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## Ten Second Reviews

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# TEN SECOND REVIEWS

*Blanche O. Bush*

Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe  
and take for granted, nor to find talk and discourse, but  
to weigh and consider. —Bacon

Ames, Wilbur S., "The Understanding Vocabulary of First Grade Pupils," *Elementary English* (January, 1964), 41:64-69.

The purpose of this study was to construct and validate a test to measure the estimated size of the basic English vocabulary of grade one pupils. The writer's findings show that of the 272 first grade children tested the mean basic vocabulary estimate was 12,456 with no significant difference in size of vocabulary between boys and girls.

Burns, Paul C., "Evaluation of Silent Reading," *Education* (March, 1964), 84:411-415.

The best diagnosis and evaluation are useless unless they are used as a blueprint for instruction. Burns emphasizes that the whole purpose of the teacher's observing and recording of individual strengths and weaknesses is to adjust instruction to detected needs. Furthermore, good teaching implies continuous diagnosis and evaluation.

Burton, William H., and Joseph Ilika, "Some Arguments About Reading," *Education* (March, 1964), 84:387-393.

If you are speaking of reading, the authors report it is more than likely that you are having an argument. The arguments usually center upon questions of teaching methods, processes, and techniques rather than upon major problems and issues. The arguments, they say, indicate wide-spread unawareness of known facts and of historical background. This is not a criticism of teachers but of the teacher training programs.

Byington, Jean Gregory, and Alyse Gregory Powys, "An Inside Story of the McGuffey Readers," *Elementary English* (November, 1963), 40:743-748.

A revival of interest in McGuffey's Readers prompted the authors to write an account of the part played in the books'

early history by their maternal grandfather, Timothy Stone Pinneo.

Cordts, Anna D., "When Phonics is Functional," *Elementary English* (November, 1963), 49:748-751+.

The author states that phonics may be said to function effectively in reading when it enables the reader to come so close to the word's identity that with the aid of the context he can guess the word. This precludes any attempt to sound out the word in order to identify it. She asks, "Is the modern approach to reading really responsible for children's inability to cope with the reading vocabulary? Or, could the methods of teaching phonics be at fault?"

Dane, Chase, "For Reading Out Loud!" *The PTA Magazine* (November, 1963), 58:13.

The fun of sharing a book through reading aloud in the evening after dinner often results in more time devoted to discussion than in actual reading. According to Dane, this gives one an opportunity to become better acquainted with the author and his story.

Davis, David C., "Phonemic Structural Approach to Initial Reading Instruction," *Elementary English* (March, 1964), 41:218-224.

The findings of the author's investigation of a linguistic approach to reading instruction carried on during the period of 1959 to 1961 indicate that phonemic structural material is no better nor less useful than other materials. Davis believes that further investigations should be made.

Devine, Thomas G., "Can We Teach Critical Thinking?" *Elementary English* (February, 1964), 41:154-156.

Devine states that no matter how noble our intentions or how grandly we phrase our objective, the unpleasant truth remains, we cannot teach critical thinking as a process in itself. "We can teach ABOUT critical thinking."

Figurel, J. Allen, "A Coordinated Language Arts Approach to Spelling," *Education* (February, 1964), 94:352-357.

In this article the author points out that English words are quite difficult to spell and suggests that the best way to teach spelling today is through coordinated usage of all the language arts. Many skills taught in reading are readily transferred to spelling. The trend in spelling to understand words through their analysis can be traced directly to reading where word recognition skills are basic to success.

Frame, Norman, "The Availability of Reading Materials for Teachers and Pupils at the Primary Level," *Elementary English* (March, 1964), 41:224-230.

Findings from the author's study indicate that the number of trade books per classroom average more than 157 books. In most schools the teachers are allowed to select their own books and more than half of the books have been published within the past ten years. Professional reading and preparation of teachers' books average slightly more than two books on teaching of reading per library and periodicals dealing largely with reading average .67 per school. More than 45% of the teachers possess books on teaching of reading, and 14% have personal subscriptions to professional magazines.

Goldberg, Lillie Z., "Development of Tastes and Interests," *Education* (March, 1964), 84:393-397.

"To whet the appetite of the small child for adventures with books is a responsibility of both parents and teachers." To stimulate children to read, teachers must be familiar with children's books and authors. The teacher's own interest in children's literature is very important to her teaching success. "Love for reading is not taught, it is created; not required, but inspired; not demanded, but exemplified; not exacted, but quickened; and not solicited, but activated."

Goodman, Kenneth S., "The Linguistics of Reading," *The Elementary School Journal* (April, 1964), 64:355-362.

Goodman discusses Linguistics of Reading and urges that this important new knowledge about language, how it functions, and how it is learned, be assimilated into reading instruction.

Groff, Patrick, "A Check on Individualized Reading," *Education* (March, 1964), 84:397-402.

A survey was conducted by the author to evaluate the principles and practices of individualized reading. From his investigation he has inferred that the greatest problems in this approach are: (1) lack of sufficient books; (2) an inadequate program of word analysis skills that are integrated into the individualized reading program; (3) inflexible grouping; (4) refutation of criticism of individualized reading programs. These criticisms that individualized reading programs do not develop study skills nor wide reading interests are actually the strongest features of the typical individualized reading program.

Groff, Patrick, "Comparisons of Individualized and Ability Grouping Approaches to Teaching Reading: A Supplement," *Elementary English* (March, 1964), 41:238-242.

Ten studies are reviewed. This is a supplement to Groff's original comparison which appeared in the March, 1963 issue of *Elementary English*.

Hahn, William P., "Phonics: A Boon to Spelling," *The Elementary School Journal* (April, 1964), 64:383-387.

From the results of the author's investigation of third, fourth, fifth, and sixth graders, he concluded that intensive phonics instruction in reading does not increase spelling ability, at least with pupils in the primary grades.

Hart, Hazel C., "Needed: More Literature Reading," *Education* (February, 1964), 84:339-342.

In this article the author enumerates some of the singular contributions of literature and cautions us that today, as never before, we should recognize these important contributions to the intellectual, social, and emotional growth of our children.

Jacobs, Leland B., "Teaching Children More About Words and Their Ways," *Elementary English* (January, 1964), 41:30-34+.

If, through the language arts, a child is to bring meaning to, and take meaning from, word signs, signals, and symbols, he must know many things about words and their ways which will help him to be a discriminative and skillful user of language. Jacobs urges teachers to teach children to become "word-wise" and to detect word clues.

Krien, Percy, "A Newspaper for Remedial Reading," *Education* (March, 1964), 84: 418-422.

The author used a Class-Made Newspaper with a group of below average ability children with reading comprehension scores from "0" to "two months in the second grade" and vocabulary scores ranging from "low" first grade to "high" second grade level. The newspaper served as a means of helping the children develop skills in reading, handwriting, creative writing, and spelling. Other objectives were bolstering self-confidence, providing opportunities to achieve in a school situation, and providing individual help when needed.

Larrick, Nancy, "Children's Book Clubs and the Reading Explosion," *Elementary English* (February, 1964), 41:165-166.

Larrick reports that documentation of our current Reading Explosion is provided by the nearly 50 million books which are distributed each year through 30 to 35 book clubs to youngsters of all ages.

Larrick, Nancy, "Textbooks and Teaching Aids," *PTA Magazine* (December, 1963), 58:4-7.

To expect every child to read a book that fits only 16% of the class is to invite boredom, frustration and failure. Instead of following the old practice of beginning with the textbook and trying to fit the child to the book, master teachers have learned to begin with the child. This means easy books for slow readers, mature subject matter for those with more grown-up interests, and spelling lists tailored to the needs of each child with tests as they are needed for the single child. Only when

teaching aids are used creatively for the best interest of each child can we hope to develop the zest for learning that lasts a lifetime.

LeFevre, Carl A., "A Longer Look at Let's Read," *Elementary English* (March, 1964), 41:199-203+.

The purpose of this article is to examine the Bloomfield proposal in this perspective, with a view of the future. LeFevre asks, "What is reading?" and discusses briefly various definitions. As he sees it, reading is basically a language-related process that must be studied in relation to what is known about the structure of the American language. The fundamental problem of reading instruction, as the author sees it, is to teach the relationships of the graphic system, writing and printing, to language as a whole, that is, to speech.

Margolin, Edythe, "Do We Really Prize Creativity?" *The Elementary School Journal* (December, 1963), 64:117-122.

Although most teachers agree that resourcefulness, critical thinking, and creativity promote new ideas or new combinations of old ideas, not all teachers are willing to meet the challenge of working with pupils who have these qualities. The pupil who is critical during a discussion, according to the author, is injecting vitality into the thinking of many of his listeners, including the teacher. The critical pupil does not always make life easier for us.

Micucci, Pat, "Let's NOT Teach Reading in Kindergarten," *Elementary English* (March, 1964), 41:246-251.

There is little doubt, the author states, that kindergarten children can be taught to read. The question is, "Should they be taught to read, and if so, to what extent is formalized instruction desirable? Research supports the validity of informal programming in kindergarten. The kindergarten teacher needs to know why she does what she does and be able to explain the special needs of kindergarten children to administrators, parents, and articulation groups.

Parke, Margaret B., "Reading for Specific Purposes," *Elementary English* (March, 1964), 41:242-246.

The skills of reading and reading rates are dictated by the purpose for reading. Parke emphasizes that more attention should be directed to the purposes for which children read. A suggested balanced program of reading should include reading to keep informed, to find answers to questions, to solve problems, to follow an interest or curiosity, to follow directions, to gain personal satisfaction, to share materials with others, and to evaluate personal writing.

Powell, William R., "The Joplin Plan: An Evaluation," *The Elementary School Journal* (April, 1964), 64:387-393.

The Joplin plan which basically is a device for grouping children in the intermediate grades homogeneously or on interclass basis was investigated by the author. In the light of evidence obtained it was concluded that the Joplin plan of organization produces no significant differences in reading achievement, however, it did encourage wider reading of recreational materials and can produce higher teacher interest and enthusiasm for the teaching of reading or content subjects.

Regar, Roger, "Reading Ability and CMAS Scores in Educable Mentally Retarded Boys," *American Journal of Mental Deficiency* (March, 1964), 68:652-656.

Within recent years increasing attention has been given to the relationship between anxiety and various aspects of children's academic performance. Part of this interest can be attributed to the development of scales that purport to measure anxiety, among them the children's form of the Manifest Anxiety Scale (CMAS). In the author's study, his findings indicate that boys lower in reading ability had higher CMAS scores than boys higher in reading ability.

Rosenheck, Viola, "The Use of Reading Test Results in Counseling," *The Personnel and Guidance Journal* (November, 1963) Bibliography, 42:290-295.

The test scores usually given in terms of percentile rank are one of four sources of information found in most of the reading tests used on the college level. The other three sources of information are the relationships between the scores, the answers to specific test items, and the over-all pattern of answers. From these four sources counselors can gain six kinds of information about the student, namely: (1) the degree of difficulty of reading material which he can handle, (2) areas of reading deficiency, (3) possible deficiencies in other study skill areas, (4) the kind of reading assignments he probably can handle, (5) clues of his mental content in various areas, and (6) minimal clues to his academic challenge.

Seegars, James E., Jr., and Harriett A. Rose, "Verbal Comprehension and Academic Success in College," *Personnel and Guidance Journal* (November, 1963), 42:295-296.

From the results of the investigation by the authors it can be inferred that a student with an average IQ for college students and high level of verbal understanding will more likely earn "A's" and "B's" in college than will a student with above average intellectual capacity and poor reading comprehension. Implication of this finding might be the inclusion of Diagnostic Reading Tests for all freshmen so that those deficient in this area might be immediately routed toward special classes.

Staiger, Ralph C., "Agreements About Phonics," *Elementary English* (March, 1964), 41:204-205.

A Planning Committee of 27 conferees met with the author with the expressed purpose of determining their agreement on phonics. Six points on which they were in agreement are: (1) Phonics is one of the essential skills that help children identify printed words they have not seen before and then understand the meaning that these words represent; (2) Without phonics most children cannot become self-reliant, discriminating, efficient readers; (3) It is not true that our schools in general employ mainly a "sight word" method; (4) No single device, such as phonics, can reach across the range of skills that an efficient reader uses; (5) The beginning reader, simultaneously with the learning of words that are common in his speaking vocabu-

lary, begins to use the skills with which he will be able to figure out other words. Essential among these skills is phonics; (6) Teachers must understand the constituent parts of a good reading program, including phonics.

Stauffer, Russell G., "The Role of Group Instruction in Reading," *Elementary English* (March, 1964), 41:230-235.

Stauffer points out that the use of group directed reading activities is not a substitute for adaptability, intelligence, and common sense. However, to provide the training needed to develop clear thinking, self-reliant, and independent readers, a methodology that gives pupils an opportunity to operate in a semi-independent situation such as group instruction is required.

Strang, Ruth, "Effective Materials for Teaching Reading," *The Instructor* (March, 1964), 73:53+.

Public criticism of methods of teaching reading, especially of basal readers, has resulted in a minor revolution in the teaching of reading. The criticism is along several lines: (1) neglect of phonics, (2) unnecessarily limited vocabulary, (3) too little attention to the structure of the English language as an aid to comprehension, (4) uninteresting, unstimulating content of poor literary quality, bearing little relation to the reader's life experiences and his natural spoken language, and (5) insufficient provision for individual differences. Strang discusses ways to meet these criticisms.

Vilscek, Elaine C., "Reading—At the Ends of Rainbows," *Education* (February, 1964), 84:329-334.

Although the trends in reading fill us with optimism, certain gaps exist in current instructional programs. These gaps exist, Vilscek reports, because school systems lack funds, are unfamiliar with current instructional innovations, or fail to evaluate and remedy existing conditions. Through research and greater effort toward improvement in these areas, today's children will arrive at the ends of rainbows carrying pots of gold along tomorrow's highways.

Whipple, Gertrude, "An Experiment in Detroit. Multicultural Primers for Today's Children," *The Education Digest* (February, 1964), 29:27-30.

In 1962 the Detroit City Schools Reading Program introduced three preprimers illustrated with multi-racial characters, prepared with the culturally deprived child in mind. The data collected during the experimental stage and the comments from parents, teachers, and pupils are believed by Whipple to show that this series, oriented to city life, is used successfully by culturally-varied children.

Witty, Paul A., "Individualized Reading: A Postscript," *Elementary English* (March, 1964), 41:211-217.

Efforts to compare conventional or traditional textbook procedures with individualized reading have yielded contradictory claims. Some studies seem to show superior results for individualized procedures and some for "basal" instruction. Similarly there are variations in practice when teachers follow individualized instruction. One thing, Witty believes, is unmistakably clear, satisfactory results can be and are obtained from the individualized reading method. Witty concludes that the most justifiable procedure is developmental reading in which both individualized or personalized as well as group procedures are employed.

Wozencraft, Marian, "Word Meaning Difficulties," *Elementary English* (January, 1964), 41:44-47.

From this study the author has inferred that as children advance in the grades one of the chief problems in reading changes from inability to understand and get meaning from paragraphs to trouble with word meaning.