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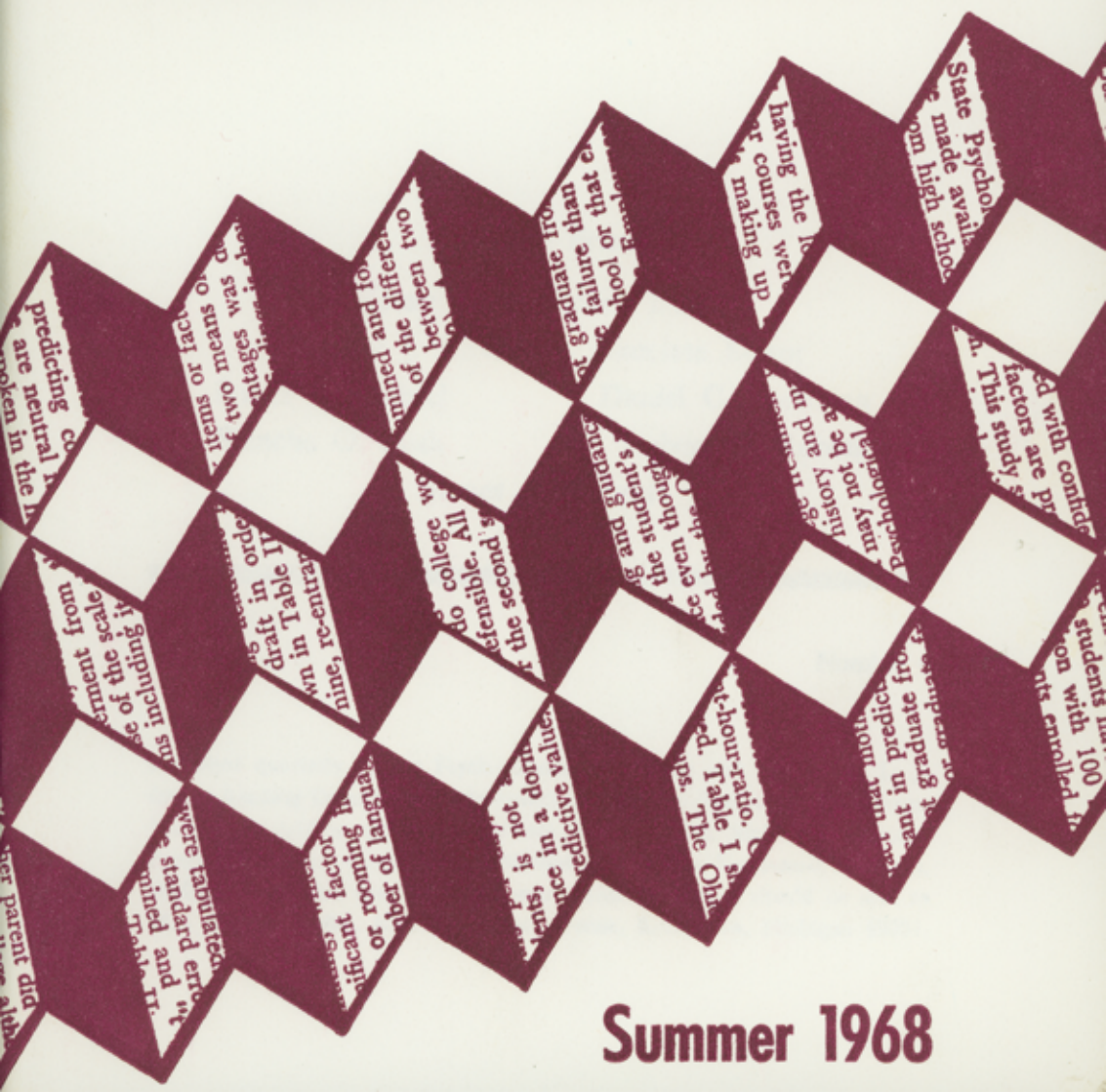
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Reading

HORIZONS



Summer 1968

Reading **HORIZONS**

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Editorial Comment

Do Teachers Really Know Their Students?

It is easier to understand subject matter and the various approaches to education than it is to understand boys and girls. It is easier to organize and teach the content of a course than to determine the interests and needs of the individual. Boys and girls of all ages differ in their heredity, environment, and social background. Norms and standards are more apparent than real. There is no such thing as a normal child. Each individual is deficient, average, and superior in various respects. Each is a unique creature having his own interests and needs. No other child is like him and what is beneficial to others may be of little worth to him.

Do teachers understand their students? What do they know about the home, the neighborhood, and what these have done to the student? What do they know about the child, his interests, his fears, his worries, and his goals? Some teachers "just teach" and believe that they have met their responsibilities to the child, to the parents, and to the community. Like any union member they have done their job and earned their pay.

If teaching is to be effective, it must fit the individual and his well being. It is a process of developing the individual physically, psychologically, and sociologically. It involves preparing him to take his place in a changing world. The teacher must really know his students if this is to be accomplished.

Homer L. J. Carter
Editor

PASSING SENTENCE ON SENTENCES*

Louis Foley

BABSON INSTITUTE

In his book, *The Art of Plain Talk*,¹ Mr. Rudolf Flesch makes many assertions which seem convincingly plausible on the face of them, but which prove to be oversimplifications or plain distortions of fact if one troubles to look beneath the surface. Good examples are the comparisons he is fond of drawing between English and other languages. He tells us, for instance, that Modern Persian "has done away with articles," and admires that as "exactly the same simplification [that] is being used today by our headline writers." Now of course the telegraphic style of newspaper headlines serves its purpose well enough most of the time, but it is frequently misleading as to the real content of the news, and occasionally produces amusing ambiguities. English has no monopoly on this telescoped style, and some languages are better equipped to handle it than ours is. As for "doing away with articles," the gradual evolution of the function of the definite article in modern languages is a very interesting study which we cannot go into here. It has, however, made possible easy precision of expression for shades of meaning difficult to express otherwise.

Mr. Flesch says that "the fundamentals of language and the psychology of human speech are the same everywhere; and if one country adopts a practical, simple linguistic device, it might well be transferred to another language." This *sounds* reasonable; the only thing wrong with it, I think, is that it just doesn't happen to be true. Different languages are different *systems*, each of which you have to understand as a unified whole. You can't just transplant an idiomatic device from one language into another which habitually handles ideas in other ways. That is why literal translations commonly produce something which does not belong to any real language at all.

"Let's start with Chinese," says Mr. Flesch. After declaring that he doesn't "know any Chinese," he refers to it repeatedly as his ideal of simplicity, "the simplest of all languages." But there are different kinds of simplicity. When you try to "simplify" an idea that inherently is not simple, you immediately get into complications. It is all very

1. Rudolf Flesch, *The Art of Plain Talk*, New York, Harper & Brothers, 1946.

* Talk given at meeting of the American Business Communication Association, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York, April 20, 1968.

well to play around with such newspaper-headline examples as he uses for his argument, "dog bites man" or "man bites dog," but they do not get us very far.

I think Mr. Flesch's avowed unfamiliarity with Chinese is already being demonstrated near the beginning when he says, "it so happens that their language does not have the *r* sound." Actually it occurs in very common Chinese words.

"There are no words," he says, "of more than one syllable." To be sure, a written Chinese *character* represents only one syllable, but by no means is it necessarily a complete word, and the language is crowded with compound words, many of them for ideas which *we* express with one-syllable words, and some of them seeming redundant from our point of view.

He calls Chinese a "grammarless" tongue. Now it is true enough that our classification of "parts of speech" simply does not fit Chinese, even for so basic a concept as that of verbs. Its classes of words are not the same as ours. Therefore it has to use all sorts of devices that our system does not require. Mr. Flesch says that it has "no persons, no genders, no numbers." It expresses person and gender clearly enough, and its handling of numbers is refined with complications far beyond ours. We can say, for instance, two men, two books, two sheets of paper, two pieces of candy, et cetera, using simply the same *two*, but in Chinese the expression of measure has to be quite different, and there is a whole collection of such categories which for us have no logical meaning whatever.

He seems to think that Chinese employs no prefixes or suffixes. In the *spoken* language it certainly uses them, including some that are quite untranslatable. In writing, this fact is disguised, since each *syllable* requires a separate character as if it were a distinct word, as very often it is not at all.

With evident admiration, Mr. Flesch informs us that "the main principle of modern Chinese is exactly the same as that of modern machinery. It consists of standardized, prefabricated, functionally designed parts." It is "an assembly-line language." Now, insofar as that may be true, I think it is the greatest weakness of Chinese. It lacks flexibility. Languages go along with kinds of civilization, with whole ways of life. The Chinese seem to think in terms of ready-made clichés. There is a proverb for everything, and that takes care of it. Individuality is not valued, nor is the stereotyped individual human life. Insofar as China has moved out of an age-old static condition, it has been by the influence of those of her nationals who have learned

western languages and with them a new freedom of thought. Chinese is indeed a wonderful language in many ways, but Mr. Flesch admires it for the wrong reasons. Let us forget about Chinese as a model for English.

Of course Mr. Flesch is thoroughly justified in his rebellion against "gobbledegook"—he claims to have invented the name. What it boils down to is the abuse of technical-sounding words when no technical meaning is involved. It is a vicious tendency of much modern writing, but it is nothing new, only more exaggerated. There is nothing peculiarly American about it. It was ably satirized many years ago by a British literary critic, nothing in whose writing suggests any awareness of the existence of America.²

Mr. Flesch has little use for literary critics or for conventional textbooks. With scorn he quotes from a book on English usage an example given to illustrate the virtue of "compactness":

"The sentence *She ran down the corridor in haste* may without the slightest loss of meaning be more economically stated thus: *She ran down the corridor hastily*."

"That's economy for you," he comments: "two syllables made into three, and the colloquial *in haste* replaced by the literary *hastily*."

Here I think his labels are altogether arbitrary. Neither of the expressions is, in my view, either "colloquial" or "literary." They both belong equally to plain language. In a given sentence one may fit more easily and naturally than the other. Would he call it being "literary" to say, "These notes were hastily prepared." ? He seems to me to miss, however, the real point of what is wrong with the textbookish illustration. In dreaming up examples for handbooks to illustrate this or that, people seem to forget sometimes what the words actually mean. Can anyone imagine the girl *running* down the corridor slowly, carefully, or deliberately? For a real touch of "compactness" the sentence might have been made: *She hastened down the corridor*, and that might have been a truer statement than the mention of real *running* anyhow.

Really, however, Mr. Flesch is no true partisan of "compactness." On the contrary, he advocates what some of us look upon as wearisome wordiness. "The secret of plain conversational talk," he explains, "is not difficult ideas expressed in easy language, it is rather abstrac-

2. R. W. Chapman, "The Decay of Syntax," in *The Portrait of a Scholar*. This and other essays were written "in camps and dug-outs and troop-trains" while the author, an Oxford graduate, was in active service as a British artillery officer in Macedonia during World War I.

tions embedded in small talk. It is heavy stuff packed with excelsior. If you want to be better understood, you don't have to leave out or change your important ideas; you just use more excelsior. It's as simple as that."

In his examples of what he calls "plain talk," in which, as he says, "filler words are freely strewn about," the rather obvious fact is that the speaker has not yet quite made up his mind what it is that he wants to say. We can forgive such fumbling in casual conversation, but it is surely no virtue to be cultivated in what is supposed to be serious *writing*.

Mr. Flesch is thoroughly right in emphasizing punctuation, which he considers "the most important single device for making things easier to read." Unfortunately in his conception it is entirely bound up with the matter of *pauses*. So it was, to be sure, in the beginning, back in the days when "reading" always implied reading *aloud*, and it was by *hearing* that you understood. For the modern rapid silent reader such punctuation is merely an annoyance. Insofar as it is discriminatingly used, modern punctuation has a different function from marking "pauses"—which might be made almost anywhere for rhetorical effect in oral reading. What modern punctuation does is to keep the sentence-structure clear as one goes along, for the innocent reader who does not know what is coming. Without it, as often happens in such carelessly punctuated material as most newspapers, the reader is often likely to lose the pattern of the sentence and have to backtrack. We may suspect that many readers never bother to figure it out, but leave the idea vague or confused as it seems, and keep on going.

What Mr. Flesch says about the use of semicolons more or less fits the old-fashioned rambling sentences with a semicolon thrown in once in a while instead of a comma, just for variety. In his own writing he generally follows the increasingly definite American usage, which has nothing to do with the mere *length* of sentences. The semicolon is used where one could use a period so far as grammar is concerned. It comes between complete sentences closely related in thought, characteristically statements of the same idea in different terms in order to emphasize it:

"You don't have to worry about me; I can take care of myself."

"There was no use waiting for reinforcements; they could not possibly arrive in time to help."

It would take much too long to consider all the things that Mr. Flesch undertakes to deal with in his treatise on *The Art of Plain Talk*.

Many of his ideas are demonstrably sound, as they have been through the ages. Some of his statements seem like pearls of wisdom, as for instance:

“People are not just plain dumb; they may have little book learning, but they usually have a great deal of sense. [Incidentally a perfect example of modern use of the semicolon.] For instance, they have sense enough to resent empty phrases, to laugh at phony stories, and to recognize folksiness as a fake.”

I do hope he is right.

We cannot agree too much with his castigation of gobbledegook or pointlessly “fancy” language. Victor Hugo disposed of that in 1848 in classic verse which can stand for all time:

“Guerre à la rhétorique, et paix à la syntaxe.”

Let us wage war against high-sounding terms for simple things, but keep peace with grammar. The latter is the soul of language, *any* language, its developed system for orderly, coherent combination of ideas. That side of the coin Mr. Flesch is not seeing clearly when he expostulates against *his* notion of “grammar,” which he disposes of as “nothing but rules set up by schoolteachers to stop the language from going where it wants to go.” In his own writing he is regularly correct in grammar; of course he is, because he is expressing his thoughts in coherent fashion. Bad grammar is always some sort of confusion.

What I wish to discuss particularly, however, is the idea which Mr. Flesch appears to emphasize above all else, namely the desirability of keeping sentences *short*. He lays down as a rule: “Try to keep sentences under twenty words, certainly under twenty-five words.” The ideal length for a sentence, he believes, is 17 words. “Easy prose,” he says, “is often written in 8-word sentences or so.” Now, whatever statistical data he or anyone else may be able to muster in support of such declarations, I think this is not the proper approach.

Mr. Flesch says that the average sentence in his book has 18 words. If he has counted them all, I’m willing to take his word for it, but I consider the matter of no importance in itself. Here is a sentence of his which seems to me as easy to read as any in the whole book:

“After you have read a dozen or so books on style and writing, you get tired of such general suggestions and impatient to know just how you go about being simple, how you can make sentences short, and how you can tell a familiar word.”

That sentence contains 45 words. It is easy to find others more than twice as long as his 17-word norm. A sentence which he quotes with

admiration from Stevenson's *Treasure Island* contains no less than 55, and various sentences of his own in comment on the story run into the 30's. This is not to say that they are not good sentences; my very point is that they are. His practice is better than his preaching.

A person who uses *only* short sentences is bound to become tiresome in a short time. The sentences will look as if they were all of the same sort, equally important, equally emphatic, instead of performing the different kinds of functions which naturally require continually varying numbers of words. With one short sentence after another after another, not only is there the wearisomeness of monotony, but the reader is made to do the work that the writer should do for him, namely figure out the *relationship* of these disjointed statements, which is not expressed and may not be very intelligibly implied.

At the ABWA Convention in Washington a few years ago, one of the speakers told us very interestingly how ghost-writers go about their work. The ghost-writer studies carefully the characteristic tone of language and rhythm of speech of each client, so that the address he prepares for that person will seem to ring true. Now I remember reading somewhere not long ago a statement by someone who had prepared speeches for the late President Kennedy. The speech-writer found his task difficult, he said, because of the President's habit of expressing himself in "short, choppy sentences." Such a habit becomes a kind of bondage. When a person so habituated has to deal with an idea which inescapably requires a sentence longer and more intricate, he will be ill at ease in handling it. He can go astray in only slightly complicated sentences if he is accustomed to using nothing but the shortest and simplest kind of statement. So in an interview on September 2, 1963, President Kennedy said: "I don't think *that* unless a greater effort is made by the Government of South Vietnam to win popular support, *that* the war can be won out there." Obviously he did not, from the start, see the sentence pattern as a whole. Had he done so, he would have been likely to make a clearer, more orderly, and stronger statement by putting the "unless" clause in the beginning. Instead he sandwiched it awkwardly in the middle, and forgot that he had already begun the "that" clause which is the object of "don't think."

The fundamental fallacy in any attempt at mathematical calculations about words is that they are about as far as possible from being anything like standard equal units. Within immeasurable limits, they vary in their importance from one sentence to another, and in their functions in the different phrases or sentences into which they fit.

In fact, Mr. Flesch's own idea about putting in filler or "excelsior" to make reading easier—thereby actually lengthening sentences without addition of anything meaningful—indicates something about sentence-length as a criterion.

No doubt we can safely say that a sentence should not be longer than it needs to be. What it needs for a given purpose, however, is often more than mere down-to-earth clearness in presenting a simple fact or idea, as may be done by a terse telegram that is hardly English at all.

The typical function of a short sentence is a simple, definite *assertion*. We see this reduced to lowest terms in *yes* or *no*, which can be defined only as the equivalent of a complete sentence. What the simple, short sentence can *not* do is to combine facts or ideas into a unified pattern, in which not only are some more important and some less, but the kind of relationship they have to the central idea is clearly shown.

One of the most celebrated statements ever made about reading is that of Francis Bacon in his essay, "Of Studies," published in 1597:

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested: that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention."

Grammatically of course this is two independent sentences; in modern punctuation they would be separated by a semicolon. In keeping with the practice of his time, Bacon used a colon and two semicolons, besides five commas. The whole thing, however, is simple enough. The idea is first presented in a figure of speech and then translated into literal terms. Yet it remains, after all, only an *assertion*. It asks to be taken on faith.

It could just as well stand as two separate sentences. Then the first, containing only 18 words, would fall neatly within Mr. Flesch's prescription. The second, which begins to make an application of the metaphor, takes 30 words. If he had gone on to *demonstrate* the truth of his assertion, by giving examples and showing why they belonged in their respective classes of books, he would surely have been drawn into sentences of considerably greater length. The quality for which Bacon's writing is always praised is *conciseness*, and that quality it certainly has. It is also bound by the limitations of this compact style. The statement we have quoted wins us by devices of rhetoric, perhaps partly because it may seem to excuse much of the careless

and superficial reading we know we have often done. It leaves us with no way of knowing which books he has in mind for each of the three classes so neatly set off from each other.

Bacon was outstanding because other prose writers of his time could be just as vague in abstract generalization without the conciseness which makes his statements stick in the reader's mind. Typical of 16th-century hit-or-miss looseness was the style of Robert Burton, whose *Anatomy of Melancholy* was first printed a quarter-century after Bacon's essay. He displays all manner of classical *scholarship* with no classical *discipline*. He writes almost interminable sentences without plan, verbose, prolix, rambling, incoherent. Such writing shows how far Francis Bacon was ahead of his time in the structure of English prose.

A study of the historical development of sentence-structure in English should cure anyone of nostalgia for imaginary "good old days." For that matter, I disagree with the English critic to whom I referred earlier when he said that "written English reached its highest general level in the latter part of the eighteenth century." His point is in the words "*general level*," by which he meant that the prose of humbler contemporaries was really not much different from that of the outstanding eighteenth-century men of letters. My impression is that he overstates the case. In our time when any sort of writing—good, bad, or worse—can get printed, we see all the faults which he deplored. Nonetheless it seems clear to me that the *best* modern American writing is the best English there ever was. The *best* of our modern writing, I said.

It is really ironic, however, to find inexcusably bad writing in writing about writing. Here I turn for instance to a recent article by a college professor on "Improving Children's Writing." It contains some interesting and practical ideas, but it is marred by things that ought not to happen. Let us consider this two-sentence paragraph. The first sentence reads:

"Many of the preceding statements on the possible causes of children's inability to write well either state directly or imply a *lack of guidance and direction*."

Then follows this sentence:

"Beyond these . . . (to what does "*these*" refer—statements, causes, or perhaps *lack of guidance and direction*?) But let us see where it leads us.

"Beyond these, the *failure* (this is the subject, *failure*) to work directly with a child on his writing, to help the class write

a group composition, to provide the encouragement needed, and to properly recognize (*sic*) differences in children's abilities and interests *indicate* a lack of proper teacher guidance and direction."³

He used a plural verb with a singular subject because he had forgotten what the subject was. This and other details are symptoms of looseness in a larger way. What it adds up to is a statement that in addition to lack of guidance and direction there is a lack of guidance and direction. But the fact that the sentence uses 45 words is merely incidental.

There can be no argument against short sentences as such. In the right sort of place they can be wonderfully effective. For an example I can think of none better than what I consider one of the best advertising slogans I have ever known, one which has been used for many years: "Burpee's seeds grow." Like short sentences in general, it is a simple assertion, to be taken on faith, but it completely covers what the seed-buyer is interested in knowing. Very different, however, are countless situations, confronting us continually, which call for much more sophisticated handling and therefore inevitably require sentences of considerable length. That does not mean that the sentences are harder to read. If the writer has a coherent pattern for his sentence as a whole, knows where he is going, and stays on the track, the sentence will not be made difficult reading by the mere number of words. Abundant examples are to be found on all sides. Here is one taken almost at random from a newspaper article:

"What does demean us is to watch what is happening to our own priceless environment—the raping of the last of our deep and silent forests, the shame of our great and silent rivers, the mutilation of our landscape—and to do nothing or perhaps engage in a few cheap, piddling efforts, contemptibly impotent, to save them."⁴

That sentence contains 57 words.

To offset any unkindness I may have seemed to show toward people writing about writing, I may quote from a recent publication addressed to teachers of composition in high schools and colleges:

"The precariousness of our daily success, the recurrent need

3. Walter T. Petty, *Elementary News*, pub. by Allyn and Bacon, Inc., No. 2, 1967.

4. *The New York Times Magazine*, May 28, 1967, p. 68.

to adapt to new crops of students, the annually renewed search for the better way to bring our points home to students, to have them see where what they have written succeeds or fails and why, or hear the reverberations of what they have read—these are a part of what we mean when we say that teaching is an art, not a science.”⁵

That sentence contains no less than 73 words. I do not believe it could be shortened without material loss.

I think there is hardly anything more inimical to really good writing, and especially to improvement in it, than the adoption of any particular manner of expression for general, indiscriminate use. That is what it is to cultivate a “style,” which is a form that the writer arbitrarily imposes upon his subject-matter. The good approach is rather at every point to look into the nature of what is to be expressed, and to be governed by that. It will result in sentences widely varying in length. The pleasing quality of variety, so important to sustaining interest, will thus be achieved almost automatically. As Mr. Flesch likes to say, “It’s as simple as that.”

5. *Exercise Exchange*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., Nov. 1966—April 1967.

A READING SPECIALIST REACTS TO CHALL'S READING STUDY

Nicholas P. Criscuolo

NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT

Research into beginning reading instruction has been published recently in the form of a book entitled *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* (2). Its author is Jeanne Chall, professor of education at Harvard University, who was commissioned by the Carnegie Foundation to analyze critically the findings of over fifty years of research studies in beginning reading. As part of this project, Dr. Chall also interviewed teachers and administrators and visited some 300 classrooms in the United States, England and Scotland.

This book is generating as much interest in the teaching of reading as Flesch's book *Why Johnny Can't Read* (5). The difference between the two authors, however, is that Mr. Flesch based much of his writing on subjective judgment while Dr. Chall analyzed the data for her book in a critical, yet objective, manner.

Discussion of the Book

During her investigation for this book, Dr. Chall was appalled at the poor quality of educational research. She underscores the lack of sophistication on the part of many "researchers" in the application of research techniques and the unwarranted generalizations made on the basis of some of these studies. She indicates that manipulation of data sometimes occurs to prove a researcher's opinion and that the results of many studies have no appreciable effect on classroom instruction.

Despite the poor quality of educational studies, she divided the many beginning reading methods studied into two groups: the "code-emphasis" group and the "meaning-emphasis" group. Code-emphasis involves teaching children to master the alphabetic code by teaching the recognition and sound of the letters of the alphabet. Meaning-emphasis involves stressing the meaning of what children read rather than sound-blending techniques in the initial stages of learning to read. This method is known as "look-say" and is the predominant approach currently being used in most basal reading programs.

Analysis of the data led Chall to conclude that a code-emphasis approach in beginning reading instruction produces better results than a meaning-emphasis approach. According to Chall, children at

all levels of the socio-economic and intellectual spectrum, who learn to break the code learn to read and to spell more efficiently than children who learned by means of the sight method.

Some common code-emphasis methods are the modified alphabet, linguistics, or phonic methods. In the book, no particular method is singled out as being superior and the admonition is made that code-emphasis should be used only as a *beginning* method—to be discarded once the child has learned how to break the code.

Since the less effective method (meaning-emphasis) is so closely associated with the basal reader approach, the author comments on these readers. Although she states that these readers “are not as hopeless as critics would have us believe,” Dr. Chall does indicate that vocabulary control tends to be a hindrance rather than a boon and that the phonics portion of the program often takes a second place to story content. She also suggests, as did Austin (1) before her, that teachers should use the manuals accompanying basal texts on a suggestive rather than prescriptive basis.

Recommendations

In *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* the author makes the following five recommendations for the improvement of beginning reading instruction:

1. Beginning reading instruction should shift from a meaning-emphasis to a code-emphasis approach.
2. There should be an examination of what kind of content to include in beginning readers and programs.
3. Grade levels of basal readers should be re-evaluated so as to produce less rigidity of vocabulary control and to permit advanced readers to read materials which are now prescribed for work at higher grade levels.
4. Better diagnostic and achievement tests should be developed.
5. There should be greatly improved research into reading practices and methodology.

Reactions

In recommending that beginning reading instruction shift from a meaning-emphasis to a code-emphasis method, it is wisely cautioned by the author that not *all* children will benefit from such a shift. Obviously, there is no single method suitable for every child. Different modalities of learning exist for different children and it is conceivable that some children do learn better by means of the look-say approach.

If school systems are already getting good results from this method, the need for a shift in emphasis seems lessened.

Since 1962, many changes in content have been made in basal readers. The locale of many stories in basal texts has shifted from suburbia to the city. Characters are now at least biracial and, in some cases, multiracial. Language structure has been used which more nearly typifies the language patterns of children, particularly those classified as disadvantaged (4).

Unfortunately, critics of basal readers have only looked at the story content of these books. Rarely have they examined the heart of any basal program—the skills development lessons outlined in the manuals. Some basal systems, regardless of whether their approach is code-emphasis or meaning-emphasis, have changed content but have neglected to assess the needed changes in that aspect which develops crucial reading skills. These self-pronounced critics have done children a disservice because all they've done is look at pictures to determine the ethnic composition of story characters instead of also looking at the skills development sections of these "new" texts to determine their effectiveness. Dr. Chall sums it up in precise terms when she states in her book: "The children's attitudes may be improved. But a reading program that improves attitudes and does not succeed in teaching reading is no program at all."

The recommendation that grade levels of readers should be re-evaluated bears attention. Who is to say that a 31 book is most appealing to third-grade children? As we evaluate this recommendation, however, we must not overlook the fact that much research into the area of child development has preceded the establishment of the reading levels of these materials.

Indeed, the vocabulary used in many of the modern basals does not parallel the vocabulary of all children. The problem is particularly acute in terms of the ghetto child. It does not seem so crucial that schools "lift the ceiling" to permit top pupils to use the more advanced readers they would ordinarily read at higher grade levels. Too many teachers race through these readers as it is—reading a story a day without enough attention to the skills development aspect of the program. The stories in basal readers are vehicles for developing needed skills. It is very likely that a good reader may read well at a particular level, but has not mastered the skills necessary for efficient use of these skills.

A recent study (3) compared two approaches—enrichment and acceleration—used in the context of a basal reading program. Each

reading group in the enrichment program spent the entire six months of the study on one basal text doing the skills development exercises and also the enrichment program as suggested in the teacher's manual. The other group did not do the enrichment portion and finished the basal reader after three months and then was accelerated into the next higher text—thus covering two basals for each group. Statistical analyses of the data showed a significant difference in mastery of reading skills in favor of the enrichment group which had covered the text so intensively.

The development of better diagnostic and achievement tests is a definite need in the area of reading. For the most part, diagnostic tests yield more practical data to the teacher in her everyday work than achievement tests. Many basal series publish their own diagnostic tests to assess pupil mastery of the skills developed in their program. Pupil performance on these tests provide an objective analysis of which skills have not been mastered. Unfortunately, many teachers do not use these tests. One teacher of the writer's acquaintance does use them and quite effectively. She administers the unit test accompanying a reader of the series she is using, corrects it and then discusses items missed with the children in the reading group. No score from these tests is obtained, i.e., 3.2 or 2.1 which is nebulous anyway. Rather, the important thing here is to discover which skills need to be reinforced or re-taught.

Scores achieved on standardized reading tests are practically revered by some teachers. They record them here and post them there. Untenable comparisons are then made among teachers and classrooms. Little or no effort is made to interpret the results so as to effect needed changes in instruction. Some reading achievement tests are more popular than others. These tests should be chosen carefully. One popular test was standardized on a population so far removed from those who reside in cities that the disadvantaged testee is at a disadvantage even before he takes the test. The ability to listen and to follow directions affect results. Disadvantaged children, because of a crowded home environment, often "tune out" the tester. The result may be low achievement scores in reading even though the opposite may be true.

Many teachers use standardized test scores to group children for reading instruction. They do not realize that such scores place children at their *frustrational* reading level and are not appropriate for grouping purposes. It is much more fruitful to administer an Informal Reading Inventory using established criteria to determine

the child's *instructional* reading level. Yet many teachers do not know how to administer such an instrument. Much in-service work needs to be done in this area.

The research skills of the average graduate student undertaking an educational study lack the degree of sophistication necessary to arrive at tenable conclusions. Fortunately, more and more colleges and universities are requiring their graduate students to understand and to apply sound research techniques.

Even when research studies are conducted competently, their findings rarely affect changes in instruction where it counts—in the classroom. Organizations such as Phi Delta Kappa and the International Reading Association are doing much to disseminate the results of the latest research studies, but more still needs to be done. So many teachers and administrators lack the knowledge and security not only to launch a good research project but also to use this knowledge to improve reading instruction at all levels.

In-service work in research techniques and the application of research findings needs to be done at the grass-roots level if children are to benefit from the latest research findings.

Concluding Remarks

Anyone who reads *Learning to Read: The Great Debate* can have confidence in the findings and recommendations made by the author. Dr. Chall possesses unimpeachable credentials and the interest this book has created concerning teaching beginning reading hopefully will result in improved classroom instruction.

The Great Debate will continue, of course. Chall's research, however, has provided us with some of the answers. We can use these answers to continue the Great Debate in a more informative manner and to attack related problems with a greater degree of confidence and skill.

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CHIPOLA'S DROP INS

Mertice B. Ringer

CHIPOLA JUNIOR COLLEGE
MARIANNA, FLORIDA

Janice is a personable young woman of nineteen, a high school graduate with a high school placement score of 73. She is not a candidate for enrollment in local universities. In fact, her prospects for success at any college are dim.

Johnny is a bright young man who was a big success in the extracurricular life of his school, but his lengthy string of D's hardly recommends him to college admission officials.

Marcus, a Negro, received fair grades in high school, but a college aptitude test revealed scores so low in reading and mathematics that success in these fields would be highly improbable, if not impossible.

Mary is thirty-four, a housewife and the mother of two. She finished high school sixteen years ago and now wants to attend college.

These individuals and others like them who are presently enrolled at Chipola Junior College participated in a six-weeks summer experimental program for students needing special instruction. With very little research available as a guide to the establishment of a remedial program, the Chipola staff wanted more firsthand experience in the teaching of the academically handicapped before rushing into a full schedule of remedial instruction during a regular session. The ground rules included automatic admission to Chipola Junior College for those students performing satisfactorily in the six-weeks institute, regardless of high school grades or test scores. The only qualifications for admission to the program were good health and a high school diploma. The institute was especially recommended for those graduates with test scores of less than 150.* The plan was to work with people who might otherwise be denied college admission.

The doors finally opened to thirty-six students in a Guided Studies Program in reading, English, and mathematics. Only one withdrew and thirty-five of the thirty-six students completed the six-weeks term. Thirty-one were advised of eligibility to enroll as regular students for the fall semester. Twenty-six Guided Studies students actually enrolled at Chipola, two in other colleges, one in business school, and two accepted jobs.

* The range of scores is 1-500. Florida's state universities require a qualifying score of 325 on the test for admission.

MATERIALS USED AND CLASS STRUCTURE

We chose a variety of materials to fit the needs of each student. We used the Diagnostic Reading Test, Basic Skills in Arithmetic Test, supplemented by elementary algebra problems added by the mathematics teacher, and the STEP Writing Test, Form A. On the basis of the test results, the classes were divided as nearly as possible into ability groupings.

In mathematics, there were two texts: *Basic Skills in Mathematics* and *Arithmetic: A College Approach*. One section, the lower one-third, used *Basic Skills*. The other two sections used *Arithmetic*. In addition to those texts, programmed materials in algebra, published by Britannica, were available to enable the student to progress as far as he could beyond his text.

English classes also used two books. Each student bought *The Magnetic Structure of the English Language* and *Fundamentals of English*. Additional instruction was provided through the use of hand-out materials covering a wide range of difficulty levels. Interest in spoken words was stimulated by class sessions on diction, using master tapes and tape recorders.

The basic text in reading was *A New Approach to College Reading*. The topics suggested for discussion and theme papers at the end of each selection were closely correlated with the English classes. Supplementary readings from *Efficient Reading*, the *Word Clue Books*, recorded instruction in vocabulary skills developed by Bergen Evans, and numerous newspaper and magazine articles were used. Study skills instruction was woven in and was geared to the type of reading being done and the stated purpose for reading.

The students were asked to stay on campus a minimum of four hours each day. Each of the three classes lasted for one hour. The fourth hour was utilized for meetings of the entire group when necessary, for individual instruction, and for counseling appointments with the guidance staff of the college.

"What is so unusual about Chipola's Program?" one may ask. Actually nothing is unusual about a junior college that offers remedial work for poor students, but from what we could determine from inquiries of other schools, the comparison stops there. Chipola's very meager entrance requirement is a total score of 100 or more on the high school placement test. Twenty-four of the twenty-six who enrolled for the regular term failed to make 100 on these tests. Research has shown that only about ten percent of such people normally perform satisfactorily in college. Not so with our group. An analysis of

first semester grades indicates that sixteen students are doing satisfactory work and will be retained the second semester. Ten of the sixteen have better than a two point average. Six of the twenty-six students are being retained on probation. Another unusual characteristic of our group is that of the twenty-six students who enrolled, twenty-six remained through the first semester. Their staying power was astonishing. Records show that about five to ten percent of all students withdraw prior to the end of the first semester and that those who do so usually come from the group with the lowest test scores.

The next question is, "What happened during the six weeks which might account for the high percentage of success and the high retention rate?" Those of us who worked with the program are not sure about everything that happened, but the following aspects of the program appear to have significance.

1. We kept the group together. They knew each other and had a working, friendly relationship with three full-time instructors.
2. The classes were small with a maximum enrollment of thirteen. Each instructor had time to make the student's learning a matter of his personal concern.
3. Every effort was made to provide each student with tasks that he could successfully do. Guided by the promise that everybody needs to succeed at something, we tried to capitalize on showing the rewards of success.
4. We chose a faculty who are convinced that students of low achievement are worth saving. This point deserves every consideration. Some very fine teachers do not like to teach remedial classes. Even a master teacher should be avoided unless he is convinced of the value of his task.
5. We concentrated on a few basic skills and avoided trying to cover too much ground. We felt the learning of a few things well would serve the student better than a smattering of many things.
6. We used a textbook for each class, primarily for its psychological impact on the students. They seemed to feel the need of owning a book in which they had regular assignments. In the classroom all teachers supplemented the texts with recordings, film strips, and outside reading.
7. All students retained one of the three institute instructors as a counselor for the regular session. We feel the familiarity already established has been beneficial.

It is still too early to say what the final benefit of this program will be. The administration and the teaching staff are convinced that the

program is worthwhile. We hope to try again with another group, and the staff is already looking forward to improving much of the instruction. We are asking the students themselves what they have found most helpful and what other subjects they wish we had covered. The need for a few changes is becoming evident. Even though we tried to develop specific skills, we want to tailor the English instruction even more to prepare students for passing freshman English as it is taught here. We hope to add an opportunity for each student to express himself without fear of correction so that at least one paper each week will be graded on content alone. More attention will be given to the student's ability to express his ideas in an orderly fashion and less effort expended on the why of proper grammatical construction. Programmed texts will be provided to aid students with basic grammar and punctuation.

We have realized our need for a better measuring instrument to determine the grouping ability in mathematics. Also, something new to us in computer instruction will be added. There will be ten student stations at Chipola Junior College, connected with the computer at the state university, seventy miles away. Our own mathematics teacher will program the computer with a tailor-made course of study for our students.

The reading program will give more emphasis to vocabulary instruction. A vocabulary series based on words with a high frequency of usage in the general education courses of the college is in preparation by the reading teacher and will be ready for use with the next group. We have no idea what effect these changes will have, but on the basis of our total experiences, we hope to place preparatory courses in our regular curriculum in order to provide an opportunity, at least, for all students who wish to attempt college.

None of the things we have done are really new. Perhaps the key to such success as we are enjoying with our current group of students is the employment of known factors with an abundance of dedication on the part of the teaching staff and the unflagging interest of concerned administrators.

WHY WASTE OUR TIME ON THE CULTURALLY DEPRIVED?

Pat Houseman

BATTLE CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Why should we waste our time with the culturally deprived student? Yes, I said waste. When a child is in our charge for at least ten years of his life and at the end of this time cannot function as a productive member of society, then we have wasted not only our time but also his time. We have wasted our energies, money, and talents. There is a tragic waste of human potential. What can we do to end this waste? How can we prepare the culturally deprived child to live in our complex world?

Educators very often try to place the blame for their failure on the circumstances of the child's birth and home environment. Indeed, the problem begins there but how can we re-evaluate our educational programs to fit the needs of these unfortunate children? Surely, we cannot be so cold-hearted as to leave them to their unhappy fate of frustration and despair. As reading teachers, we hold a key that will unlock many doors for these students. Improvement of reading and the related language skills can make these children more at home in the adult world.

Let's take a closer look, then, at this child that we label as culturally deprived, disadvantaged, underprivileged, or whatever the current educational jargon is calling them this year. This child comes to us from a home that is usually in the lower social and economic levels of society. In this home the child is deprived of many of the things that other children take for granted. Most important to his future educational success or failure, he is deprived of the many varied language experiences needed for initial success in reading. This child is deprived of books and other reading materials. Frequently his parents do not read because they lack the time and skill. Perhaps reading is looked upon as a waste of time or a "sissy" activity. The child is not usually read to nor does he ever see anyone reading just for enjoyment. Nobody talks to a child in this environment except perhaps in abuse or in monosyllable directives. He, therefore, is denied vocabulary-building experiences and is not accustomed to hearing or speaking in complete sentences. This impoverished child does not have the opportunity for exposure to the many experiences in life that would prepare him for future learning experiences. He has never been to a zoo or a farm or, indeed, anywhere.

We, in reading, should realize the importance of the child's self-image as related to his success in reading. The deprived child comes to us with a very poor image of himself and our educational system is designed to damage further this meager measure of self-esteem. His sub-standard language is immediately corrected and he is told that it is wrong. The child immediately senses the conflict between the standards of his family and this new and frightening institution with which he is faced. He frequently rebels.

Our deprived child is also frequently burdened with physical problems because of poor medical care as an infant or even the lack of adequate pre-natal care. The possibilities of trauma and injury are many and the interested teacher should make every effort to become aware of and try to compensate for these problems.

As soon as possible, the child is judged according to his ability level and grouped with children of the same ability. These children are not given work designed for their own needs but are usually given the same materials at a slower pace.

Later an intelligence test is given and the results usually confirm the teacher's evaluation of the child's innate intelligence. He is then tracked with children of similar abilities and is again given a watered-down version of the same materials given to all children. Even so, he frequently fails.

This is not to serve as an indictment of all schools but I am afraid that we have to admit that this pattern is all too common in our urban ghetto schools. It seems amazing that educators can continue to place so much emphasis on the results of intelligence tests when so many times we have been told of the significance of the cultural factor in the success a child experiences in taking a test. A deprived child has limited test-taking skills, therefore, he must do poorly even though his ability is equal to others who may score higher on the test. By the time this child reaches the junior high school, he has become a rebellious, frustrated, "problem child." What can we do, then, in the secondary schools to compensate for the deprivation to which this child has been subjected?

The reading teacher, therapist, consultant, or clinician who wants to help this child must be a very special kind of person. She must, most importantly, be an understanding person. She must be an accepting kind of person. She must not present a threat to the child. This child is all too often threatened in his educational experience. The reading teacher should be educated in and be fully aware of the problems

the child is faced with and should not evaluate but should understand and accept the child.

What methods should the reading teacher use to reach and teach the underprivileged child? This question cannot be answered in any simple manner because the treatment of each student should be varied to suit the personality and needs of the individual.

First and most important, the reading teacher must become acquainted with the child and, in this process, try to gain rapport with him as well as a good working relationship. Sometimes the student will be hostile. Can you blame him? He has failed so often. Perhaps genuine interest in him and compassion on the part of the teacher can get through this armor that he has donned to protect himself against the sting of failure.

Some kind of process must be developed for the teacher to ascertain the reading level and the specific needs of the student. Many of our so-called diagnostic tests are useless for this purpose because, as we have noted previously, these students are definitely not good test-takers. An informal reading inventory could be developed with which the culturally deprived child could be appraised. This would serve as a useful tool in determining needs, especially if the teacher is a trained and skilled observer.

After the needs of the student are ascertained, materials must be chosen that are appropriate and relevant to the child. Many publishers are developing reading materials that fill this need. Sets of paperback books are now available that deal specifically with urban, ghetto, and teen-age interests and problems. This child is stimulated only by reading materials that are related to his experiences and are therefore meaningful to him.

The reading teacher should have definite objectives in mind when working with the culturally deprived child. One of the most important of these is the development of study skills so that the reading improvement that, hopefully, results can be carried over into the child's work in other classes. Teaching a child how to read a textbook should result in more successful experiences in learning.

Development of problem-solving skills should also be a primary goal of the reading teacher. This can be done most easily in discussions of the reading materials. "How" and "why" questions should be helpful in guiding the student to a greater awareness of his own place in society and how to deal with his own every-day problems, now and in the future. In these discussions, the child can be helped to develop his means of self-expression. Some writing could be done centering

around the themes discussed. The teacher should make an effort not to be critical or to be too easily shocked by any of the child's statements. Only in this way can the child become aware of and develop a regard for his own ideas and thoughts.

A child who is culturally deprived cannot be blamed for what he is. These unfortunate children should be compensated rather than penalized for the fate that circumstances have dealt them. We should make every effort to ensure that our time with them is not a waste. We must see that it is a contribution to the betterment of the child's future and to the enrichment of our society and of our nation.

DID YOU SEE?

Dorothy J. McGinnis

"Reading Expectancy Formulas: A Warning Note" by George A. Simmons and Bernard J. Shapiro? The authors state that a major problem in remedial reading programs is the identification of the disabled reader. Reading expectancy formulas have been proposed as one way to solve this problem. A comparison of three of these formulas revealed that reading expectancy is not an absolute concept but is highly relative to the specific method used to determine it. The authors conclude that such formulas can be misleading if used as more than a rough indicator of reading expectancy. The article appears in the May 1968 *Journal of Reading*.

Carolyn M. Neal's report, "Sex Differences in Personality and Reading Ability," published in the *Journal of Reading* for May 1968? She attempted to find a relationship between personality characteristics and ability to read. Her findings indicate that the quiet, thoughtful, feminine, agreeable woman is a better reader and that among men the better reader is also the quiet, thoughtful person. She concludes that the able reader of either sex is the one who has more successfully accepted his role in society and, being a more adjusted person, has more energy to devote to reading.

"A Basis for Diagnosing and Treating Learning Disabilities Within the School System" by W. A. Hurst? This article published in the April 1968 issue of the *Journal of Learning Disabilities* points out that present day schools are dedicated to visual learning and that this adds to the problems of learning for the perceptually handicapped child. He sets forth a series of tests for screening the perceptually handicapped child as well as methods for providing perceptual training.

Grune and Stratton's 1967 publication, *Learning Disabilities: Educational Principles and Practices* by Doris J. Johnson and Helmer R. Myklebust? This is a clearly written book for the teacher who wants to know how to help the child who is having difficulty in learning to read.

WE SUGGEST

Eleanor Buelke

Kingston, Albert J., and Rice, Marion J.

Language

Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, 1968, pp. 46.

Emig, Janet A.; Fleming, James T.; and Popp, Helen M., Editors

Language and Learning

New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966, pp. viii +301.

In the study of the nature of man, still a frontier for earnest educators, for adventurous anthropologists, and for sincere sociologists and psychologists, the linguist is a pioneer in his own right. His increasing knowledge of the nature of language, and of the role it plays in the lives of people in any pattern of culture, can be a consequential contribution to the understanding of cognitive processes and sociological relationships in, and among, men.

Perhaps, for teachers, the primary effect of linguistic knowledge has been felt in the area of attitudes. In the past, American public school educators have been proud of the assistance they have given to other national institutions in creating equality of opportunity, and in maintaining a fluid and open society. Now, contrary to previously held middle-class values, a new awareness has arisen. Language and dialect, possible measures of some aspects of human personality, are no longer considered valid measures of human worth. This awareness may help school personnel who must deal with problems in communications, social interaction, and personal relationships. However, concern and caution are voiced by Walter Loban when he states:

To deal with such problems in schools requires sound knowledge, humane values, and great delicacy, for nothing less than human dignity, and the pupil's self image are at stake.¹

In the midst of expanding knowledge and changing values, teachers search for humane and practical insights to use in an interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of language arts. An ever-growing body of research and volume of publications serve both to help, and to confuse. Serving to clarify some issues for teachers and students are the two paperbacks suggested here. Obviously directed to dissimilar reader

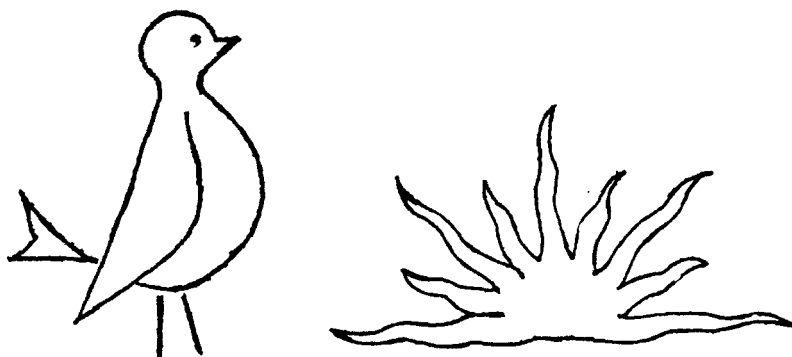
1. Walter Loban, "Teaching Children Who Speak Social Class Dialects," *Elementary English*, 45 (May, 1968), 592.

audiences, they are similar in one important aspect. Both of them have grown out of a genuinely felt need to translate new discernments about language into classroom practice.

Language, a pupil text, is intended for use with young students, probably in junior high school, or early senior high school classes. It has been developed and reported as a curriculum project under a contract with the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Its authors are serious in intent, have organized well, and have written clearly to inform and educate, not to preach and propagandize. In the expository portion, the writers explore the importance of language, and introduce the reader to some significant features about it. At the close of each chapter interesting exercises and activities to reinforce chapter learnings are suggested. Additional features are a selected list of readings and a glossary of possibly new and unfamiliar terms. This book could be of value for junior and senior high school classes in reading, as well as those in English, and other communications skills.

Language and Learning, a text for professional reading, revises and expands the 1964 Special Issue of the *Harvard Educational Review*. A theme of dissatisfaction with current teaching practices of a first language runs throughout the book. Aspects considered by individual writers vary from analysis of the child's acquisition of syntax, explanation of causes for abnormal speech and language development, and psycholinguistic theory in teaching concepts, to the development of linguistics in America and its relationship to the teaching of grammar and composition. Examination of traditional concepts of language from these new vantage points may help teachers to understand reasons behind, and need for, proposed major revisions of language curricula at all levels.

Intellectual frontiers and physical frontiers, alike, share the same potentialities for confrontation with challenges to courage, common sense, and compassion. Accompanying the stalwart, wise, rational leaders of any pioneer group are its own peculiar brands of dreamers, gold-diggers, four-flushers, witch-hunters, and impractical or misguided elite. Professional people, true to themselves and to the learners for whom they are opening new paths, choose thoughtfully among a rapidly increasing number of available leaders and resources. They temper the excitement and exhilaration to be found in new paths of language understanding with knowledge that is sound, values that are humane, and a delicate touch, preserving the human dignity of those whom they teach.



ROUND ROBIN

Dorothy E. Smith, Editor

Dear Editor:

There is much good sense in Hazel Askin's article in the Spring issue of *Reading Horizons*, "Is It New?" It is a healthy deflation of ostensibly "new" ideas or methods with which people may be so carried away as to lose all feeling for perspective. And it is surely unrealistic to presume that there can be only "*one right* way of teaching reading to everyone." A remark seems called for, however, concerning the opening sentence, which is in no way necessary to the article as a whole:

"Education by hard, cold definition is a drawing or leading out . . . from the Latin verb *educo*."

It is amazing how widely this bit of armchair philology has been circulated and uncritically accepted, and continues to be year after year. Again and again in educational "literature" one finds the claim that our word *education* comes from "Latin *educo*, to draw out, implying the cultivation and systematic development of the natural powers."¹

In line with this explanation a newspaper article on Abraham Lincoln, considered as a self-educated man, tells us that "education means, in its original sense, merely the drawing out of latent abilities"² This derivation of the word has been insisted upon as an argument in favor of certain methods, or a certain "philosophy," of teaching. University presidents have asserted that "to educate is to

1. N. Allworth Beach, *The American Citizen*, May 1940, p. 44.

2. Willis Thornton, newspaper syndicated article, "Lincoln's Road to Education," published February 12, 1939.

educate; to make something out of a man rather than to put something into him.”³

Year after year, on the strength of this alleged etymology, it has been urged that the efforts of a teacher should be devoted to “bringing out” the latent powers of children and youth, rather than injecting knowledge into them, because, forsooth, “education” signifies “drawing out.”⁴

Yet any good amateur Latinist ought to know that our word *education* was not derived in quite that way. It does not represent a figurative application of Caesar’s military verb *educō*, “to lead out (troops),” nor can we be sure that it ever meant “drawing out” at all. *Educatio* came not from *EDUCō*, *EDUCere*, but from *Educo*, *eduCARE*; the two words stood far apart in meaning. This verb from which *education* really developed meant simply “to nourish,” “to bring up,” “to cause to grow.” The Latins used it to mean “bringing up” or “rearing” in the widest sense, and applied it to the raising of poultry and domestic animals as well as children. It could also refer to the training of animals to obey commands. Certainly it never suggested to them any theory about drawing out the latent capacities of a pupil in school.

The French word *éducation* has kept practically the Latin meaning; that is why our word “education” will hardly do as a translation for it. *Bien éduqué* does not mean “well educated” (*bien instruit*), but what we should call “well bred” or “well brought up;” it represents not mere schooling but the finer, deeper, more intrinsic quality that we call “good breeding.” It has often been said in France that “instruction is the business of the school, while *éducation* is the business of the home.”

No doubt it is desirable to “draw out” the latent abilities of the young, but certainly this is not the *whole* process of teaching. The true signification of Latin *educatio*—“bringing up”—suggests a more plausible analogy. The essential idea of “nurture” is the supplying of food, material which the body receives from without, which it digests and assimilates, and which enables it to support life and growth. Surely it is clear that a good teacher does not merely “draw out” his pupils, but gives them the mental nourishment they require. He knows

3. President Arthur Twining Hadley of Yale, *Harper's* 146:16, 1923. Quoted, with evident approval, by Joseph G. Masters, *Journal of the National Education Association*, December 1924, p. 319.

4. For instance, *Books Abroad*, University of Oklahoma Press, Spring 1939, p. 176.

that the development which takes place within is constantly dependent upon the nutriment which is absorbed from without. That is how we have come to possess the very words with which we talk—and think—about “education.” They are part of the social heritage that the teacher tries to transmit as best he can.

Of all the words that have peculiar potency in educational discussions, surely none is more conspicuous than the word *education* itself. Often it seems to be pronounced or written with a sort of reverence, as if it expressed something sacred. It appears to rank decidedly higher in the professional vocabulary than “training,” “instruction,” or “indoctrination,” terms that are even used to disparage methods not deemed worthy of the honorable name of “education.” It might really be a good thing for teachers once in a while to devote a little non-wishful thinking to the fundamental or “proper” meaning of this much-used word.⁵

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5. Louis Foley, “*Word-Education and the word, Education,*” *School and Society*, August 23, 1941, p. 113.

TEN-SECOND REVIEWS

Blanche O. Bush

The best way to teach reading is not to teach reading but to provide the occasion . . . in which reading functions . . . Let pupils read to learn, incidentally, they will learn to read.
—J. L. Meriam

Atwater, Joan, "Toward Meaningful Measurement," *Journal of Reading* (March, 1968), 11:429-434.

This informal investigation of eleven reading improvement workbooks is an attempt to clarify in some measure what we mean when we talk about evaluating reading comprehension. It centers on the definition of comprehension not alone as it is defined in these texts, but as it is measured in the tests and exercises included in these workbooks. This study is a step toward clarification of what is being done and the direction to be taken in the future. A challenge of finding the means for testing a more significant level of comprehension is indicated.

Bagford, Jack, "Reading Readiness Scores and Success in Reading," *The Reading Teacher* (January, 1968), 21:324-328.

In this study the author investigated the relationships between reading readiness scores and later success in reading by correlating reading readiness tests with fourth, fifth, and sixth grade achievement test scores. Within the limitations of the study the data seem to warrant the following conclusions: (1) Reading readiness test scores are significantly related to later success in reading. (2) Reading readiness test scores are as related to later success in reading as they are with early success.

Center, Clare, "Senior High Taped Lessons," *The Pointer For Special Class Teachers and Parents of the Handicapped* (Spring, 1968), 12:42-44.

The author is convinced that taped lessons are one of the most effective ways of teaching the mentally retarded on the secondary level. Such lessons give the student the effect of individualized instruction, maintain his attention on the work at hand, and are a multi-sensory approach using eye, ear, and hand.

Chasnoff, Robert E., "Two Alphabets: A Follow Up," *The Elementary School Journal* (February, 1968) 68:251-257.

This is a report on second graders who as first graders took part in a study that compared achievement when experimental classes used the initial teaching alphabet and the control classes used the traditional orthography. It was concluded, that there were advantages for either population with respect to scores on a standardized test of language ability and ratings of writing samples. These findings cause one to refrain from making any claims for or against the initial teaching alphabet. Results for the second graders showed no significant difference between experimental and control groups.

Crescimbeni, Joseph, "The Need for Diagnostic Evaluation," *Education* (November-December, 1968), 88:160-164.

Tests prepared systematically by the classroom teacher may be an inestimable help in evaluating the effectiveness of instruction and in discovering individual needs. Some instructional factors to consider when preparing tests are: (1) Determine the purpose of test. (2) Carefully plan test questions. (3) Make test specific. (4) Write questions well. (5) Make test comprehensive.

Criscuolo, Nicholas, "Enrichment for Culturally Disadvantaged Readers," *School and Society* (March 30, 1968), 96:219-222.

One implication which the author has drawn from this study is that enrichment should not be reserved for the academically able or one particular social class.

Davis, Sandra S., "Pied Piper Way to Reading," *High Points in the New York City Public Schools*, Winter, 1968, pp. 8-10.

The author's experience indicates that music and dramatics can be used with other basic and creative methods of teaching reading to help insure maximum achievement for all children.

Denney, Patti, "Starting from Scratch," *Journal of Reading* (January, 1968), 11:271-275.

This article discusses the provisions made by one school system for the professional growth of reading teachers newly

appointed under ESEA Title I Funds. There were five stages of the in-service program. (1) An overview of reading, disadvantaged children, and the Reading Improvement Project. (2) Exploration of methods and materials. (3) Emphasis on Diagnosis. (4) Teacher responsibility for content of meeting. (5) Teacher research.

Durr, William K., "The Nature of Reading," *Helping Your Child Grow in Reading*. International Reading Association, Newark, Delaware, 1968.

Basically, reading is translating the printed language into familiar spoken language, but for the mature reader much more is involved. It involves reading for a variety of purposes, varying the rate according to the purpose and difficulty of the reading material. The nature of the reading act varies according to the maturity of the reader.

Fennimore, Flora, "Reading and the Self Concept," *Journal of Reading* (March, 1968), 11:447-451+.

This study, limited as it was by numbers and duration, raises more questions than it answers. The college students involved in the study not only improved significantly in reading achievement but they also significantly altered their view of ideal self. Was it the nature of the course? Personal contact? Could same results be achieved in varied settings?

Furness, Edna Lue, "Pupils, Teachers and Sensory Approaches to Spelling," *Education* (February-March, 1968), 88:267-274.

The author describes various approaches to learning to spell, points out factors affecting learning, and suggests effective teaching procedures to follow. The first step in teaching spelling is to present common words the pupil must write and use. The second, and perhaps the most important, is to teach the pupil an effective method of learning the words he knows and uses. The learning involves perceiving the word, pronouncing it, recognizing its meaning, visualizing the configuration of the word and storing away a visual image of it.

Gardner, James and Grayce Ransom, "Academic Reorientation, A Counseling Approach to Remedial Readers," *The Reading Teacher* (March, 1968), 21:529-536+.

This paper reports the initial findings of a pilot project with remedial readers in which an attempt has been made to develop counseling procedures which would be directly relevant to the student's school learning problem. This counseling procedure is termed "academic reorientation" in order to specify its general goal.

Hackney, Ben H., Jr., "Reading Achievement and Word Recognition Skills," *The Reading Teacher* (March, 1968), 21:515-518.

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the word recognition skills normally taught in a basal reading series program had been acquired by a random sample of fourth grade students in the public schools of North Carolina. The study identified the word recognition skills possessed by the students and attempted to answer the following questions. (1) Is there a basic pattern of word recognition skills acquired by students at designated reading achievement levels? (2) Are there word recognition skills which are commonly taught in a basal reading series program that do not contribute to reading achievement? Data revealed a consistent pattern of word recognition skills for students in designated reading level achievement groups. The author also interpreted data to mean that word recognition skills measured by the Doren Test contributed to reading achievement.

Harris, Albert J., "Psychological Basis of Reading in the United States," *Reading Instruction*, An I.R.A. Publication, Newark, Delaware, 1966, pp. 336-346.

This paper attempted to review significant new contributions to knowledge in several aspects of child development. Consideration was given to the following topics in relation to the reading process: reading readiness, intellectual development, language development, perceptual development, lateral dominance, physical development, cultural factors and personality development. The author stated that we do not yet have final answers to most of the important questions concerning child development and reading.

Hayward, Priscilla, "Evaluating Diagnostic Reading Tests," *The Reading Teacher* (March, 1968), 21:523-529.

This article is intended only as a guide in evaluating diagnostic reading tests. The final judgment must come from the teacher for only he knows what will work best with his children. Three criteria are suggested as guidelines for reviewing diagnostic tests. (1) How does the test measure the skills and do the subscores represent meaningful areas for providing remedial instruction? (2) Are the subscore reliabilities sufficiently high (above .90) for individual use? (3) Are the intercorrelations among subtests sufficiently low (below .60) to warrant differential diagnoses?

Hildreth, Gertrude, "On First Looking into A Greek Primer," *The Reading Teacher* (February, 1968), 21:453-463.

In this article Hildreth describes in a personal forthright manner her observations of Greek Children in Athens learning to read and write in the first and third grades. She discusses how the children learn these skills in a language which is written with a phonetic alphabet and with a regular consistent spelling system.

Laffey, James L., "The ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading," *Journal of Reading* (January, 1968), 11:293-300.

This is the first in a series designed to keep teachers and researchers informed of ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) services. ERIC makes available to teachers, administrators, and researchers information derived from the accelerated programs in research and development which are characteristic of this decade in education.

Lerner, Janet W., "A Global Theory of Reading and Linguistics," *The Reading Teacher* (February, 1968), 21:416-421.

The purpose of this paper was twofold: first to discuss a global theory of reading, that is, what are the major aspects of the field called reading, and what are the elements that should be considered within each of the major aspects, second to

discuss the role that linguistics can play within such a global theory, that is, at what points can linguistic findings be applied?

Levine, Shirley, "Teaching Readiness in Reading to the Immature," *Education* (February-March, 1968), 88:260-261.

The author suggests twelve methods which may be used in teaching slow learners. (1) Appeal to children through their auditory senses, (2) Introduce concepts by moving from intuitive to level of awareness, (3) Strengthen the power of association by presenting parts in relation to whole, (4) Use mediums of arts and crafts to help children develop small muscles of eyes and fingers, (5) Watch for opportunities to relate food to subject matter, (6) Use words and concepts that personally involve the child, (7) Maintain an orderly and calm arrangement of classroom routine but supplement it with a system of rewards, (8) Develop and use built-in readiness procedures, (9) Present vocabulary for reading, concepts and generalizations for science, mathematics and social studies apart from formal basic texts, (10) Teach reading through the look-say-phonetic method, (11) Suffer no self recriminations, (12) Be patient at all times.

Mattila, Ruth H., "The Reading Problem of the Big Boys," *Journal of Reading* (March, 1968), 11:452-455.

This article is concerned with gathering a collection of easy reading books for boys, twelve to sixteen years of age, who may have second to fourth grade reading skills. The author presents these guidelines: (1) Avoid all basal readers. (2) Avoid all growing up books such as "Helpful Jimmy" who holds the board while daddy saws. (3) Avoid picture books and beginners' books. (4) Avoid books with a middle class suburban family orientation. (5) Avoid books which require well-developed concepts in time and space orientation or historical and geographical data. (6) Avoid easy to read classics written down for a poor reader. Among the promising areas left to explore are animal and nature stories, sports and sport heroes, adventure and mystery biography with rugged non-bookish heroes, folk literature and tall tales humor, space exploration and selected historical fiction.

McClane, Mary B., "Dramatics Improve Reading." *The Pointer For Special Class Teachers and Parents of the Handicapped*, Spring, 1968, 12:7.

Dramatics is the author's favorite technique for motivating the reading for mentally retarded children. The normal child can appreciate the benefit of systematic drill, but for slow learners there is little joy in such an approach. Simple dramatic activities leading to formal plays and programs foster happy associations with learning. In addition there is more enrichment connected with the learning.

McCracken, Robert A., "Supervision of Reading Instruction in Junior High School," *Journal of Reading* (January, 1968), 11:276-284.

This is a report of a year-long program with junior high school teachers aimed at improving instruction in reading. The program began with a seven-week summer session and continued through the academic year with monthly seminars, bi-monthly observations in the teachers' classrooms and evaluations by a team of university professors of reading methodology.

Napoli, Joseph, "Environmental Factors and Reading Ability," *The Reading Teacher* (March, 1968) 21:552-557+.

The number of books in the home might not always determine a good or poor reader but in this survey the honors student or the good readers generally had more books and reading matter at home and more emphasis was placed on education. Results seem to point out that the home environment greatly influences the child's reading habits and ability.

Niensted, Serena, "A Group Use of the Fernald Technique," *Journal of Reading* (March, 1968) 11:435-440+.

This method involves teacher-prepared duplicated manuscripts to be traced by the pupils as the graphemes are pronounced, followed by an underlining of the syllables and a reading of the passage. The content of the duplicated sheets can be chosen to fit any requirements or aims of the class. This method requires the use of ears, eyes, fingers, and muscles.

Oliver, Marvin E., "Reading Instruction. Preventive? Remedial?" *The National Elementary Principal* (February, 1968), 47:30-33.

The author recommends that one highly trained expert on the causation and prevention of beginning reading problems be employed to serve the entire school district as a reading consultant instead of an expensive staff of remedial teachers to treat intermediate grade reading difficulties. This preventive philosophy does not claim that all potential reading failures can be eliminated, however.

Racette, Rene J., "Special English Classes for Poor Readers," *Journal of Reading* (March, 1968), 11:441-446+.

The concern for English students who have reading deficiencies is more than realized by most secondary school English teachers. This article is a description of what one school did to cope with the problem. The author states that this program has been a success. It not only increased reading abilities but also, in the opinion of the teachers involved, has greatly changed attitudes and self concepts.

Rauch, Sidney J., "A Checklist for the Evaluation of Reading Programs," *The Reading Teacher* (March, 1968), 21:519-522.

This checklist devised by the author can give guidance to the administrators, supervisors, or reading specialists who may be called upon to evaluate a school or system-wide program. The items listed cover five areas: (1) The reading program, (2) Administrators and supervisors, (3) Teaching staff, (4) Pupils, and (5) Parents.

Robinson, H. Alan, "Developing Lifetime Readers," *Journal of Reading* (January, 1968), 11:261-267.

This article attempts to bring together a variety of suggestions for developing lifetime readers of secondary school students. Staff members who make their own reading visible, who make books attractive and accessible to students, who know adolescent literature and relate it to the needs of their students, play a significant role in shaping the leisure-time activities of their adolescent charges.

Robinson, H. Alan and Earl Hanson, "Reliability of Measures of Reading Achievement," *The Reading Teacher* (January, 1968), 21:307-313+.

The results of this study demonstrate that some highly reliable standardized instruments for measuring selected factors that may be related to reading success or failure are available. On the other hand, the results show that some tests often used need to be more carefully studied and perhaps refined. This study does contribute information about reliability but the reader must bear in mind that high reliability is not necessarily related to validity.

Robinson, Helen M., "Provisions Made for Children in the U.S. Who Have Difficulties in Reading," *Reading Instruction—An International Forum—First World Congress on Reading, Paris, 1966*, pp. 127-130.

In the United States provisions for children with reading difficulties vary from adequate to meager. Most elementary and many high schools are aware of the need for special help but some have been unable to finance such programs or to secure trained teachers. The current trend appears to be toward prevention of difficulties by the use of a relatively new specialist called the reading consultant.

Sawyer, Rita and Lucille B. Taylor, "Evaluating Teacher Effectiveness in Reading Instruction," *Journal of Reading* (March, 1968), 11:415-483+.

In-service education should produce changes in teaching. In this program 15 items were identified as the teaching goals to be stressed: (1) Knowledge of appropriate instructional materials, (2) Effective use of materials, (3) Understanding reading process, (4) Balanced program, (5) Emphasis on comprehension, (6) Thought questions, (7) Guidance in purposeful reading, (8) Application of skills to content areas, (9) Relation of content to real experiences of children, (10) Attention to individual differences, (11) Effective grouping, (12) Diagnosing reading status of each pupil, (13) Encouragement of free reading, (14) Sharing materials with other teachers, (15) Leadership in in-service programs.

Seymour, Dorothy Z., "Three Linguistic Problems in Using i.t.a." *The Reading Teacher* (February, 1968) 21:422-425.

The author discusses three linguistic problems that arise with the use of i.t.a. She concludes that i.t.a. can probably be of some help to both teachers and students. However, time must still be spent on working out the linguistic problems and incongruities of this initial approach to teaching children to read.

Spache, George D., "The Perceptual Basis of Reading: United States of America," *Reading Instruction—An International Forum*, Paris, 1966, pp. 181-190.

This paper deals almost exclusively with the visual aspects of perception in reading. Three theories of perception in the area of reading were discussed. Despite the volume of research available there still remains in this area, as in many other facets of perception, the need for continued applied research.

Spitzer, Lillian K., "Selected Materials on the Language Experience Approach to Reading Instruction," *I.R.A. Annotated Bibliography*.

The first section of the bibliography, Reference and Research, lists materials for study and research to increase understanding of the language experience approach and its philosophy. The second part, Practices and Ideas, contains many practical suggestions. The Practices and Ideas for Written Expression singles out for special emphasis the use of self-expression through writing.

Viox, Ruth G., "Successful Practices in a Junior High School Summer Reading Program," *Journal of Reading* (January, 1968), 11:285-292.

This article describes a six weeks corrective program for poor readers in the sixth and seventh grades from diagnosis to final evaluation. It discusses: (1) Setting goals, (2) Diagnosing pupils' needs and weaknesses, (3) Organizing classes, (4) Using commercial materials, (5) Employing successful teaching techniques, and (6) Reporting to parents and evaluation of program.

Wardhaugh, Ronald, "Linguistics Reading Dialogue," *Reading Teacher* (February, 1968), 21:432-441+.

Certain linguistic principles must be recognized in a definition of reading. The first principle is that a clear understanding of any kind of language use can be based only on discovering answers to the questions of what language is and how language works. The second principle is that there is an important distinction between competence and performance. The third principle is that most language behavior is rule-governed behavior and this fact must be taken into account if one is to seek the reinforcement or change of existing behavior.

Whipple, Gertrude, "The Concept of Reading Readiness in the United States of America," *Reading Instruction, An International Forum—First World Congress on Reading, Paris, 1966*, pp. 84-90.

Our emerging concept of reading readiness provides for prereading curriculum for four-and-five-year-olds, and postpones reading for immature six-year-olds a few months or a year or more. It also introduces reading in the kindergarten for the most capable children. For many others, systematic instruction in reading is begun in the first grade after several weeks of orientation. Our concept of reading readiness is kept flexible in order that teachers and school officials will be able to meet the needs of the individual child.

White, Evelyn Mae, "Linguistic Learning Cycles," *The Reading Teacher* (February, 1968), 21:411-415.

The author has outlined one possible instructional program for beginning reading, involving linguistic learning cycles. It is a program leading to the discovery of word patterns. Ideas emphasized in this program include: (1) Writing is used as a tool in beginning reading, (2) Children can follow letters to word process without the phonic step, (3) Spelling patterns are a valuable key to reading, (4) The concept that infants learning to speak and a child learning to read and write involve parallel linguistic learning cycles.

READING DEMONSTRATIONS AND WORKSHOP

Sponsored by

THE PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL CLINIC

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan

General Theme: *Some Strategies in Teaching*

DATE	TOPIC
Tuesday, July 2	Making the Most of Informal Inventories
Tuesday, July 9	Creative Instruction in Reading
Tuesday, July 16	Group Therapy, An Individualized Approach
Tuesday, July 23	Creative Dramatics as Therapy
Tuesday, July 30	Acquainting Parents with the Reading Needs of Their Child
Tuesday, August 6	Team Action in Diagnosis and Treatment

These demonstrations are an integral part of the course, Educational Therapy in Reading, which offers 2 hrs. of undergraduate or graduate credit. Visitors are invited to the demonstrations and discussions which begin promptly at 1:20 p.m. All meetings are held in Room 2302, Sangren Hall, West Campus.

