. When each group had accumulated a stack of cards, the teacher would stop the groups and ask the total class for suggestions about what kind of packaging food came in. The children would list such packaging as boxes, bags, cans, jars, bottles and frozen food containers. Each group would then be provided with six envelopes. On each envelope the group recorder would write one of these six packaging modes. The teacher would then instruct the groups to take each of their foods, decide which way it was usually packaged and put it in the appropriate envelope. (For foods packaged in several ways, additional cards could be made and filed in more than one envelope.) When the groups had sorted their cards, each group shared their results with the total class.

This particular activity was quite successful with a group of third graders who had not previous experience with small group discussions. The lesson would not have been successful had the students been told: “You have 20 minutes to discuss how foods are packaged.” Other ways of structuring the packaging discussion might include:

1. Whole class brainstorms “foods we eat.” Teacher writes suggestions on board. Children assemble in small groups and list those foods under appropriate packaging headings.
2. Each small group is given a type of packaging and must think of as many foods as possible which come in that packaging.
3. Groups are first asked to list six types of packaging, then list foods under the appropriate headings.

The irony is that you don’t get children involved in discussions by telling them to discuss. You ask them to brainstorm or list or compare or sort and in the process of making these decisions, some lively discussions ensue.

#### (4) How do you handle discipline problems?

Most discipline problems during group discussions will be avoided if (1) the children have practices getting into their groups, (2) the group membership is heterogeneous, and purposefully planned, (3) the topic is one they have some prior input on, (4) the task is structured by more than just “discuss” and, (5) the teacher limits group discussion time to a short period and provides activities for those who finish early.

Occasionally, one group is uncooperative and unruly and will consistently not get down to the task at hand. A statement such as “I’m sorry you don’t seem able to work together today” followed by moving their desks to separate areas and assigning them some individual work to complete is usually an effective remedy. This group should, of course, be given a fresh chance to work together each time discussions are held. Once the teacher



has the other groups working together successfully, she may join the obstreperous group and help them learn to work together.

Story dramatization, like group discussion, may enhance the learning of content subjects. Folk tales which are sequential and contain much dialogue are among the most easily dramatized. The dramatization of a folk tale of a country being studied in a Social Studies unit increases curiosity about and a feeling of common history with that country. Story dramatization may become an expansion of the daily time most teachers spend reading to their students. One day a week this story-reading combined with the English period would provide ample time for the dramatization of one or two scenes from a story.

Dewey Chambers<sup>1</sup> provides a clear, readable and entertaining account of the "hows" of story dramatization. Any teacher who desires to try this technique would feel able and willing after reading his chapter, "Creative Drama in Action," in which he presents an actual account of a fourth-grade class planning and executing the dramatization of several scenes from the old French tale, *Stone Soup*. In the next chapter, Chambers lists and expands upon the following 12 steps in creating a story dramatization:

1. Select a good story for creative drama and then tell it.
2. With the class, break the plot down into sequences, or scenes, that can be played. Note these on the chalkboard.
3. From those noted on the board, choose a scene, or scenes, to be played.
4. Break the scene, or scenes, into further sequence.
5. Discuss the scene or scenes. Discuss setting, motivation, characterization, the times, physical makeup of the characters, etc. Help the children to develop mental images of the characters, what they did, how they did it, why they did it.
6. Choose the players. Let them go into conference and plan in more detail what they will do during the playing period.
7. Plan with the youngsters who remain. Let them know that the play will be re-cast and re-played, and that they might pretend a part in the next playing.
8. Instruct youngsters to watch the play for five things they like and five things that could be improved in the next playing.
9. With an agreed-upon signal, start the play. Let it continue until finished.
10. Let players return to the group, and all evaluate the play, using the criteria in #8.
11. Re-cast, instruct remaining students as in #8, and replay the scene.
12. Evaluate. If time permits, re-cast and re-play.<sup>2</sup>

Purposeful critical listening is a must for successful story dramatization. While listening to the story being told or read, children listen for the order

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<sup>1</sup>Dewey W. Chambers, *Storytelling and Creative Drama* (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1970) 60-88.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 73.

of events to decide which scenes follow which and to determine the sequence of events within the scene. They listen to remember the details of setting and characterization. From the literally stated, they make inferences about the characters' motivation and try to develop mental images of the characters. During the dramatization, the audience becomes critical listeners and observers as they watch to note things they especially liked and things they would want to improve in the next playing.

The potentials for increased fluency in speaking are also abundant during story dramatization. Vocabulary is stretched as children seek just the right verb to describe how the old man walked and the adjective to describe the look on his wife's face when he returned after all those years. The players have a conference during which they discuss exactly how they will play the scene. The players act and speak as the characters they are portraying. The audience explains to the players what they think was good and what might be improved.

Small group discussion and story dramatizing can provide the structure for the teaching of listening and speaking. Teachers can schedule them regularly into the various subject areas of the curriculum and can observe tangible growth in their students' verbal communication skills. Mrs. McGinchy and Mrs. Bilco are now using both with success; even Mr. Bull appears impressed. Listen!

Time: Wednesday morning during recess, mid April

Place: The Faculty Lounge

Mrs. McGinchy: Yes, I would never have believed it would work. And the first time I tried putting them into groups it was a little chaotic. But we practiced moving the desks and I made sure those first discussions were highly structured and on topics they knew a lot about to start with.

Mrs. Bilco: Well, even my first graders are doing it. We have discussions almost every day as a part of some subject. It just seems so natural. But the best part is the dramatics. When I pick up a book now, they listen so hard I think their ears will fall off. I never tell them ahead of time if we are going to act it out. So they listen intently to every story I read.

(Mr. Bull leaves the lounge)

Mrs. McGinchy: I guess he still thinks there isn't time for these things.

Mrs. Bilco: Well, I don't know. The other day I saw him outside your room while your kids were acting out a story and he was actually smiling. Maybe some day. . .

# THE PRINCIPAL HELPS IMPROVE READING INSTRUCTION

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Study after study indicates the principal sets the tone for the reading program in the school. His interest, his concern, his knowledge, his sensitivity, and his ability to involve faculty are key factors determining the success of a school's reading program. What then stands in the way of principals so that we continue to have many schools with declining reading achievement? What blocks effective administrative functioning so that teachers will say in response to a question about how supervisors have helped them to be better teachers of reading: "In twelve years I don't think a supervisor has really helped me very much and I haven't gone to them either." "I have had one reading observation in ten years." "They've given me teachers' manuals and marked my planbooks with such comments as: 'Where is your medial summary?' In other words they haven't helped."

In cases in which principals have failed to improve reading instruction it is because they have not fully accepted their role as school instructional leaders, because they don't see reading as a priority goal, because they don't understand what is involved in change, or because they view materials and systems rather than teaching as the key to the reading process.

Before a principal can improve reading instruction he needs to be clear about his job. Will most of his time be devoted to school-community relations? Will working with parents use all his energy? Will written reports capture his priority? Or does he see helping teachers to improve instruction as his major function? If he sees himself primarily as an instructional leader, he needs to relegate reports and liaison with community groups to someone else's area of responsibility or to second place on his priority list.

Frequently, principals operate as though change can be mandated, that a new reading program needs only the support of an initial faculty conference, of frequent classroom observations, of close examinations of planbooks to magically bring improved reading. They are unaware that change needs an atmosphere that stimulates, informs, and supports, that this atmosphere develops when a principal recommends articles from *The Reading Teacher*, *The Journal of Reading*, or *Reading Horizons* and they become subjects for lunchroom conversation and faculty conferences. It grows when teachers are encouraged to attend reading conferences and to visit other schools to see interesting programs. It spreads when there is a professional library which is not located in an unexplored corner of the principal's office forever remaining undiscovered, unread, and untouched, but rather is a library whose use is encouraged by the principal as he refers to its contents in bulletins, at faculty conferences, and in conversation. The atmosphere nurturing the reading program is fostered by weekly bulletins

to the staff containing ideas for teaching reading, pertinent quotations, and information regarding new book acquisitions.

An essential ingredient for a successful reading program is a principal who sees reading improvement as a major goal. He cannot be like the secondary school principal whose vision of the high school is teachers teaching history, mathematics, foreign languages, and who sees reading as something to be mastered in elementary school. The principal who views reading as a major school objective needs to learn as much as possible about reading so that he can work with teachers in classrooms. Often, principals are reluctant to expose themselves as teachers in the classroom because they have lost contact with the subject. If the principal can complement the teacher in a non-threatening, knowledgeable, and supportive manner, he will have done much to break down barriers between principal and staff, between principal and students. Teachers specify the demonstration lesson as a particularly useful activity for staff development. The principal with the knowledge and confidence to take the role of demonstration teacher will gain respect and loyalty from teachers and will strengthen his position as catalyst for staff growth.

Support for a school goal needs wide support. It needs teachers, parents, and community figures who recognize its importance. The effective principal is aware of the school social system. He knows the school power structure, the strengths and weaknesses of the staff, the feeling level—its moods and rhythms, the roots and foci of some of its problems, and the sources of energy. He has a picture of the totality of the school architecture and can build structures to work on improving instruction. A reading committee can be formed representing the staff to answer such questions as: What reading goals deserve emphasis in our school? How do these goals differ from grade to grade? How do these goals differ for different children? Communication can be abetted through the use of a reading newsletter for staff and community. Such a newsletter could include reading suggestions to parents, names of recommended books, teaching ideas, and announcements of meetings.

What is perhaps most crucial is that the principal recognize that the most important factor in the improvement of reading is the teacher. Administrators frequently have sought the panacea to reading problems in the newest system. It might be pressure from a school board, or newspapers focussing on the most current cure for reading difficulty, or a persuasive salesman, and suddenly the latest reading system descends upon the school with expensive material and voluble proponents. Distar, Alpha, Sullivan, or ITA flood classrooms with promises of an end to all reading problems. The cry is that "ALL CHILDREN WILL READ ON GRADE LEVEL," neglecting the statistical inconsistency involved. Not infrequently a visit two or three years subsequent to the introduction to the system finds it has been abandoned. Money spent on more and newer materials, or reading laboratories, on introducing systems will not in itself be effective. Since there is considerable evidence that it is the teacher and not the particular system or materials which makes the difference in children's reading

development, the principal's time and energy would be most effectively expended in helping teachers to grow.

The principal who sees his role as helping teachers to expand their professional skill knows what a complex, difficult, and subtle process is involved. He knows it is not the simple application of approaches to be found in a *How-to-Supervise* book. Rather it is the creative amalgam of sensitivity and skill which shows itself in the principal who knows when to praise and when to respond objectively, who knows when to observe and when not to observe, who knows the distinction between the secure teacher and the insecure teacher.

To give help where it is needed demands knowing the problems. It takes a principal who clearly accepts people. Teachers should be able to admit weaknesses and not at the same time feel vulnerable to attack. To help teachers grow calls for a school leader with a strong enough sense of self to encourage risk taking and to allow for possibility of failure. This is no easy task in an era in which accountability is defined as blamability, and ultimate responsibility hangs heavy over the heads of the schools. This kind of principal can support experimentation based on careful thinking and preparation. He knows that teachers need recognition for their achievements. He does this by giving teachers opportunities to share their expertise through faculty conference presentations and by teaching in-service courses. Class efforts are publicized through school and class newspapers, assembly presentations, performances for parents, and poetry festivals. At the same time he is never satisfied with the status quo. He sees the school as a constantly growing organism and without jarring the staff's sense of security he introduces ideas and possibilities. He does this as he hands a teacher an article to read, as he joins with teachers at professional conferences, as he works with teachers in classrooms, or as he takes courses with staff members.

The principal strengthens the reading program through thoughtful administration. In organizing classes he matches the child's personality with that of the teacher. For example, the hyperactive child might function best with a structured teacher. Similarly, he matches a child's learning style with the teacher's method. For example, the child with poorly developed oral language might best be placed with the teacher who will use a language-experience approach. In his use of reading specialists the principal again recognizes the need to match personalities. He uses his knowledge of people to have the specialist, at least initially, work with teachers most receptive to help. He knows that not all specialists are good for all teachers. As the reading resource teacher grows in ability to work with teachers then appropriate matching becomes less of a problem.

The principal supports teachers in other ways. He organizes a smoothly running system for the distribution of books and materials. He involves teachers in ordering and sees to it that reasonable requests are met. He obtains community understanding of the schools' reading program by involving parents in planning and implementing activities and by apprising them of problems as well as successes. With force, clarity, and optimism he

communicates the detailed efforts the school is making to improve reading instruction.

The school leader who recognizes his role as instructional leader, who gives major emphasis to reading as a school goal, who implements change with sensitivity and skill, and who develops an in-service program providing teachers with support, structure, and stimulation will find that he has developed a firm foundation for the school reading program.

# HIGH SCHOOL DISCIPLINE PROBLEMS AND READING DISABILITY

**George M. Usova**

THE CITADEL, CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA

In the past ten years vandalism, impertinence to teachers and general classroom disturbances have increased tremendously. These are only a few of the types of discipline problems that teachers and administrators are faced with daily. The secondary schools seem to be the most prominent area of trouble. If at all possible, it is up to these high school classroom teachers to handle the discipline problems they face. Sending students to the office, suspensions, and expulsions are often not the answer for chronic offenders. They simply meet these punishments with resentment and defiance. Too many times they just return to the classroom, only to repeat their disruptive actions. So it is in the classroom that the problem must be solved. In order to do this, the teacher must understand what discipline involves and how to use it most effectively. Correcting classroom environment and finding the cause of behavioral problems are also essential. Many studies have shown that reading problems in students often are the cause for discipline problems in those same students. Understanding discipline and coordinating it with correcting reading deficiencies would be a major step toward improving discipline problems.

In general, discipline problems stem from two sources: adolescent development and the atmosphere and effects of institutionalization.<sup>1</sup> Discipline problems that are considered "real" are those that cause the infringement on the freedoms of the teacher and the other members of the class. It is important that the teacher recognize the cause of these problems. Equally important is that the teacher does not perceive a discipline problem when there is none.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes the teacher can create challenges by imposing unnecessarily forceful and strict rules rather than an atmosphere of learning.<sup>3</sup> "The fact is that force will be met with equal resisting force, and will generally result in disruptive behavior."<sup>4</sup> The best action to take against misbehavior in the classroom is preventive discipline, not remedial discipline (action taken when confronted with a problem). "Positive steps should be taken to insure a good learning environment, free from challenges that might become problems, yet also giving freedom to students."<sup>5</sup>

"The common tendency among teachers is to accept students in terms of their successful behavior and to reject them in terms of their non-successful ones."<sup>6</sup> Reading abilities play an important part in the successes or failures of a student. According to Jorgenson, "Reading material that is too difficult . . . leads to repeated failure over a period of time and causes frustration, confusion and discouragement."<sup>7</sup> Duke reports that, ". . . students who become disciplinary problems in high school are distinguishable as a group

by the third grade.”<sup>8</sup> It becomes more evident as they grow older. “. . . the student who completes elementary school with a history of failure and low achievement is a likely candidate for disciplinary action later on.”<sup>9</sup> Thus, by the time the student has reached the secondary level, he has met much difficulty in reading and increasing failure. In a profile of a typical delinquent youth, his education status is listed as “. . . one or two years behind the class: difficulty with reading . . .”<sup>10</sup>

The relationship between reading disabilities and discipline problems is a positive one. In regard to this, instructional teaching strategies may be at fault. Students who are forced into reading instructional material at grade level and who can't, further reinforce negative feelings of failure; they become frustrated, angry, and discontented. According to Berman, “. . . delinquency results from a failure to detect significant skill deficits which predispose certain children to failure in school and life.”<sup>11</sup> Maynard reinforces the issue by stating that, “Often teachers build a pattern of failure, especially in minority children that can never be broken.”<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps, then, the greatest prevention of discipline problems lies in adjusting the material and climate in the classroom. Obviously, the first place to begin to improve behavior is in the elementary schools by correcting deficient academic skills and increasing the possibility for success. If this does not occur, then most likely the student will fall behind and become a discipline problem. Therefore, it becomes necessary for the secondary teacher to deal with the situation. One of the main techniques he can utilize is to adjust the difficulty of the material to the reading levels of the students. This procedure can easily be accomplished by utilizing a readability formula. By reducing the sentence length and simplifying the word difficulty level (substituting synonyms of one or two syllable words), the overall readability level will be lowered. Jorgenson found that behavior improved as material became easier and that poor student behavior resulted when material was too difficult.<sup>13</sup> It appears evident that readability level of materials is indicative of classroom behavior.

Studies on students' behavior in school make it clear that reading, or a lack of reading ability, is related to discipline problems. It is necessary for classroom teachers to provide material equal to the reading ability of the students. An atmosphere of challenges rather than frustration or boredom is preventive disciplinary action and should alleviate most major problems. Teachers should make a real effort to reduce the threat of going to school. “Most disruptive students are convinced that they are failures and perceive school to be a threatening experience.”<sup>14</sup> By providing a meaningful experience in the classroom, teachers can meet the needs of students, rather than their meeting the needs of the school.

While frustration in reading needs to be reduced, the classroom climate must also be attended to. The concept of teacher prevention of discipline problems extends itself to the teacher's relationship with the students themselves. The following suggestions attempt to clarify the essence of discipline problems and offer direction in their reduction.

1. *Expect and anticipate adult-like behavior.* If the teacher treats his students in a child-like manner, then it is reasonable to assume that



they will behave in the same manner. By increasing student responsibility and raising expectations of their academic and behavioral performance, the teacher not only raises student self-concepts but also elicits adult-like behavior.

2. *Re-examine what a discipline problem is.* In many instances, the discipline problem is a relative term. What constitutes a deviant act varies from classroom to classroom and from teacher to teacher. Thus, it is the teacher's perception—based upon his own values, attitudes, and beliefs—of what is or is not a discipline problem. Quite frequently, a teacher can create problems where none might exist by drawing attention to minor transgressions; many transgressions, if ignored, will eliminate themselves as some students are simply seeking attention. In essence, the teacher needs to question and analyze his present behavioral-classroom-standards and determine whether or not they are truly valid and worthy of attention.
3. *Be prepared and organized for instruction.* The rationale here is that if the teacher is lively, informed, and interesting in his instructional approach, students will not want to deviate; they will be more involved and interested in the learning process. Involving students in active rather than passive learning activities is additionally helpful. The structuring of routine tasks, particularly at the beginning of class, immediately involves students in an activity which they can anticipate and expect, and thereby eliminate the unoccupied time and tendency to misbehave.

With the proper materials and a positive climate, teachers can improve reading ability and at the same time avoid classroom discipline problems.

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# EDUCATIONAL GAMES ON FILE

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Even in the best of budgetary times, classroom teachers are often in need of an assortment of educational games for reinforcing learned concepts. The teacher can accumulate files on a variety of such games inexpensively and with a minimum of storage need. The games are prepared on file folders and when not in use store flat in a file drawer or box. The labels for each game are clearly visible so that even the youngsters can retrieve them with little difficulty. The labels can be pictures or symbols for non-readers and printed titles for children already acquiring recognition skills.

A good many of these games are typical board games which use a linear progression where one or more objects are moved from start to finish. However, instead of controlling movement by a spinner, dice or any arbitrary and "chancey" determiners often found in both educational and non-educational commercially produced games, the movement of the objects is controlled by using the very elements just learned. While primarily devised for word recognition skills, math facts, metric conversions, reading comprehension skills, or items from specific content areas all can provide the movement controls for the same game board when cues are placed on 3x5 index cards or appropriately sized pieces of oaktag. A correct identification of the element on the card leads to a one-space movement of the object along the linear path of the file folder game. Since the cards are independent of the game file folders, all are interchangeable and any child can play with any file game using his or her own set of control cards. Two children can play together either by pooling their cards and sharing their learning with each other or by each using his or her own deck. In the latter case, children of diverse abilities can play the same game and the weighted effect of using separate decks makes for an equal chance for either of them to win without being in direct academic competition.

Need for reinforcing and learning games in classrooms have produced similar ideas previously either by our own discoveries or by sharing with other teachers. However, there has not always been a sharing of some general learning principles involved with games in the classroom and this has led in many cases to abandonment of using games in classrooms. Any activity in the classroom is subject to the abilities of normal classroom decorum. Some teachers need to establish this decorum prior to introducing games in class, while other teachers gain the decorum through the use of games. Which comes first is not the issue here. What is of concern here is whether the game is a pure game and hardly related to education at all. We are charged with seeing that children learn and if they can have fun while doing this all the better, but we should not succumb to the reverse posture and see to it that they have fun at the expense of learning. The distinction between the two must be established. The object of a game for fun is

pleasure and perhaps development of peer group competitive skills. The object of an educational game is the learning or reinforcement of elements of larger educational concepts. As a result, some of the features of “fun games” ought not to be included in learning games unless these are the specific features the teacher is trying to reinforce. For example, pitfalls and penalties such as losing a turn or moving back a space makes some games more interesting and fill a vital life function of child development in learning how to deal with frustration. In the terms of the game, this is perhaps a minor aspect, but it strengthens the ability to deal with life's adversities. However, in the learning or reinforcing educational game negative associations of such reversals (and they are usually arbitrary ones) of fortune can lead to negative transference. The child then associates the learning elements of the game with the frustrations of the penalty. Remember the child is not trying to learn, but to win the board game. It is you, the teacher, who sets up the board game so that learning takes place while the child plays the game. Of course, there are degrees of this frustration and the majority of the children will not likely stop the game solely because of the pitfalls and penalties. But with some younger or immature children or if this is a case of remediation why take the chance? For some children and young adults their frustration threshold is often exceptionally low.

The bonus aspect of the fun-game may also serve little purpose in educational games. Moving ahead three spaces may limit the necessary exposure of the elements being reinforced. Similarly, if the deck or words or math facts contain too many cards, the game will provide only limited exposure of each card during the course of play.

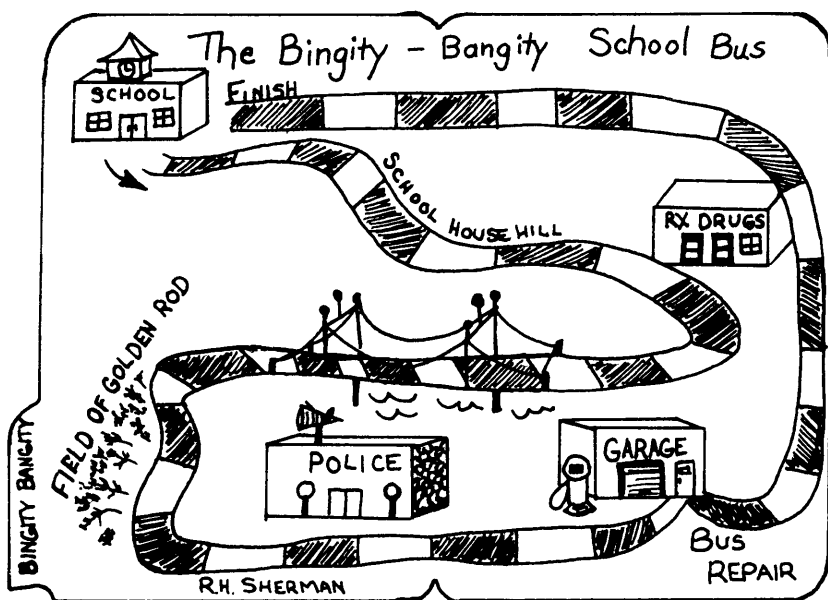
### CREATING THE GAMES ON FILE FOLDERS

While I have developed several file folder games for the elementary grades I taught and watched my students in college methods courses develop some of them perhaps more artistically, there seems to be no reason that the concept be limited to early grades. The secondary school teacher who is cramped for space or may have to travel from room to room with each class can utilize file folder games and carry them in a briefcase or large pocketbook. Learning algebraic formulas or chemistry symbols or even foreign languages can have a good deal of common methodology with youngsters learning to read or do arithmetic.

As long as the teacher or child can cut and paste, the lack of artistic talent need not be a deterrent for constructing file folders. While the best situation stems from the children creating their own folder games since there is added motivation in personalized activities, the teacher should take care that the construction is not so time consuming that it presents an imbalance in proportion to the planned activity.

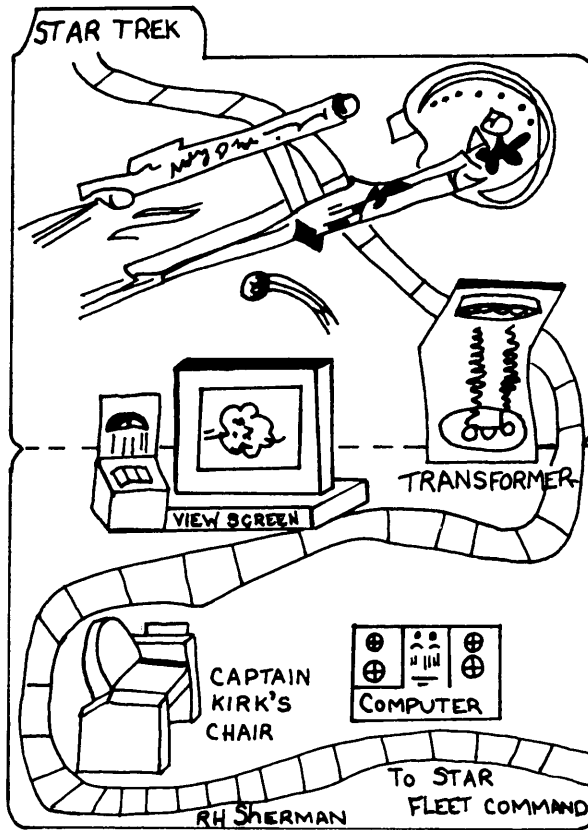
The first key move in constructing the games is to select popular children's (not teacher's) themes from their concrete book and television experiences. Current television favorites are *Star Trek*, the *Fonz*, *The Six Million Dollar Man* and the *Bionic Woman* which are being watched by early elementary and even primary grade youngsters. Some series'

popularity wanes fast and these are good introductory subjects for first file games. Even more concrete experiences from the children's lives can be used if they wish. Children's books read to and by children provide other stimuli which are as diverse as the progression across the file board to meet individually *One Monster After Another* by Mayer, or retracing the route of *The Bingity-Bangity School Bus* by Conkling, or filing behind mother duck as everyone tries to *Make Way For Ducklings* by McKlosky, or to travel through the settings that are in and around *Charlotte's Web* by White, or even travel down the Mississippi after Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn. For social studies The Voyage of the Pilgrims and how to get from my house to school and back provide themes which may integrate the board items and the cards as well.



Whatever grade level and subject choice, the design should not be so elaborate that it completely obscures the learning aspects. Neither should the "journey" across the board be too short, for this limits the reinforcement and too many plays of the game can lead to reduced or total loss of interest. Your own design should not be so elaborate if you are artistically inclined so as to deter children from desiring to create their own games some of which they will make for the class and some for themselves to keep. You will find that the representation of the file game "Star Trek" is simple enough.

The objects that are moved across the board can be consistent with the game subject or can be any other device of the child's choosing. One game was developed directly as a result of a youngster who insisted on bringing his small racing cars to the Reading Lab. The situation was fast becoming a tug-of-war with the child bringing his cars and the teacher trying to hold

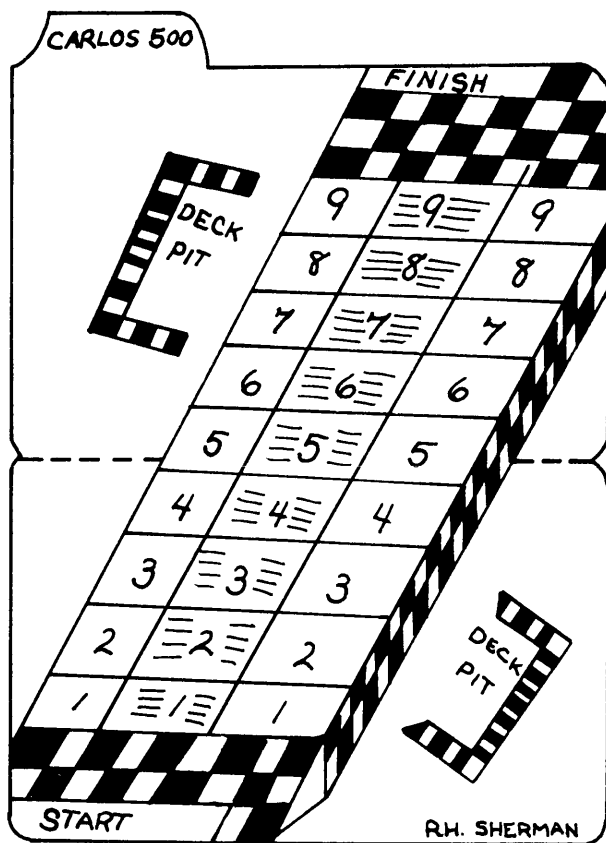


them so that he could pay attention and learn. A file folder was set up with the “Indy 500” which quickly became the “Carlos 500.” The names are another attempt at personalizing instruction wherever possible. In this case the materials were simply a file folder which had been used for something else at the time, some colored magic markers, a ruler, and Carlos’ cars. The game proved too short for his ability and was replaced by the “Carlos Grand Prix” and Carlos knew what all that meant and was now willing to read about races and racing cars.

### RULES FOR THE GAMES

All games have rules; however, the educational games have some rules for teachers as well.

1. If the teacher plays with the child, she should not throw the game and deliberately lose, but should instead balance the competition. After all, teachers are supposed to know the material. To equalize the ability levels, have the child move the object after a correct response to the card. The teacher will move when the child is incorrect, but before play resumes the



teacher will review elements for that card. This is a legitimate opportunity for a teacher and child to compete in a relaxed atmosphere, and while some educators do not advocate competition at all, children still need to learn how to properly compete with adults most of whom maintain a different view of the place of the child. The teacher can and probably will win the early games, but as the game is replayed and the cards in the deck are rotated, the teacher can note that the child is rapidly catching up and can point this out to the child. The teacher must be certain to determine the extent of manipulation allowed under the educational framework. Just as the game should not exceed the educational aspects, so too should the educational thrust avoid cancelling out the game aspects. Above all, the teacher ought not to let the relationship degenerate into "two kids playing a game" and then expect to stand up and be teacher with all the authority implied with being teacher immediately at the end of the game.

2. Manipulation of the game can be achieved both by the number of control cards and difficulty of the control cards. If the teacher is working with an early learner or in a severe remedial situation with the chance that

the teacher is winning too often and by too much of a margin, then some partial credit ought to be allowed. For example, one space forward for a good attempt and two spaces forward for a correct response, but in this instance limit the number of cards in the deck for maximum exposure for each element. Similarly, for a child who seems to be progressing rather rapidly, more cards or cards with more difficulty may be inserted. A timed response may perk up the action and the interest or a flash exposure of material learned also bring some degree of satisfaction with this type of child.

3. If the child is going to play with other children, one or the other must know the correct answers and at this point reinforcement is most probably in its final stage. The child knows the work but perhaps responds slowly or self-corrects and needs no more than a second chance. This is a good opportunity for each child to share the contents of the personalized deck. If either one or both does not know an element in each deck it should be removed temporarily unless the teacher is nearby, for it may lead to reinforcement of an incorrect element. This may make it extremely difficult to correct later on.

4. Be wary of combining too many game aspects. Blind matching as in the game of "Concentration" along with the game board prolongs the interest, but it will also likely go beyond effective learning. Frustration of knowing the correct answer, but not being able to move on your response because of the necessity to find a match may lead to disinterest and dislike both for the game concept as well as in the material being learned.

5. Keep the rules simple and think carefully about altering rules in mid-game. The reality factor operates strongly in educational games. If a rule modification will produce better results, then after everyone in the game has completed that round, change the rules. It is also possible to have different rules to account for different ability levels and children will accept this if it is explained, but take extreme care with this form of handicapped style play. And as in this article, five rules should be more than enough.

As has been mentioned, board games and their relationship to education are not new to the classroom teacher, but avoiding some pitfalls and establishing some fundamental ground rules will make them more successful in their two-fold objective of learning and enjoyment. They are their own reward and a teacher ought to be reticent about supplying prizes at the end of each game, for then the focus shifts from the learning and from the game itself to the prize. This is already two steps beyond the purpose for having educational games on file.



# BUSY PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILDREN BE GOOD READERS

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Busy Parent: "Is there anything I can do at home to help my child be a good reader?"

Primary Teacher: "Yes. There are things you can do."

Busy Parent: "Name some things so I can get started."

Primary Teacher: "Well, you can . . . ."

What do you tell the parents of a primary grade child when they ask this age-old question. "How can I help my child be a good reader?" Or what do you say at the next P.T.A. meeting when your principal calls on you to address this question?

You know that busy parents want easy yet purposeful suggestions that require a minimum of time and effort. They also want specific suggestions instead of the vague ones sometimes offered by teachers. You are aware that the most effective suggestions are the ones that fit right into the family's daily schedules, and that the most appreciated suggestions are those that require little or no monetary expenditure. A child's success or failure as a reader is shaped more by the influence of the home than by the teacher and the materials used at school (Larrick, 1975). So given the strict guidelines of limited time, limited effort, and minimum expense, you may offer busy parents the following suggestions for fostering good readers.

## *1. Do You Know Your A, B, C's?*

Children love to play games. They also like to find letters of the alphabet on highway signs and billboards when in the car traveling to and from school, church, shopping, or when traveling on the weekends. Here's how to play a simple alphabet game. The child looks out of the moving car on one side of the road and the parent looks out on the other side. By looking at billboards and roadsigns, the letters of the alphabet must be observed and spoken out-loud in proper sequence. The object of the game is to try and complete the entire alphabet before the opponent does. The appearance of a previously agreed upon type of car (red convertible, yellow Volkswagen, etc.) causes the player on which side it appears to lose all the letters he has observed and he must begin again with the letter "A."

If two children want to play, they can play without a parent. The parent can still participate by becoming the monitor. Don't be surprised, however, if you find yourself searching the billboards and roadsigns too. What good practice this alphabet game gives in being observant, paying attention to details and, most important, recognizing the letters of the alphabet. And what fun it is to try and find road signs with the letters "X" and "Z"!

## 2. *It Sounds Like Fun.*

A child's success in reading is largely dependent on his knowledge of individual letter sounds and the ability to discriminate between these sounds. In order to reinforce what is learned in school about letters and the sounds they stand for, why not play another simple game—a phonics game (Mountain, 1970). This game requires no special materials and can be played at almost any time or place. Say, "I'm thinking of a word that starts with the sound /m/. Guess what it is." Or say, "I see something in the room that begins with the sound /d/. What is it?" The child must use his knowledge of letter sounds in order to answer.

After the child has learned to play this phonics game, vary the game by saying, "I see something in the room that begins with the letter D," or whatever letter you choose to use, this time naming only the letter and not the sound. This requires the child to supply the letter sound himself. After you have played the game this way, vary it again by using ending and middle letters and sounds instead of beginning letters and sounds. However you play it, the child can't lose because he is receiving excellent reinforcement of phonics skills and is having fun doing it.

## 3. *The Library of All Places.*

It almost goes without saying that to be a good reader you have to read. And in order to read you have to have books. But with the price of books going sky-high, it's nice to know there's a place nearby where books are free for the borrowing—the local public library. Take advantage of this handy resource and stock your home with plenty of good books, (Knudson, 1970).

There is usually no limit on the number of books you can check out at one time. This permits your child to check out many books and once he is home with them, help him place the books at various locations throughout the house so that no matter where your child might be in the house, a book is within arm's reach for a few moments, or hours, of reading. Regular trips to the library will also insure that books are changed frequently.

Once books have been selected, perhaps with the help of the children's librarian, schedule enough time during the library visit for a free-reading period. The impact of being in the presence of a room of people reading, young and old alike, can make quite an impression on a young reader. As he begins to feel comfortable and at-home in the library and is acquainted with the children's librarian, he will look forward to regular visits there. A trip to the library may begin to take precedence over a trip to the local toy store or ice cream parlor.

## 4. *Get Down on Your Knees.*

Clever display of books is as important in reading as advertising is in selling a product. Advertisers use attractive display techniques and encourage people to buy their products by using eye-level displays and attractive arrangement of items for sale. You too can use similar techniques in order to sell your child on the idea of reading.

Begin your advertising campaign by getting down on your knees. Now you see from your child's point of view and are in a better position to survey your home for potential book centers. If present arrangement of the room

doesn't permit the creation of such a center, perhaps you will want to consider rearranging the room in order to provide the necessary space. Books can be attractively displayed on an eye-level bookshelf, table, or desk. Featuring several different books in the center each week may be just the marketing strategy you're looking for.

You will also want to make books readily available in other rooms of the house. Magazine racks and wicker baskets always provide attractive containers for books. One mother displays her child's books in a saucer-shaped, brass bowl. An antique washstand serves another home as an inviting book center. Drawers that once held wash cloths, towels, soap, and other toiletries now contain books, paper, crayons, and other items of interest to a young reader. One concerned father displays colorful books around, and on top of, the family television set in hopes that his children will select one of the books to read instead of turning on the television set. As you survey your home, on bended knees, look for original containers and locations in which to present books.

The preceding suggestions describe ways busy parents can help their primary grade children be good readers. Each suggestion requires a minimum of time and effort from parents by capitalizing on readily accessible resources such as highway billboards and roadsigns and the local public library. These suggestions are popular because children enjoy participating in games and activities that provide together time with their parents. This together time that is so important to a good parent-child relationship may be an added incentive for busy parents who want to make the most of the time they have with their children. Therefore, these suggestions do more than just foster good readers. They also encourage good relationships between parents and children. Busy parents will be doubly grateful for these helpful suggestions.

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# ADULT READING PLANS: ENJOYMENT, ENRICHMENT AND INQUIRY

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Purposeful reading can ennoble and expand any person's life and serve as a constant problem-solving device. Most adult Americans, however, do not read either regularly or purposefully. Book sales are higher than ever but only ten percent of the population reads eighty percent of the books. Robert Karlin, in *Teaching Reading in High School*, cites a poll of adults which reveals that 79 percent "had not read a book within the past month."

Although many adults realize that vocational competence—"keeping up" and "getting ahead" on the job—requires reading, too many of us fail to turn to reading for other needs. Thousands of perplexing questions face us as consumers and voters. Retirement, use of leisure time, and the search for meaning also present problems or the need for knowledge. Reading can provide answers and unlimited enjoyment.

## *Consumerism*

Health, safety, and pocketbooks are often at stake as we make choices in a marketplace which has become a jungle of products and services. The government attempts to protect the consumer with a host of regulations. Can we expect the state—in a free society—to shield us from the cradle to the mortuary? We must learn more about the products and services we buy.

Libraries, bookstores, and newsstands overflow with consumer literature concerning nutrition, taxes, insurance, housing, the automotive industry, appliances, and so forth. Market magazines such as *Consumer Reports* give the pros and cons of specific products with brand names usually included. General interest publications offer many "how-to-choose-it" articles and, ironically, "how-to-fix-it" advice. Books on marketing in general abound: Vance Packard's *The Hidden Persuaders*, McKay, 1957, is a basic for those who would understand advertising and its effects upon us.

Government agencies publish a wealth of free or inexpensive brochures about everything from keeping the basement dry to selecting amiable pets. A request sent to the Consumer Information Center, Pueblo, Colorado 81009, will bring a lengthy list of selections and an order form.

Consumer knowledge doesn't require a lifetime of study to begin to pay. Bits and pieces of information—gathered as needs arise or are foreseen—soon add up to responsible and money-saving action.

## *Government*

Two centuries ago Benjamin Franklin was stopped as he left a meeting

at Carpenter's Hall, Philadelphia, and asked what kind of government the new nation would have. "A republic," he replied, adding, "if you can keep it."

The warning is no less meaningful 200 years later. It is the freedom of speech and the free flow of information that preserves our society and other freedoms. The Founding Fathers safeguarded this basic freedom (which includes the right to read what we choose) through the First Amendment to the Bill of Rights. The Supreme Court has called the First Amendment "the master matrix of liberties."

We must be aware of issues and events in order to "keep" Franklin's republic—knowledge must precede action at the ballot box or in the political sphere. Many of us, however, receive too little news; we rely too heavily on encapsulated broadcast news. Newspapers and magazines offer broader and more in-depth coverage of events.

Often, however, we have difficulty interpreting the news. Understanding what we read in newspapers must begin with the use of critical reading skills, the basis of which is the separation of fact from opinion. Too many of us believe that anything in print is a fact. We fail to examine who wrote it, who said it before that, and their motivations, if any. As one experienced newsman put it, "The validity of any news story is its source." It is only through sharpening our ability to "read between the lines"—critical reading—that rhetoric can be weeded from reality.

Many people suffer from a basic misconception about the meaning and nature of news itself. Many readers become discouraged, fearful, and disgusted when all the news is bad. We fail to remember that, in most instances, good news is not news. "The news is not the norm," explained an editor. "The news is the odd and the unusual, and most of the time good things are the normal occurrences." He added that he'd hate to live in a world in which the reverse was true: Headlines might read, "*No Children Kidnapped Today.*"

Basically, newspapers give us immediate history, what newsmen call the "Four W's": What happened, Who made it happen, Where it happened, and Why it happened. As we learn to read newspapers, we can begin to speculate about the future, or what *might* happen. It is then that we can turn our critical reading into power by defining our individual part—our action—in preserving Franklin's republic.

### *Retirement*

Old age is no longer defined by decrepitude. As life expectancy grows, the length of service in the labor market is shortened. We are being asked, feeble or not, to step down earlier and earlier to make room for the young. Many government agencies offer retirement after twenty years of work; retirees in their forties are not unusual. Young adults can expect to spend more time out of the "mainstream" than in it.

Few want to "sit on the shelf," and yet few plan for later years. Purposeful reading can be used to map out the future or to fill it. General suggestions for retirement can be found in such books as Dr. Joseph H. Peck's *Let's Rejoin the Human Race*, Prentice-Hall, 1963.

Many have developed hobbies into second vocations through reading and practice. A local dentist with an interest in furniture refinishing opened a small garage-type shop upon retiring; he said that he found *Restoring Junk* by Suzanne Beedell, McDonald, 1971, both useful and amusing. Help with such undertakings is as close as the library: Texts like *Resources for the Aging, An Action Handbook*, published by the Office of Economic Opportunity, give sources for loans and other aid.

Travel—planned by many for their later years—can take on greater meaning and enjoyment through prior reading. General travel books such as *Mexico*, Rand McNally, 1969, will insure that the most interesting sites are put on a trip itinerary. Fiction or biography set in other countries, however, can make a new culture more understandable. Elizabeth B. Trevino, for example, describes the customs and traditions she encountered when she married a Mexican in *My Heart Lies South*, Crowell, 1953.

Reading and learning in themselves can fill years that might easily become a time for stagnation. Everyone has some interest that could be pursued, and many universities offer reduced-price tuition to older persons. Stay-at-homes or those planning for the future might consider correspondence study: The National University Extension Association prints a complete list of accredited programs in *The Guide to Independent Study Through Correspondence Instruction*, available at One Dupont Circle, Washington, D.C.

### *Leisure*

The eight-hour day is the shortest in history, and experiments with the length of the work week are providing even longer periods of free time. Self-improvement courses and books proliferate as we attempt to fill our leisure hours both pleasantly and constructively. Books such as Maxwell Maltz's *Creative Living for Today*, Essandress, 1976, offer positive suggestions. Bookworms have no problems: Reading is not only enjoyable in itself but a door into new or expanded undertakings. And, thanks to Benjamin Franklin's "invention" of the public library, reading is the least expensive leisure activity around. It's free.

Any interest can be enriched through reading. Sports fans might be weaned from their televisions with Lee Allen's *The National League Story*, Hill, 1965. Crossword puzzle addicts, for example, will find the beginnings of their "sport" detailed in Roger Millington's *Crossword Puzzles, Their History and Their Cult*, Pocket Books, 1977. Special-interest magazines are almost without number; there's even one for people who like spotted horses: *Appaloosa News*, Box 403, Moscow, Idaho.

Those who enjoy crafts or hobbies will find their pursuits and skills growing as they read about them. Lynn and Joel Rapp tell how to *Grow with Your Plants*, Bantam, 1976. Wood sculptors can carve out leisure time and find new ideas in *Ben Hunt's Whittling*, Bruce, 1959. Many of these books make pleasant reading even if one is not involved in the specific pursuit.

Pleasure reading *per se* is often the last time-filler on most people's list of leisure activities. Many of us fail to look for reading material that relates

to our interests or problems. Related to our own unique concerns, reading becomes as fascinating—or more so—than a television show or a movie.

Like Victorian grandmothers, some people condemn the reading of fiction as a non-constructive activity. Even less-than-classic novels and short stories offer something. In the science-fiction series, *Nebula Award Stories*, for example, (Berkley) editors such as Isaac Asimov discuss the scientific basis of the tales. A noted scientist and writer himself, Asimov says that his interest in science began when he read “pulp” magazines that brought frowns from his elders.

Taste in fiction is said to grow as we read more and more of it and become more and more adept at judging the reality of the settings, characters, and plots. Fiction is an art, of course, and the reading of it is a hobby akin to visiting picture galleries or going to concerts. Reading “classic” fiction needs no defending: Probing individual authors or periods of writing can become an art in itself.

### *Personal Meaning*

Millions are troubled and seeking meaning in their lives. Reading can help. Fiction gives us characters, problems, and value systems to consider, to accept or reject. Relating these ideas to our own lives and problems—bibliotherapy—can help us see and know ourselves. In addition to triggering introspection, reading is a relaxing activity. Those seeking structured solutions or discussions of the problems that seem to face us all might profit from modern philosophers such as Erich Fromm, whose book *Man for Himself*, Fawcett, 1947, attempts to explain existence in up-to-date terms.

### *Why Don't We Read?*

The answers to many of the questions we ask as adults can be approached—if not completely found—through purposeful reading. And yet most adults continue to leave the handiest and most pleasant source of enlightenment—books—untouched. Why?

Unfortunately, many of us were “turned off” in school by being forced literature that was above our instructional and maturational levels. Reading for personal meaning was not stressed. Solving individual problems or answering our own questions through books was overlooked.

Print saturation—“Too Much Too Fast”—afflicted us in high school and college. We came to believe we could learn all there was to know about Shakespeare or geology in one or two semesters. Overdependence on the vocational necessities of higher education led us to forget the value of a liberal arts education, and we never learned that reading—which is its foundation—is a lifetime pursuit.

First and foremost, we forgot that reading is “fun.” We put that fundamental in the attic and let it grow dusty along with other childish things such as the insatiable curiosity and wonder of youth that makes reading so rewarding.

### *What Should We Read?*

Reading matter should be chosen for *pleasure*. A second criterion might

be problem-solving. If the two mix, so much the better. Either way, we'll be motivated to dip into our book selections.

Dutiful or medicinal attitudes toward reading should be forgotten while we give away all those books someone else said we **SHOULD** read. Sets of *The Harvard Classics* or poetry anthologies received as gifts make handsome decorative objects but they are rarely read, regardless of their worth. Most of us have too many duties to turn reading into one of them. Books chosen that bore or fail to live up to their covers should also be abandoned: One of the least lauded prerogatives of adulthood is the freedom not to finish "the whole thing."

There are books that exist that purport to be "reading plans" and will tell us at least 500 titles that every "educated" person should read. The mere length of such lists would discourage most people. It is best to follow our natural interests, pleasures, and problems in selecting reading material and forming a loose reading plan.

Habits, the behaviorists say, are built on the positive reinforcement which follows the directed action. In other words, if we make books a source of enjoyment, we'll continue to read more of them. Purposeful reading builds upon itself and will become even more purposeful or specific as it grows. One reader, for example, might begin by looking for interesting books about history and then find himself specializing at a later date in a particular period.

Reading with purpose shapes our lives and experiences. We must use actual experience in order to read at all. Basic concepts such as color, sound, and smell must begin with reality, and they are built from early childhood. As we read we broaden these concepts, coloring them and giving them individual connotations or meanings from our own lives and our reading. A novel read by 1,000 persons is 1,000 somewhat different and separate experiences. At some point, reading and reality merge: What we read shapes our expectations and our actions; reality—what we experience determines our choice of reading matter.

#### *An Individual Choice*

Just as each of us is completely unique as a person, each of our reading plans or choice of books will be different and individually our own. One man's "poison" may be another man's joy. A staid high school principal, for example, read everything he could find about tiger hunting in India. A bat flew out of my attic one day, and "bat" went on my reading list. Silly? Perhaps. I found myself traveling from the encyclopedia entry on "bats" to Darwin's *Voyage of the Beagle* as an interest in animal behavior grew. Although Darwin is on many of those forbidding lists of "must" reading, I would never have taken him up if I had not "followed my own nose."

There is an accidental and mysterious nature to reading that is not unlike natural selection. A mis-shelved book—a biography found in the fiction, for example—can spark a new interest. A quote in one book can lead to a new author. As interests and problems change, reading plans change. The excitement of the "hunt" also enters into it as we seek special or hard-to-find materials through book clubs, university libraries (most



offer special cards for non-students), and inter-library loan. The latter will bring any book or piece of written material IN THE NATION right to your local library.

Anyone can begin purposeful reading and form a loose plan for it by setting the very limited goal of providing himself with plenty of reading material that is truly INTERESTING TO HIM. The only action necessary is a trip to the library every so often, occasional bookstore and newsstand browsing, and one small notebook. The notebook is for jotting down ideas, authors, titles, and questions as they arise and before they are forgotten.

Many people find it interesting to pursue several subjects at once, selecting one or two novels, a hobby book, and something pertaining to another interest or problem. With such a start, reading WILL GROW. Such a start IS a purposeful reading plan.

# A SURVEY OF THE USE OF READING READINESS TESTS

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Reading readiness tests generally are intended to serve two purposes: (1) prediction of readiness for reading instruction and, to a degree, (2) diagnosis of deficiencies of specific skills that are prerequisites for reading. How successful are these tests in serving their purposes?

## Prediction of Readiness for Reading Instruction

The authors of readiness tests don't try to answer directly the question of how well their readiness test predicts readiness for reading instruction. Instead they report correlations between performance on their reading readiness test given in the fall of first grade with performance on reading achievement tests given in the spring of first grade. The assumption is made that pupils achieving low in spring were the ones who had poor prereading skills the previous fall. Thus if the fall readiness scores correlate well with the spring achievement scores, the readiness test authors assume that their test is probably properly identifying the low-skill pupils in the fall.

Performances on readiness tests do correlate well with performances on reading achievement tests. The authors of the *Metropolitan Readiness Tests* (MRT) report correlations ranging from .58 to .73 between total performance on the MRT and performance on the *Metropolitan Achievement Test* (MAT) at the end of first grade. The authors of the *Clymer-Barrett Prereading Battery* (CBPB) report correlations ranging from .49 to .69 between total test scores on the CBPB and subtest scores on the MAT at the end of first grade. A review of the manuals of the major reading readiness tests reveals that the correlations reported above are typical.

However, even very high correlations between performance on readiness tests in the fall and performance on reading achievement tests in the spring would not be evidence that readiness tests predicted preparedness for reading instruction. According to Calfee and Venezky (1968):

A child's ability to name the letters of the alphabet or the kindergarten teacher's rating are both reliable predictors [of reading achievement]. Correlation continues to resist any efforts to be equated with causality, however. By the end of first grade, most children have learned to identify the letters of the alphabet, but many have not become satisfactory readers. Children who are not able to handle phonetic discrimination or segmentation are also likely to be poor readers. The conclusion has been drawn that such children must be taught to listen more carefully to what they hear and say. Yet pilot studies in this laboratory and the experience of

teachers with whom the writers have spoken suggest that it is difficult to explain phonetic segmentation to a child until he learns to read. (p. 102)

Isn't it likely that the children who know their letters in the beginning of first grade come from homes that stress education? For the sake of making a point, let us say that having parents who stress education is a causal factor of reading success. Those children who had parents who stressed education would have learned their letters by the time they entered first grade. However, teaching the alphabet to a kindergarten child whose parents did not care about education would not cause that child to become a reading success.

Furthermore, there is the complication of the self-fulfilling prophecy. Rosenthal and Evans (1969) suggest the possibility that teacher expectancy affects such student motivational components of performance as perseverance, independence, and feelings of competence.

#### Diagnosis of Deficiencies of Prerequisite Skills

Besides having the purpose of prediction of preparedness for reading instruction, readiness tests generally are intended to be used to some degree for diagnostic purposes. Most readiness tests have several subtests, each of which is designed to test a separate skill. (However, typically, readiness test authors discourage users from relying on subtest scores.) Nevertheless, there is no evidence that subtests on readiness tests are testing separate skills. On the contrary, Calfee and Venezky (1968) posit that readiness tests are actually testing two general factors, the ability to follow instructions and general language competence.

There is evidence for the claim that readiness tests are not testing independent factors. In their report on first grade reading instruction, Bond and Dykstra (1967) gave a comprehensive set of subtest intercorrelations for the *Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis* (MDRRA). The phonemes subtest correlated .52 with the letter names subtest and .42 with the learning rate subtest; the letter names subtest correlated .31 with the learning rate subtest. The mean of these subtest intercorrelations (.42) is nearly as high as the mean of the correlations between the subtests of the MDRRA given in the fall of first grade with the subtests of the *Stanford Reading Achievement Test* given in the spring (.48).

One cannot make logically the following two claims simultaneously:

- (1) A correlation of .5 between readiness test performance in the fall and reading achievement test performance in the spring indicates valid functioning of a readiness test.
- (2) Even though the mean intercorrelation between subtests on a readiness test is .5, these subtests are measuring independent factors.

Yet readiness test authors, either explicitly or implicitly, are making similar contradictory claims.

There is another way of determining whether independent skills are

being measured by the various subtests on readiness tests. Presumably the Listening Subtest on the MRT and the Phonemes Subtest on the MDRRA are testing the same factor, i.e., auditory discrimination. These two subtests correlate .42 or .61 with correction for attenuation. Yet the Alphabet Subtest of the MRT and the Phonemes Subtest of the MDRRA, which presumably are testing different skills, correlate equally as well, i.e., .41 or .58 with correction for attenuation (Calfee & Venezky, 1968, pp. 95-96). In view of this evidence, it is fair to suggest that the subtests of various readiness tests are not measuring independent factors.

#### A Survey on Readiness Tests

In view of the reservations about reading readiness tests held by many authorities, this investigator considered it important to determine how extensively and for what purposes readiness tests are being used. Therefore, in March and April of 1975, a survey on readiness tests was conducted. The questions on the survey form reflected the concerns of Calfee and Venezky (1968) and Bond and Dykstra (1967). The survey form was designed by this investigator and later revised according to the suggestions of a number of reviewers. The revised survey form was sent to a stratified random sample of fifteen school districts from ten counties in New York State. The sample included districts of varying socioeconomic levels from rural, suburban, and urban areas. Respondents were reading coordinators, reading directors, reading teachers, and, in one case, a building principal. In all cases the respondent was the person assumed to have the greatest familiarity with the over-all reading program at the primary level. There was a 100% return of the survey forms.

Respondents were asked whether readiness tests were used in their districts. If the district used a readiness test, respondents were asked the names of the tests and the purposes for which the tests were used. Respondents were also asked how satisfied they were with their reading readiness screening procedures.

Of the 15 districts sampled, 13 of them used at least 1 readiness test: 5 districts used 4 tests; 3 districts used 3 tests; 1 district used 2 tests and; 4 districts used 1 test. The test named most often was the MRT (named by 8 respondents) followed by the *Gates-MacGinitie Readiness Tests* (named by 4 respondents). Altogether 73% of the respondents for these 13 districts were either totally satisfied or satisfied in the major aspects of their districts' readiness screening procedures.

Of the 13 districts that used readiness tests, all of them used the tests as one indication of preparedness for reading instruction. Respondents from 8 of the districts reported extensive or regular use of the tests to establish a cut-off point. (That is to say, children scoring below a particular point would not be given reading instruction but would be given readiness training instead.) Additionally, 9 of the respondents reported extensive or regular use of the tests for diagnosing specific skill weaknesses, a practice at variance with the stated purposes of most readiness tests. For example, in the manual for the MRT, the use of sub-tests for diagnostic purposes is discouraged. Yet of the 8 districts that used the MRT, 6 of them used it

extensively or regularly for the purpose of diagnosing specific skill weaknesses.

The data presented here suggest that readiness tests are used extensively, and that in the majority of the districts that use readiness tests, the tests are being used for the purpose of establishing a cut-off point. Calfee and Venezky (1968) would object to using readiness tests for this purpose. Their position is that it is sad that "readiness test information can be used only to delay the beginning of reading instruction by intervention of 'readiness' activities" (p. 104). MacGinitie (1969) would claim that the wrong question is being asked. He suggested that the question "What and how is the child ready to learn?" be asked rather than the question, "Is the child ready to learn to read?"

The data from this survey suggest that the majority of districts that use readiness tests may be using them extensively or regularly for the purpose of diagnosing specific skill weaknesses. Thus the majority of districts that use readiness tests may be using them inappropriately with respect to the stated purposes in the manuals.

Evidence about readiness tests needs to be disseminated among the users of these tests. The data from this survey suggest that readiness tests are being misused, even with respect to the stated purposes in the manuals. Furthermore, it is not clear that readiness tests are achieving even their stated purposes. Those who teach reading readiness should be informed about the evidence regarding readiness tests and should exercise caution in regard to interpreting readiness test scores.

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<sup>1</sup>However, it should be noted that intelligence quotients correlate about as well as readiness test scores correlate with reading achievement test scores.

# EXPANDING THE READING INTERESTS OF SECONDARY STUDENTS

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All students encounter various required reading assignments during the course of a school day in the different content areas. The adolescent's attention is also directed to hundreds of other pieces of reading matter which may not be recommended or suggested by teachers or parents. Some students at both the high school and university levels contend that they have no available time for engaging in wide reading since required reading and school activities consume most of their study and leisure-time hours.

Despite these conditions, every teacher can, and must, assume responsibility for extending the reading interests of their students in regard to the content area being studied. This article is designed to provide numerous practical suggestions for every secondary teacher in achieving the goal of wide reading for all students. To fulfill this objective the following topics are discussed: evaluating reading interests of students; building reading incentives; and making book reviews profitable and useful.

## *Evaluating Reading Interests of Students*

The types and kinds of adolescent reading interests appear to be somewhat varied based on age, sociological and educational background, and geographic location. The research to date regarding this phase of literature has not been extensive; however, a few well designed studies have been conducted during the past twenty years. Regarding these studies, Olson and Ames comment:<sup>1</sup>

It should be noted that the research regarding adolescent reading interests and tastes is far from complete. At times the data seem to present conflicting information, but the research techniques have been so crude that the results may reflect more technical problems than actual differences in tastes and interests. Some studies have dealt with choices of specific books, some with expressed likes for certain topics, and some with what teachers thought about their students' interests and tastes.

There have been a number of interesting studies devoted to finding data and formulating conclusions regarding reading interests of adolescents. One of the most important investigations was conducted by Norvell<sup>2</sup> in 1950 and involved more than 50,000 students and 625 teachers. Some of his findings were 1) girls liked many of the books normally chosen by boys, whereas not many boys chose books which are favorites of girls, and 2) basic book choices were fairly uniform by sex regardless of the intelligence levels of the subjects or the reading level difficulty of the books.

Questions such as the following have proved to be valuable. (Schubert, 1975)

1. If you had three wishes which might come true, what would you wish for?
2. Are you afraid of anything? If so, what?
3. What things do you worry about?
4. What bothers you?
5. What don't you like about yourself?

Questions 3, 4, 5 would be especially valuable in eliciting written responses from older students.

### *Values of Bibliotherapy*

According to various authorities, the values of bibliotherapy include:

1. The opportunity to learn to know one's self better.
2. To aid in the understanding of human behavior.
3. To find interest outside the self.
4. To contribute to the socialization of the individual.
  - a. to reinforce socially accepted modes of behavior
  - b. to clarify and strengthen the individual's concept of his own rôle in society.

In the secondary school, the values of bibliotherapy include:

1. Teaching the apathetic the love of reading.
2. Satisfying adolescent emotional and psychological needs.
3. Throwing light on the problems of adolescent individuals.
4. Exploring the teenager's relationship with the community.
5. Leading pupils toward adult reading.

### *Limitations of Bibliotherapy*

1. There must be a permissive environment with no pressure to show results or to report on books if bibliotherapy is to operate successfully. (Russell and Veatch).
2. A wide variety of reading materials of varying levels must be available.
3. On the psychological side, tensions and anxieties of the reader may block or distort the expected constructive identification.
4. The therapeutic process may be halted for lack of social or emotional experiences on the part of the reader.
5. The attitudes and ideas gained from books must be supported by the school and the community influences or must appeal to some felt need of the individual.
6. The use of inappropriate materials may prolong dependency and immaturity in the individual, rather than be beneficial to him. Postel warns of this result in relation to upper grade retarded individuals reading inappropriate primary materials.
7. Reading success is prerequisite to personal benefit from bibliotherapy.

### *Teacher Competence*

According to Spache (1974) psychologists and psychiatrists differ tremendously in relation to the competence of teachers and others to

engage in bibliotherapy. Russell and Shrodes feel that teachers may proceed with caution once they have attained a wide knowledge of books, and a broad and deep understanding of children, adolescents, and also the troubled adolescent. It will be necessary for them also to have knowledge of reinforcement principles, before and after bibliotherapy.

Spache (1974) believes the question to be answered by the fact that teachers are and have been carrying on a successful form of bibliotherapy since the beginning of time.

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# BIBLIOGRAPHY: SOLVING PROBLEMS THROUGH READING

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Although bibliotherapy has been known and practiced since ancient times, the term itself is of more recent origin. It is generally credited to Samuel McChord Crothers in an article in *Atlantic Monthly* in 1916. Shrodes (1955) has defined bibliotherapy as "a process of dynamic interaction between the personality of the reader and imaginative literature which may engage his emotions and free them for conscious and productive use." The Association of Hospital and Institution Libraries has adopted as official the dictionary definition which reads . . . "guidance in the solution of personal problems through directed reading." Simply stated bibliotherapy is helping students to help themselves solve their problems through reading.

## *Dynamics of Bibliotherapy*

Just how does bibliotherapy work? What mechanisms are involved?

Russell and Shrodes (1950) have suggested that bibliotherapy like psychotherapy involves three mechanisms: identification, catharsis, and insight.

Once a reader recognizes a character in a story or book with whom he can identify (depending on the readers' experiences, attitudes, values, desires, and needs), the process expands. According to Spache, the reader then experiences catharsis—an emotional sharing of feelings and motivations of the character in the book or story being read. Finally, insight takes place when the reader realizes that he can make a more satisfactory adjustment to life or can solve his difficulties by adapting or imitating the actions of the character whose problems are comparable to his own. For example: "He's like me"—"Gee, I feel the same as he does"—"I can do it just like he did it."

## *Bibliotherapy For Whom?*

Schubert (1975) believes bibliotherapy can be used successfully with any age and grade level; "as soon as a child can read, he is amenable to bibliotherapy" . . . "it is particularly suitable for gifted children because these children are often voracious readers who may need help in their social relations. (Strang, Checovitz, Gilbert, and Scoggin, 1944.) In addition bibliotherapy is of benefit to the socially disadvantaged reader.

## *Bibliotherapy In The Classroom*

A teacher can learn about the kinds of problems a pupil faces by the use of interest inventories, observations, interviews, and discussion.

During the recent past much speculation has arisen regarding the amount of influence that teachers, parents, and librarians have on the teenager's choice of books. The Leafe<sup>3</sup> and Johnson<sup>4</sup> studies indicate that these groups have little, if any, influence with respect to adolescents choosing certain books. An additional important conclusion drawn from these studies pointed to the principle that the peak of reading interest occurs during the high school years.

One of the most in-depth studies regarding student reading habits was compiled by Kimmel<sup>5</sup> in Bellevue, Nebraska. Her study of 140 ninth grade boys yielded the following data:

1. The average number of books read per month was two.
2. Magazines, newspapers, and fiction were the three most often read types of reading material.
3. Reading to relax accounted for about one-half of all reasons stated for reading any material.
4. The leading categories for choosing books were in the areas of mystery, animal stories, war, crime, and information.

According to Olson and Ames,<sup>6</sup> several conclusions appear to be valid with regard to adolescent reading interests:

A librarian's study of reading interests of high school students as determined by their choices of books checked out of the library showed that boys read more stories of adventure than anything else. General fiction was second in popularity, and animal stories was third.

Boys read more stories of strenuous adventure, sports, and hobbies than girls. Adventure may be designated as two types—grim physical and milder types. Girls prefer the milder adventure story while boys favor the story involving vigorous physical activities. Girls have a greater preference for adventure combined with love as compared to boys' preference for "straight" adventure. This rejection of love as the theme in any type of literature by boys seems to be standard as shown by findings of different studies. While boys rate other sentiments higher, girls place romantic love first.

There are many methods that can be employed by content teachers to survey the reading interests of students in their classes. Meaningful conversations can be conducted with students relating to questions dealing with such matters as book and magazine choices, amount of reading, and favorite authors. Surveys can also be undertaken which utilize the data regarding the kinds and numbers of books checked out of the school library. The use of a reading interest inventory may be one of the most helpful devices for obtaining information directly from students enrolled in a given teacher's class. The following inventory was constructed by the writer.

Reading Interest Inventory<sup>7</sup>

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

1. List the names of three magazines which you like to read. Put a number 1 beside the magazine which you read the most often.

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2. What is the most important reason why you like the magazine which you marked in No. 1?

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3. Do you read a newspaper every day?      yes      no

If the answer is "yes," check the three parts of the newspaper which you like the best. Put a No. 1 in front of the part of the newspaper that you usually read first. Put a No. 2 in front of the part which you read second.

\_\_\_\_\_ front page news

\_\_\_\_\_ society news

\_\_\_\_\_ sports section

\_\_\_\_\_ editorials

\_\_\_\_\_ comic strips

\_\_\_\_\_ advertisements

\_\_\_\_\_ financial news

\_\_\_\_\_ entertainment and  
movie section

4. Name two or more books which you have read during the past several months.

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5. Which of the following persons do you depend on for suggestions regarding good books to read (Place a No. 1 in front of the individual's name who influences you the most.

\_\_\_\_\_ Parents

\_\_\_\_\_ Church Pastor

\_\_\_\_\_ English teacher

\_\_\_\_\_ Classmates

\_\_\_\_\_ Other teachers

\_\_\_\_\_ Librarian

6. Why do you read a book which has not been assigned by a teacher? Place a check beside the most important reason.

\_\_\_\_\_ to gather information  
for a report or talk

\_\_\_\_\_ because I think it  
will be different  
and exciting

\_\_\_\_\_ to relax

7. Check the kind of movies you like best.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> western          | <input type="checkbox"/> love stories    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> war stories      | <input type="checkbox"/> sad pictures    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> cartoons         | <input type="checkbox"/> adventures      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> murder thrillers | <input type="checkbox"/> travel pictures |

8. The following is a list of books which are available in our library. As a personal choice, check the names of three of the books which you would like to read most. Remember: these are not assigned—you should choose them because you think you might like to read them.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heroes of World War II              | <input type="checkbox"/> Heroes of Science          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> America's Preacher:<br>Billy Graham | <input type="checkbox"/> Exploring Amazon Jungles   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dick Jones, Fullback                | <input type="checkbox"/> The Vanishing Ghost        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Upward to the Stars                 | <input type="checkbox"/> The Best of Shakespeare    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Famous Bank Robberies               | <input type="checkbox"/> How to Repair Dune Buggies |
| <input type="checkbox"/> A Night of Horror                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Smith of the State Police  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> How to Take Good Pictures           | <input type="checkbox"/> 1001 Things You Can Make   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> The Road to Peace                   | <input type="checkbox"/> How to Study Effectively   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bob Gibson's Own Story              | <input type="checkbox"/> Improve Your Personality   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Wild Animals and Their<br>Habits    | <input type="checkbox"/> The Drug Menace            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take Care of Your Heart             | <input type="checkbox"/> The Making of a President  |

9. In three or four sentences, tell why you chose the three books which you checked in No. 8.

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10. List the names of three or four of your favorite TV shows.

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The results of this inventory can be studied carefully and the data employed in the selection of materials and techniques which will stimulate interest in reading for information and enjoyment in all content areas. Additional responses may be elicited through oral discussions and interviews.

*Building Reading Incentives*

Wide reading will occur on the part of many students if sufficient motivation is provided by innovative teachers. The fear of making an unsatisfactory grade on a test is *not* a sufficient reason for all students to read. Some of them don't worry about their grades. They need to develop other reasons for wanting to read assignments, books, articles, and magazines.

Most high school students want to achieve—few, if any, really want to fail. If a teacher makes the decision that a learner apparently wants to fail, a careful study must be made relating to the conditions which caused this attitude to exist. Social acceptance is a decided motivation for reading on the part of many learners. Marksheffel<sup>8</sup> makes the following observation:

The desire to learn to read is prevalent among most children who enter school. They want to learn to read because learning to read is the socially accepted expectation. Children's parents, relatives, and friends expect youngsters to read, and when children demonstrate that they can pronounce written words and get meaning from them, they are rewarded for their achievement. The reward may vary from a pat on the head or an approving smile to loving praise from mother or a dime from Uncle John. Regardless of the kind of reward, the important factor is that a reward has been given. The reader has achieved success. His achievement has been noted. His self-esteem has been elevated.

Every teacher should have a system of rewards whereby all students can feel a measure of success in their reading efforts. Favorable remarks (both written and oral) should be extended for those reading skills which a given learner *does* demonstrate. As additional lessons aid the development of deficient skills, learners should draw the conclusion that reading *can* be a rewarding, successful and pleasurable experience. In other words, *success breeds success*. It is important for all teachers to demonstrate to students that they are slowly but surely improving their levels of reading achievement.

If students are to be motivated to read they *must* be given reading assignments which are at the instructional reading levels of the affected learners. (The instructional level is that reading level where the student can pronounce correctly at least 95 percent of the words and comprehend at least 75% of the material when it is read silently.) All reading tasks must be capable of being accomplished. Too many students are discouraged about the reading process because they are asked to read materials which are too difficult for them. In other words, no one can be motivated to do anything if he or she cannot cope with the responsibility.

Many adolescents are motivated to read if they are given *time* to read materials of *their* choice. Sometimes students are placed in a class environment where all reading materials are required during a limited period of time. There should be an occasional period of time devoted to unin-

errupted sustained silent reading of materials which are freely chosen. Despite the feelings of some teachers, adolescents will read materials even though they are *not* required.

There are many commercial reading materials available which are especially motivating for many students. Included in this list would be *Venture* (Follett); *Action* (Scott, Foresman); *Contemporary Reading Series* (Educational Activities, Inc.); *Impact* (Prentice-Hall, Inc.); *Reluctant Reader Libraries* (Scholastic); *Scope* (Scholastic); and *Young Adventure Series* (Bowmar). These and related materials should be displayed attractively and “advertised” for the students.

### *Making Book Reviews Profitable and Useful*

One of the important by-products of the expansion of reading interests is that of sharing reading experiences with other students. In a few instances, students are asked to write a book report of specified length. Unfortunately this approach may actually have the opposite effect of causing students to dislike reading since a book report is required. There are many innovative alternatives to the traditional book report. Some of these are:

1. Submission of a brief report not to exceed 250 words which would consist of an overview of the story and the reader's reaction to the selection.
2. A panel discussion of the highlights of a book by a group of students who describe various phases of the volume such as the characters, most exciting episode, climax, outcome, and reaction by each member.
3. Preparation of a “teaser” report of perhaps 100 words for the school paper.
4. Oral reading of certain passages from the book which the reviewer feels is exciting and important.
5. Preparation of a video-tape by several class members, at which time various persons give two to three minute reviews of books. The video-tape could be used in several literature classes to build interest in book reading. The project could also be a display during open house of American Education Week.
6. Construction of a bulletin board display where various scenes of books may be depicted. Other “selling” techniques, such as one word sentences, may be included on the bulletin board or in the school paper.
7. Construction of a news story depicting one incident from a book as it might appear in a local paper. Ask the students to choose the most exciting incident.
8. Preparation of a tape recording which would include a brief summary of a book along with appropriate sound effects. The tape could be played for various classes.<sup>9</sup>

### *Summary*

Many secondary teachers are concerned about expanding the reading

interests of their students. There are numerous ways of discovering these interests through the use of interest inventories and other techniques which have been discussed. Different strategies may be employed to motivate students to read. There are several strategies available to teachers for encouraging adolescents to share information regarding stories and books which have been read.

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# A WRITING APPROACH TO HIGH SCHOOL READING

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Many of the problems which are endemic among middle school and senior high school youngsters who have difficulty in learning how to read effectively are overcome in writing workshops. Disabled readers at the secondary level often have a bad attitude toward reading. This attitude stems from their having developed bad self-images during their elementary school years, and these negative self-images are directly connected with their inability to perform at anticipated levels in the basic skills.

When these youngsters reach secondary school, their problems are intensified by a number of factors: (1) they are developing mature interests, yet the reading materials available for use with them are geared to younger, less mature students; (2) materials which approach their normal interest levels tend to be beyond their vocabulary levels; (3) writing that is consistent with their interest levels frequently is expressed in longer sentence units than they can handle with reasonable comprehension; (4) much of the material available to them is written from a cultural bias which is alien to their experience; and (5) they see little importance in and have little desire to read what is available to them.

Most of these problems can be overcome in writing workshops, the normal and natural outcome of which is to have students read each others' work. Most students are eager to read what their classmates have written, so motivation for reading is high in the writing workshop environment.

## *Techniques and Tactics*

Activities for writing workshops are dictated largely by the types of students taking part in them. The possibilities available to the imaginative and creative teacher are virtually limitless.

In working with secondary school students who have reading disabilities, teachers must devise ways of making reading an ancillary rather than a central activity for them. If students are involved in situations in which the compulsion to read is strong and comes from within them, typical motivational problems will cease to exist. Not all of the students' reading problems will disappear; but a major barrier in encouraging reading disabled secondary school students to read — the attitudinal barrier — will be overcome.

An informal situation, in which students can seek help from their classmates rather than from the teacher, should be the aim of the writing workshop which should, in many respects, resemble the composing room of a newspaper. Activity, motion, and healthy noise may be indications that a writing workshop is functioning productively.



Three types of writing experiences that work well with reading disabled secondary school students are “Writing Roulette,” “The Even-Steven Swap Game,” and “The Open-Ended Story with a Slant.” Used in the order suggested here, one leads gracefully toward the other. Writing Roulette is a good technique to use early in a term when students do not know each other well and when the teacher might not yet have gained the kind of control which would allow for group activity. The Even-Steven Swap Game involves group activity for those who want it and permits those who prefer to work alone to do so. It is a more advanced technique than Writing Roulette and demands more controlled skills than the earlier activity. The Open-Ended Story with a Slant is yet more sophisticated. Each activity, while it emphasizes writing, necessitates reading; yet the reading that is demanded is generally engaged in with little or no difficulty largely because typical motivational problems have been overcome and because both the vocabulary and sentence structure are at the students’ level.

### *Writing Roulette*

The sight of a blank page intimidates even some professional writers. It is understandable that a student who has experienced little success in reading and writing quails at the thought of filling an empty page. What he needs to achieve before he pays any attention to matters like conventional spelling, correct punctuation, and standard usage, as important as such matters are, is fluency. He must translate thought patterns into their visual counterparts—words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs.

In Writing Roulette, everyone including the teacher must have a blank sheet of paper and something to write with. The teacher should also have a simple kitchen timer. The instructions are uncomplicated: “When I give the signal, we are all going to write anything we want to for a short period of time. If you cannot think of anything to write about, just select a word that you like—*petunia* or *swordfish* or *jaguar*—and write it over and over again. But whatever you do, KEEP WRITING. DO NOT STOP UNTIL THE BELL RINGS. Begin writing.” The timer should be set for about three minutes. When the bell rings, everyone should stop. If some students are in mid-sentence or mid-word, so be it. Collect the papers and redistribute them. Then give the instructions, “Read what is on the paper you received and begin writing where the first writer left off. Write until the bell rings.” Set the timer for about four minutes.

Ideally, papers will be exchanged three or four times. Students will do quite a bit of reading, although they will not really be aware that they are engaging in a reading exercise as well as in a writing exercise. At the end, as many of the papers should be read aloud as time permits. If teachers wish to take the exercise one step farther, they can ask students on a subsequent day to rewrite the paper to which they were the final contributor, making it as interesting as possible. This will engage the student in working with sophisticated skills related to diction, sentence structure, style, unity, and coherence. Such skills, approached from a writing base, will make students more appreciative and understanding readers.

In the Writing Roulette exercise, it is rare that students elect to write

one word over and over again, even though they are given that option. On those rare occasions that a student writes *petunia* or *jaguar* 75 or 100 times, the second writer will take up and write prose related to the word which has been repeated. And the student who has written a single word repeatedly in the first three minutes, will not continue to do so when the papers have been redistributed.

### *The Even-Steven Swap Game*

This game is best engaged in as a group activity, particularly if the students have difficulty with reading and writing. As a group activity, severely disabled students can participate without having to reveal the extent of their disabilities to anyone. At the oral level, they may contribute significantly and gain the self-confidence which will enable them to make progress in attaining greater proficiency in reading and writing.

The teacher begins this game by saying, "Today we are going to make a swap. I will give you ten words and you will give me a story in which each of the ten words is used. You may work by yourself or with one or two other people. If you do not recognize some of the words on the sheet you receive, either look them up in the dictionary or ask me. At the end of the hour, we will compare what you have written with what other people have written."

The teacher should find a brief newspaper or magazine article which reports an occurrence, usually a mysterious event or an accident or a crime. The teacher should list alphabetically either the ten longest or the ten most difficult words from the selection and mimeograph them. A typical list might contain the following: *fatality, investigated, juvenile, negligence, oncoming, overturned, pedestrians, semi-trailer, vehicle, witnesses.*

As the students grapple with the words, some word attack skills and dictionary skills come into play. If students ask the teacher for a definition, the teacher should pronounce the word and use it in a sentence to see whether anyone can glean the definition from the sound or from contextual clues. The teacher might have students sound a word out syllable by syllable.

Once the students begin writing, they will necessarily read each others' contributions and they will wrestle cooperatively with stylistic problems. They will also deal with matters of unity and coherence.

As the period draws to a close, the teacher should save time so that students can read their initial efforts aloud. At this point, the teacher might pass out a mimeographed copy of the news story from which the ten key words were drawn, so that students can compare what they have written with the actual account as it appears in a newspaper or magazine. Or, if it seems appropriate, the teacher may continue the exercise the following day, getting students to regroup to work on revision and rewriting. In this case, the final writing should be on a ditto master containing the story and the name of each student who has worked on it. The ditto master should be run and copies of the story distributed to everyone in class. It also gives students an ego boost to see their work posted on bulletin boards either within the classroom or about the school. Writing is best done for an audience if it is to have meaning to those who produce it. And once it reaches an audience,

the writing exercise leads directly into a reading exercise of the sort that even the disabled reader stands a good chance of being able to handle.

*The Open-Ended Story with a Slant*

This exercise goes one step beyond the sort of open-ended story which is discussed and completed either through discussion or through writing. In order to carry this exercise out effectively, the teacher must insist that students work alone. No collaboration is to be permitted, for reasons which will soon be apparent.

The teacher should construct a story which is brief, action-packed, and which leads rapidly toward a climax. The story should be typed up and reproduced for distribution to each student. A typical story might be the following:

Version A

It was a windy night in late October. Mary had not wanted to go out alone, but the movie at the Midway was far too good to miss and was to be on for only one night. And, since everyone else had seen the movie the first time it was in town, Mary could find no one who wanted to go along. Now the movie was over and it was ten o'clock. The wind howled. The eight blocks home seemed like 80 miles to Mary. The streets were darker than dark, the trees swayed wildly in the air as the wind nipped away at them, and there was not a light to be seen in any of the houses that Mary passed. Even the traffic light on Elm and Main was not working, a victim of the high winds. And just as Mary turned from Elm onto Main, a man leaped onto the sidewalk from behind a huge oak tree. He blocked Mary's path. Mary's heart pounded wildly and then. . . .

The duplicated story should not be marked *Version A* as the above story is. But the story should exist in two versions, the only difference in the versions being that in Version B, the name of the central character should be Mark. As students work toward their resolutions, some of their sex role biases usually emerge, and this provides an excellent basis for discussion. The completion of the open-ended story should take 20 to 30 minutes. If the students have followed closely the admonition to work independently on their stories, they will be quite surprised at some of the endings their classmates have produced. Typically, when I have used this technique, Mary has fled or been rescued by a brave male who happens onto the scene just in the nick of time. In many of the endings involving Mark, he also fled, but he is equally likely to stay and fight—and, of course, win. In some endings, Mary has fainted, whereas Mark has never done so. In some instances Mary has begged to be spared, but Mark has always either stood his ground or fled with an athletic prowess which would become a red-blooded male.

Any open-ended story which can, in two very similar versions, lead to an ending which reveals to students something about their value systems can be used to good effect in promoting reading instruction, because students in

this situation will be eager to read the endings which their classmates have produced. Also, teachers can suggest readings which deal with value situations similar to the ones in the open-ended stories. If all of this is done in connection with a writing exercise, the reading part of the exercise, which comes of necessity, will be unselfconscious. Students who might find it difficult to read from a book or magazine will find that they can read what other students have written. In classes that are grouped relatively homogeneously, the writing to be read will be at approximately the level of difficulty that students in the class can handle.

#### *Reading and the Secondary Student*

The first task of the secondary school teacher who is dealing with reading disabled students is to work at building self-confidence, at repairing damaged self-images. This cannot be done if teachers insist that high school students do more of the things that they have been failing at for the six or seven years previous to their entering junior high school. If such students are ever to learn how to read competently, they must be exposed to a broad variety of language experiences that engage their interests and imaginations. From these experiences will come the need for them to work on perfecting their language skills.

Few people talk about reading readiness at the secondary level. However, if teachers at that level are dealing with students who are severely handicapped in reading, perhaps to the point of being functionally illiterate, they must work on assessing readiness, on engaging students in activities that will bring them to the brink of needing to read. Until students have a sense of urgency about something they are doing – and there are precious few classroom situations in which such a sense is imparted – they will have little inner drive to read.

# WE SUGGEST

*Eleanor Buelke*

Bruner, Jerome S., Jolly, Alison, and Sylvia, Kathy  
*Play—Its Role in Development and Evolution*  
New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1976. Pp. 716.

School, separated from work which itself has grown difficult to understand, becomes its own world . . . .

How can a system for preparing the immature for entry into the society deal with a future that is increasingly difficult to predict within a single lifetime? . . . .

I would only urge that in considering these deep issues of educability we keep our perspective broad and remember that the human race has a biological past from which we can read lessons for the culture of the present. We cannot adapt to everything, and in designing a way to the future we would do well to examine again what we are and what our limits are. Such a course does not mean opposition to change but, rather, using man's natural modes of adapting to render change both as intelligent and as stable as possible.

"Who would dare study play?" question the editors of this book, indicating that there have been many serious men from varied disciplines and sciences who have tried to do just that. This is not a book for quick, easy perusal or reading. Papers included here have been edited so they may be understood and enjoyed by the general reader, yet contain enough description of research and data analysis for the serious students of animal and human behavior. The volume brings together a body of literature, much of which has appeared in specialized journals, with major emphasis upon the crucial role of play in human child development and its function as a "natural mode of adaptation." Articles in Part I deal with emerging evolutionary trends in the primate order. Part II proceeds with sections that concern play and its relationship to the world of objects and tools. Part III continues with discussions of play and the social world; while Part IV concludes with considerations of how play is related to the world of symbols, and to its civilizing functions. Particularly intriguing are those articles illustrating the rich connection existing between play and human culture and those pointing out the parallelism found in the rule-bound structure on play and the rule-bound structure of language.

Researchers in the area of play behavior have observed that play satisfies certain needs and incentives of children during critical periods of growth toward effective, comfortable living in the social world. These needs and incentives change as children grow. Understanding relationships between the distinctive features of the types of activity called play and the special character of these incentives can aid insight into the socializing, maturing

processes. As writers in this book have described the generalization from their explorations into the nature of play, they have delineated general features and characteristics of play behavior. Some which might be recognizable and helpful in education are:

1. Reduction/neutralization of pressures of goal-directed action, or the "push" to successful completion of an act;
2. Minimizing of consequences of actions, and learning, with much less risk-taking involved;
3. Provision for opportunities to try combinations of behavior that, under functional pressure, would never be tried;
4. Use of rules systems in which cultural restraints are substituted for operation of impulse;
5. Provision for encounters to aid in mastery of language constituents;
6. Engagement in perceptual and intellectual activities for their own sake, not for any biological function that can be clearly recognized;
7. Presence of an emotional element of pleasure;
8. Derivation of satisfaction from the process, rather than from the product;
9. Freedom to notice seemingly irrelevant detail, often a preliminary step to "discovery;" and
10. Voluntary, self-initiated action.

More accurate and ready recognition of the general features of play leads to greater awareness of its essential, unique role in an individual's growth toward potential maturity.

Other implications from discoveries about play could be of vital importance to educational agencies and institutions in development of curriculums and programs that utilize natural modes of adaptation for more intelligent, stable means of changing behavior. Investigations about play reveal that animals with complex forms of adaptation require youthful play to practice a variety of behaviors, to supplement insufficient hereditary endowment. In view of coming life tasks, they require individual experience to deal with situations for which inherited instinct might not be wholly adequate. Because engaging in play provides a temporary moratorium on frustration, it allows for experimentation, and such activity can be sustained over a long period of time. Individuals have opportunity to practice the "unusual" assembly of objects and actions, resulting in organized/flexible problem solving. Their involvement in creating imaginary situations can be regarded as a means of developing abstract thought. In reality, much of the scientific knowledge people use today to master their worlds has arisen from playful activities conducted in a free field, for their own sake.

Further, it has been pointed out that real civilization cannot live in the absence of a certain play element. Play between mother and offspring during the very early years is a prerequisite for the offspring's later interaction with members of its species. Play during later years prepares the individual for competitive and cooperative roles, and for the conventions which govern interaction between members of society. Disruption or denial

of play in childhood leads to abnormal peer reactions, poor control of aggression/inappropriate aggression, and general incompetence in social situations.

In the concluding chapter of the book, Erik Erikson calls the play of children "an infinite resource of what is potential in man." He predicts:

Unless his gifts and his society have on each step provided the adult with a semblance of an arena of free interplay, no man can hope to reach the potential maturity of old age . . . .

Then, he cautions that adults playing too hard at playing, "simulating naturalness, honesty, and intimacy may end up being everybody and yet nobody," and that:

. . . . we must always also be receptive to new forms of interplay; and we must always come back to the children and learn to recognize the signs of unknown resources which might yet flourish in the vision of one mankind on one earth and its outer reaches.

# QUICK REVIEWS

## *Homer Carter Reading Council*

Adams, Marilyn Jager, Richard C. Anderson, and Dolores Durkin, "Beginning Reading: Theory and Practice," *Language Arts*, (January 1978), 55:19-25.

The authors emphasize that there is still much to be learned about beginning reading, what it is and how it should be taught, and also, that classroom practices fail to reflect what is known to date. They present a detailed discussion of the problems that arise in beginning reading, and suggest ideas for effectively coping with these problems.

Blaschowitz, Camille, "Cloze Activities For Primary Readers" *The Reading Teacher* (December 1977) 31:300-302.

Many primary grade students have trouble with comprehension after they have acquired good decoding skills. Cloze activities that work for older readers will intimidate first and second graders. Simpler techniques may be used as: Oral cloze, "zip," "maze" and synonym cloze. These introductory cloze procedures lay the groundwork for standard cloze procedures in the middle and upper grades.

Cassidy, Jack, "Reporting Pupil Progress in Reading: Parents vs Teachers" *Reading Teacher* (December 1977) 31:294-296.

This is a research study done to show the ten factors both parents and teachers felt were important in relating children's reading progress. Both groups seemed to be most interested in what parents can do to help their children, and second, in knowing what each child's specific weaknesses and strengths were in various reading skills. At the bottom of the list for *both* groups were such factors as reading levels and letter grades.

Chambers, Aiden, "Letter From England: Talking about Reading—Back to Basics? Part II," *The Horn Book Magazine* (December 1977) 53:700-708.

The author charges the administrators of our schools with devaluing reading literature as a life habit, by the way they set priorities on activities. Questions which administrators should answer are: "How much time is Johnny given to read for reading's own sake? How many books is he given to choose from? How much



do his teachers read? How much are his tastes and opinions allowed to enter into the work? How much do we value Literature as a primary, unique, essential feature of any life worth living?"

Degler, Lois Sauer, "Using the Newspaper to Develop Reading Comprehension Skills," *Journal of Reading* (January 1978) 21:339-342.

"With careful planning, fun and motivating skills, based on the newspaper, can help students develop their reading-thinking skills" — recall, infer, evaluate, and appreciate. Degler provides good creative examples of activities to do with the newspaper that reinforce these skills.

Forester, Anne D., "What Teachers Can Learn From Natural Readers" *The Reading Teacher*, (November 1977) 31:120.

A report of a study at first grade level which suggests that the natural learning strategies used by children who learn to read at home might be effective in a classroom setting.

Fowler, Charles W., "Making the Most of the School Day," *The Education Digest* (December 1977) 43:28-29.

If student test scores are falling, it may be because schools are devoting about 100 hours less time to teaching than they did twenty years ago. Lengthening the school day and/or the school year could pay off in increased learning and higher test scores.

Gentile, Lance M., and Merna M. McMillan, "Humor and the Reading Program," *Journal of Reading* (January 1978) 21:343-349.

"Out of the overflow of good humor and comedy comes a healthy sense of proportion or sanity." Gentile and McMillan lament the passing of humor in our literature and on television — no more Mark Twain riverboat pilots delightfully directing landsmen in moving a gangplank. Because types of humor are dependent on age and experience, the authors define what's funny for ages ten, eleven, twelve, and thirteen, and then provide a list of *funny* books for each age group.

Goodman, Yetta and Dorothy J. Watson, "A Reading Program to Live With: Focus on Comprehension," *Language Arts* (November/December 1977) 54:868-879.

Teachers are becoming disenchanted with highly specific skill-oriented programs, this article claims. Teachers are discarding some of their previous practices to search for activities and procedures suitable to a reading program that is student-centered in nature,

keeps language and thought intact, and has comprehension as its focus. Before setting up a new reading program, they suggest teachers answer these four questions: What is reading? How do children learn? What instruction is compatible with my views of reading and learning? What resources are available?

Hack, Gary, "Theme Schemes," *Teacher* (January 1977) 94:77-78.

Theme Schemes is a stimulating and fascinating way to entice children to read a variety of content. Motivation techniques include: bulletin boards that flash lights, activity cards, and books of adventure, mystery, and autobiography. The children make their own choices, prepare a folder, and are evaluated with a teacher-pupil conference.

Harper, Robert J. and Gary Kilarr, "The Law and Reading Instruction," *Language Arts* (November/December 1977) 54:913-919.

The authors discuss what has led up to more and more state legislatures establishing and redefining, with great specificity, the exact outcomes of the educational process, and, as a result, to the courts having begun to entertain more and more specific charges of inequality and inadequacy in fulfilling these established objectives. In cases where a school's reading program is deemed inadequate, courts have used test scores to set up requirements based on grade equivalent scores. Unfortunately, say Harper and Kilarr, grade equivalent scores should not be interpreted as reading levels for grades in school. The notion that there is a reading level for each grade is false.

Indrisano, Roselmina, "Managing the Classroom Reading Program," *Instructor* (January 1978) 87:117-120.

This model for classroom management is based on the individual child's needs and strengths. The ideas include usage of learning centers, skills checklists, and color-coded instructional materials which, according to the author, should result in greater productivity for teacher and learners.

Lawson, Tana, "Word Search Center," *Learning* (January 1978) 6:20.

This description of a unique use for a montage of words created by teacher and/or students would be applicable at most grade levels. Eleven suggested tasks could be added to or recycled with a new montage. Vocabulary—classification—alphabetizing—and much more. *Clip and Save!* item—share with your fellow teachers.

McDonnell, Gloria M. and E. Bess Osburn, "New Thoughts about Reading Readiness," *Language Arts* (January 1978) 55:26-29.

Several Title I teachers in Fairfax County in Virginia, dissatisfied with the information received from existing standardized reading readiness tests, decided, in order to help their children more effectively, to construct a readiness checklist based on Marie Clay's research and her diagnostic test (Clay, Marie M., *Reading: The Patterning of Complex Behavior*, Auckland, New Zealand, 1972, and *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties: A Diagnostic Survey*, Auckland, New Zealand, 1972). A diagram and explanation of this checklist is included in the article.

Morrison, Faye, "On the Right Track," *Teacher* (February 1977) 94:94-99.

Practical and useful techniques for teaching elementary students to organize research materials are discussed in this article. The ideas are designed for teachers to help students in the lower grades learn methods and techniques of research which will adequately prepare them for the upper grades.

Muia, Joseph A., and Eugene T. Connors, "Legal Entanglements of Reading Clinics' Diagnostic Procedures," *Journal of Reading* (January 1978) 21:321-328.

Dear me! Reading clinics beware! Do you realize you could land in court if you do not heed PL94-142? You could be cited for your referral process, your interview procedure, and your follow-up prescriptions. In this article the authors provide seventeen recommendations from the Education for All Handicapped Children Act to help reading clinics avoid legal involvement.

McNair, Shirley, and Velma Bischoff, "Cooperative Reading," *Teacher* (December 1976) 94:61-62.

Can a classroom teacher find happiness with a remedial reading specialist in a coordinated curriculum? The article deals with steps one might take to develop, maintain, and improve a reading program for disabled readers, with the concentrated effort of classroom teachers *and* the reading teacher.

Peterson, Jean, "A Painless Approach to Vocabulary Building" *Instructor* (December 1977) 87:86-88.

An interesting and enjoyable way of developing vocabulary is presented, emphasizing identification and, most importantly, usage of each week's new words. Practice and useful ideas are given which should result in very *loquacious* students.

Shafer, Robert E. "Will Psycholinguistics Change Reading in Secondary Schools?" *Journal of Reading* (January 1978) 21:301-316.

A convincing argument for initiating the psycholinguistic approach at the secondary level is presented by Shafer. He first reviews the history of reading at the secondary level, going back to Strang, Traxler, McCullough, Early, and Karlin; however, we discover that in the past thirty years the status of reading instruction in the secondary school has changed very little. Perhaps the skills model isn't doing the job. By using the psycholinguistic approach; i.e., by directly attacking the written language for meaning first, "we can make learning to read easy for the thousands of high school students who not only find reading difficult but well-nigh impossible."

Stecher, Judith, "TV As A Two-Way Street in Learning," *Teacher*, (November 1976) 94:46-52.

Television is influencing today's children as a passive, second-hand experience, occupying far too much of every child's life. Judith Stecher says teachers can use the "boob-tube" as a valuable stimulus for language expansion, and makes several suggestions for applying TV as a teaching tool.

Strange, Michael, and Richard L. Allington, "Use the Diagnostic Prescriptive Model Knowledgeably" *The Reading Teacher* (December 1977) 31:290-293.

Teachers need a knowledge of reading theory and methodology in order to use this technique. However, the authors point out that a disturbing tendency exists, which places excessive reliance on systems, testing, contracts, and so forth. This can be a detriment to the use of sound teacher judgment. The authors discuss the proper use of the various techniques.

# NEW MATERIALS

**Sandra Ahern**

READING CONSULTANT, COMSTOCK, MICHIGAN

*Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading: A Sequential Program* by Sam V. Dauzat, Jo Ann Dauzat, Wayne Otto, and Burton W. Kreitlow. Published by Steck-Vaughn Company, 1977, Austin, Texas.

*The Steck-Vaughn Adult Reading* is an individualized sequential program of basic reading skills intended to guide the adult student from complete illiteracy to advanced comprehension skills.

The program consists basically of two levels: phonics/word attack and comprehension skill development with instructional materials consisting of fifteen skill books and a teacher's guide. The guide contains the Program Placement Inventory making it possible to correctly place students in the program and measure the progress of skill mastery.

This excellent program enables adults to increase reading skills, gain general knowledge about occupations, consumer economics, law, health, and build a very functional vocabulary.

There are several features that make this program ideal as part of an adult reading program: (1) the diagnostic/prescriptive feature insures that the student is working only on skills not yet mastered; (2) it provides a wide range of adequate materials; and (3) the program provides individualized meaningful experiences for the mature learner.

*Blue Network TUNE-IN Listening & Literature Skills through the Magic of Old-Time Music* created by Sherwin S. Glassner—written by Robert M. Oksner. Published by Sunburst Communications, Inc., 1976, Pleasantville, NY 10570.

The *TUNE-IN* program is designed to develop listening skills and to also develop skills in literature, creative expression, and writing through the use of old-time radio programs taped on four 30-minute cassettes.

The program consists of three main components: (1) the radio shows—four half-hour shows in cassette form taped the exact way they were originally recorded—*Escape: The Abominable Snowman* (1954), *The Lone Ranger: The Iron Horse* (1950), *My Friend Irma* (1952), and *The Shadow: Death Speaks Twice* (1942); the teacher's guide that gives background information and a synopsis of each story and follow-up activities; and (3) six spirit masters for each show that question the student's understanding of the tape's plot, character, setting, point of view, theme, mood, climax. There are also masters that provide practice in vocabulary and comprehension development.

The development of listening skills is often neglected because we assume that children will acquire these skills naturally. The truth is that children need to be provided with practice in order to learn good

listening skills and *TUNE-IN* has activities that can provide this practice in an interesting and fun way.

*Critical Thinking* by Anita Harnadek. Published by Midwest Publication Co., Inc., 1976, P.O. Box 129, Troy, MI 48099.

Reading level—5/6 grade

Interest level—Jr. and Sr. High

*Critical Thinking* is designed to teach students to think critically by learning how to ask and answer many excellent questions. The purpose of the eleven booklets is to “sharpen thinking skills using class discussion and/or individual student written responses.”

The booklet themes include: *Critical Thinking, Analogies, Antonyms, Synonyms, Similarities and Differences, True to Life, or Fantasy?* and there are sets of duplicating masters to accompany the series.

The series seems to be very thorough in its approach to teaching students to think carefully and independently when answering thought-provoking questions.

*Newbery Award Sound Filmstrips* by Miller-Brody Productions, Inc., Audio-Visual Instructional Programs, 342 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017.

Miller-Brody has released eleven new Newbery Award Sound Film strips based on the Newbery Medal and Honor Books. They are:

- NSF 3050 *The Black Pearl* by Scott O'Dell
- NSF 3029 *The Bronze Bow* by Elizabeth George Speare
- NSF 3077 *Chucaro: Wild Pony of the Pampa* by Francis Kalnay
- NSF 3003 *Ginger Pye* by Eleanor Estes
- NSF 3047 *The Golden Goblet* by Eloise Jarvis McGraw
- NSF 3086 *Hurry Home, Candy* by Eleanor Estes
- NSF 3046 *The Loner* by Ester Wier
- NSF 3043 *Misty of Chincoteague* by Marguerite Henry
- NSF 3072 *The Noonday Friends* by Mary Stolz
- NSF 3078 *The Planet of Junior Brown* by Virginia Hamilton
- NSF 3075 *A Wind in the Door* by Madeleine L'Engle

*The Story of the Grateful Crane* by Jennifer Bartoli—Full Color Dioramas by Kozo Simizu. Published by Albert Whitman & Company—560 W. Lake Street—Chicago, IL 60606, 1977.

Ages 6-up

Grades 1-up

This is a beautifully illustrated Japanese folktale about a magical crane who repays the kindness of an old childless couple in a mysterious way.

*Mine, Yours, Ours* by Burton Albert, Jr.—Illustrated by Lois Axeman.

Published by Albert Whitman & Company—560 W. Lake Street—Chicago, IL 60606, 1977.

Ages 4-6

Grades—Preschool-1

A very interesting little *Self-Starter Book* that teaches the concepts of owning and sharing through pictures and the three words: mine, yours, and ours.

*Monsters, Ghoulies, and Creepy Creatures* An Anthology by Lee Bennett Hopkins—Illustrated by Vera Rosenberry. Published by Albert Whitman & Company—560 W. Lake Street—Chicago, IL 60606, 1977.

Ages 8-11

Grades 3-6

This is the third book in a trilogy by Lee Bennett Hopkins and as before, it is packed full of scary and fascinating stories of ghouls and other creatures.

*Tell Them My Name is Amanda* by Jo Anne Wold—Illustrated by Dennis Hockerman. Published by Albert Whitman & Company—560 W. Lake Street—Chicago, IL 60606, 1977.

Ages 5-8

Grades K-3

The Whitman Company has published another valuable *Concept Book*. In this story a little girl finds ways to overcome her shyness and finds her first taste of self-confidence.

*The Pelican Mystery* by Ruth Hooker and Carole Smith—Illustrated by George Armstrong. Published by Albert Whitman & Company—560 W. Lake Street—Chicago, IL 60606, 1977.

Ages 8-12

Grades 3-7

Patti and Grant Henderson leave for a vacation to the Florida Keys and have an adventure they will never forget as they try to unravel a strange mystery.

*The CB Adventures of Neil Hawkins* by Bob Cunningham—Illustrated by Rod and Barbara Furan.

Titles:

*Come on Smokey*

*Range Fire*

*Emergency*

*Alaska Skip*

*For Good Sam*

Published by Crestwood House—P.O. Box 3427—Mankato, MN 56001, 1977.

A new series of high interest, low vocabulary books with a reading level of Grades 4-5 and an interest level of Grades 3 and up.

The stories revolve around the adventure of Neil Hawkins, an outdoor editor for the Cascade City Journal. He writes about fishing, hunting, camping and other outdoor sports. And, of course, about his favorite hobby—CB radios. The stories are very interesting and teach many valuable lessons about human behavior and kindness. Each book has a glossary of all the CB terms.



## REVIEW — LEARNING GAMES, FOR INFANTS AND TODDLERS

By Dr. J. Donald Lally and Dr. Ira J. Gordon  
New Readers Press, Division of Laubach Literacy International  
Box 131, Syracuse, NY, 13210, 1977, 80 pages

Review by Sue Gay  
Kalamazoo, Michigan

One would need to be psychologically or emotionally *ready* to spend an appreciable amount of time with *Learning Games*. We recognize the importance of the activities described as background to readiness for reading. However, the book does not spell out the why's of the games and play. This is an unfortunate omission, since mothers are not always aware of the vital necessity of giving their children the experience in multi-sensory play that constitutes the underpinning for interpretation levels in reading.

At the same time, it should be stated that this book adds a great deal to what most young mothers know about beneficial ways to help their infants and toddlers develop. The games are very clearly explained. It is a resource book of ideas, giving new twists to old games, and as such it would be a valuable book to own. Some parents might object to the almost primitive appearance of the illustrations, but it must be noted that simpler pictures almost never depict ethnic groups, therefore never omit and never offend. An indefensible element of the book is the use of baby-talk, which should not be recommended by example.

The format of the book is especially appealing; it is divided into age groups, with eight games or activities suited for children at each of eight different ages up to two years. Games are classified by type, including communication, eyes-and-ears, grouping games, using-a-tool, imitation games, etc. Reading teachers should be aware of this valuable book, and be able to recommend it to new mothers. The importance of such early activities in coordination, organized movement, concept development, and combined sensory experience cannot be over-emphasized.



