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*Reading*

# HORIZONS



WINTER 1965



# *Reading* **HORIZONS**

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## *Editorial Comment*

### ILLITERACY AND DROPOUTS

There is a relationship between dropouts and their parental educational and income levels according to the director of population studies at the Census Bureau. He shows that among 16 year old boys whose family income is under \$3,000:

One in three are dropouts if their parents did not complete grade school.

One in five are dropouts if their parents finished grade school but not high school.

One in ten are dropouts if their parents finished high school.

This study shows that millions of teenagers are cutting their education short in the precise pattern of their parents. It is reported that nearly half of today's boys whose parents did not complete grade school are classified as "retarded scholastically." Studies made at Western Michigan University show that parental attitudes toward the importance of reading, the development of language skills in the home and the fostering of an intellectual climate in the home are directly related to attainment in reading. One of the chief causes of failure to achieve scholastically is inability to read and inability to read has its beginning in the home. Edgar Dale reports that about half of the adults in the United States do not and probably cannot easily read *Time*, *Newsweek*, *Reader's Digest* and similar magazines.

Many parents read only comic books, "girlie" paperback books and other dubious and questionable literature. In this manner they set the reading patterns for their children. For some parents the radio and television have become a substitute for reading. Parents listen indiscriminately to loud, blatant music, the lyrics of which are devoid of ideas and made up of silly rhymes, such as moon, June, and spoon. Some mothers actually protest the substitution of news items for their "soap operas." It is said that when Rome burned Nero fiddled. Today when we need informed and thinking people so badly radio, the constant companion of so many, has so little to offer. Obviously children reflect the background, attitudes and interests of their parents. They apparently inherit their way of life, their lack of interest in books, and their illiteracy. What can these young people contribute to a modern society where competition is keen and is becoming more so? In our world today a high school diploma is required for even semi-skilled labor. These young folks and the society which produced them are being weighed in the balance and found wanting. Their loss is our loss and the loss of all mankind.

Homer L. J. Carter  
Editor



# PARENTS, SCHOOL AND READING

*Sandra Sloan*

Much has been written about reading. Hundreds of research projects have been carried out to determine just what can be done to improve the teaching of reading in the nation's schools. From all sides come advice, suggestions, panaceas and gimmicks to make all children accomplished readers. School mail is filled with advertisements extolling new books, workbooks, programs, and what-have-you that will greatly improve the school reading program. Millions of dollars have been spent purchasing these materials and yet reading is still a major problem in every school.

I would like to say at the outset that every child cannot become an accomplished reader for we have learned long ago that you cannot "make a silk purse out of a sow's ear." What we can do, however, is approach reading with a common sense objective of teaching each child to read to the best of his ability.

Through the past few years several ideas concerning reading keep popping into my mind. First, the idea of reading readiness; second, the great influence the home has on reading readiness; and third, the need for parents to be made aware of their important role in the development of reading readiness.

## **Readiness is a Must**

Most parents and teachers realize that in beginning any activity children must be ready. Readiness for anything is a state of being. A child must be ready to be weaned, ready to walk, ready to talk, ready to be toilet trained before these activities can be successfully learned. Readiness is a composite of many factors and it must be measured in many ways. It is not a thing to be taught. It can neither be purchased in a box nor developed on paper. It is part of life.

A state of readiness manifests itself in many ways. Sometimes the outer appearances represent only a superficial readiness. Something vital must shine through! It is a kind of reaching out which is recognizable to the skilled teacher as she works with children at any age level. It is a recognition which goes beyond the limits of testing.

Readiness evolves from practice with the environment, people, and materials which promote the desire to look beyond the commonplace, beyond self-interest; to reach a level of physical maturity, of social competence, of emotional control and of mental alertness. Readiness for reading, as for anything else, is built on such experiences

over a long period of time. It is the solid substance of growth, personality, imagination, and self-realization.

Although the concept of reading readiness has been “tossed around” for more than twenty years, its nature and purpose still are not clear to all teachers. Many teachers today appear to believe that a child is ready to learn to read the day he completes the reading readiness workbook. They seem unaware of the fact that readiness is not a point in a child’s development in the sense that he is ready one day but not the day before.

Reading readiness means that a child’s mind, body, emotions, and interests are all ready for learning to read. When thought of in this way, it becomes apparent that for most children there is not one day or week when they are completely ready to read.

The modern concept of reading readiness is that it is a combination of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social factors. Thus it is evident that reading readiness involves a multiplicity of factors which gradually mature or are modified by training until the whole picture is favorable for initial reading success.

Reading readiness involves a sort of all-around growth where one phase of development affects another. And we cannot force this readiness any more than we can force a child to walk. Too many teachers forget and parents don’t realize that it takes several years to ready a child for reading—years in which he becomes prepared physically, mentally, emotionally and socially to work with reading symbols happily and easily. Pushed beyond his readiness, the child may become confused, lose confidence, wonder if he’s backward or stupid, and be convinced that it’s useless to try. Feelings like these make learning to read more difficult.

#### Parents Can Help

Exceedingly important is the contribution of the home to the child’s readiness for reading. As Monroe pointed out in her book *Growing Into Reading*, pre-reading experiences begin to lay a foundation as early as two years of age. Educators agree that children whose parents enjoy reading usually anticipate learning to read. Recognized is the importance of attitudes stemming from family interest, cultural opportunities through family life, and the child’s intellectual curiosity. Benefits resulting from parents reading aloud to their children encompass not only liking books and reading, but also giving background which will aid the child in understanding more difficult stories. A

great degree of the child's reading readiness is dependent upon his previous environment.

Very often I'm amazed to find that some children have had absolutely no background. I've found out that they've never heard a nursery rhyme or have never had a story read to them when they were small children. When people speak about how children can't learn or won't learn to read, I don't know how they can expect them to, if they have nothing to relate it to, nothing in their own lives that is beautiful or imaginative.

Children who have opportunities for rich firsthand experiences in their environment have their own collection of meaningful concepts to bring to their first reading experiences. Beginning books, on the whole, devote their content to stories based on home and community experiences. If the child has had these same experiences, he will understand and vicariously appreciate the experiences of the characters in his books.

No less important are the verbal experiences acquired in preschool years. They are often the most significant factors in the child's readiness. At any age or grade level the child must be able to use sentences orally comparable in difficulty to those he is to read if he is to read with comprehension. Some children enter school unable to speak in simple, direct sentences. It is small wonder they have difficulty in learning to read. Facility in the use of spoken language may well be the most important skill which the child brings to beginning reading. Good language development certainly helps prepare the child for the verbal task of reading.

It seems reasonable to say that success or failure in reading has its roots in the preschool years. Parents can not only foster favorable attitudes toward reading, but can also instill a desire to learn to read, help develop the child's vocabulary, encourage his speaking in sentences, answer his questions, and promote his growth in visual and auditory discrimination. The preschool period is an important one and deserves much concern.

Many educators and parents feel that what the home doesn't provide, the school should. True, guided by readiness tests and observations, the primary teacher tries to help her children overcome their peculiar handicaps and to achieve eventual reading success. In the physical area, she may determine their visual and auditory needs and, partly with the aid of vision and visual training specialists, attempt to have their defects corrected or train their discriminations. In the intellectual area, she may provide firsthand experiences which

form a common core of information and background for beginning reading. In the social area, she may attempt to direct and guide social experiences which will promote the child's adjustment to school demands. Finally, in the emotional area, she may help the child adjust to the demands of work in a group and to life with his peers. But what chance of success does she have when the home has failed to do its part?

Now really, isn't it time we use a little common sense? Is it possible for the teacher to make up in one year what some parents have neglected for four or five years? It is time we faced the realization that the school and its teachers can do only so much. A few simple exercises which require ten or fifteen minutes of each school day just won't do the complete job. Letting a child know that you like him and respect him is fine. But when he arrives home after school and there is nothing but an empty house or uninterested parents awaiting him, that old feeling of insecurity and the feeling of not being wanted will creep slowly back into his heart and mind.

As was previously stated, the modern concept of reading readiness is that it is a combination of physical, intellectual, emotional, and social factors; and that there are certain things that can be done by the teacher to help the child grow in each of these areas. However, I feel that the school desperately needs the help of the parents to assist in this growth. I'm convinced that there are circumstances existing in too many homes that overshadow any attempt made by the teacher to help a child grow in any appreciable degree in the four readiness factors.

It is generally recognized that various physical factors are related to learning to read. Learning to read requires a well-developed body. This is evident when we think of the various ways a child uses his body while reading. His eyes have to be developed to the point where printed symbols both in books and on the board can be clearly seen. Eyes must be able to follow a line of print. Ears must pick up the sounds of oral language. The brain must link sensory impressions with each other and with meaning. Hands must be able to hold books and turn pages, and speech organs should be adequate for reproducing oral language. He should be able also to give his undivided attention to the task of reading, at least for brief periods. It stands to reason that, other things being equal, a child who is free from visual and hearing defects, and who enjoys excellent health will naturally have been more alert to reading situations before coming to school than a child who has been hampered by physical handicaps.

Of course physical health alone does not insure readiness to read, but it is such an important factor in the learning process that it is recommended that the teacher make every effort to maintain a high health status among her pupils. Here again, I ask this question—how much can the teacher do alone? And many times she is alone. Her program can include a daily health check-up. The children can take turns playing doctor and nurse. They can examine each child's hands, fingernails, neck, face and hair; they can ask if he brushed his teeth, what time he went to bed and what time he got up. They can discuss correct eating habits and develop many other health activities. But what can a teacher do when parents seem unconcerned about their child's physical health? It seems that she has no other course to follow than to make the best of it. And this does not always result in helping a child grow in physical readiness.

As far as intellectual factors are concerned, it has been proven repeatedly that a child's intelligence is one of the strongest factors contributing to beginning reading success. Studies have revealed a close correlation between IQ scores and reading test scores. Their results can be summarized in one general conclusion: Intelligence is a major factor in reading success at any level. However, it would be wise to remember that we cannot assume that high intelligence necessarily will ensure reading success. High mental age alone does not ensure early reading success when other aspects of readiness are unfavorable. Many bright children are not reading as well as they should and too many are seriously failing. The implication is that other factors seem at times to overshadow the gift of intelligence by preventing children from making normal reading progress.

It would seem that the teacher has little control over the mental age of her children. However, she is in a position to adapt her instruction in beginning reading to those who are mentally immature, those of average maturity, and those who are above the expected level of maturity for a given grade.

In the emotional and social areas, again the home is out in front. Lack of preparation for entering school is responsible for the lack of adjustment with many children. This difficulty occurs most frequently when the child enters school. If he has not felt secure in his home situation, he is likely to feel more insecure in the new experience. Many times the parents have not handled the child wisely. They are overprotective and cause him to be too dependent. He is afraid to try anything new. He has not been allowed to move from the family circle to the neighborhood group. Thus he is

not ready to step into the wider circles of the school group.

Unfortunate home situations may be another reason the child is not well adjusted. Parents who nag a child constantly or who are quarreling between themselves leave a mark on him. Sometimes the child feels he is forced to take sides between the two people he loves most.

The child's attitudes toward himself, his understandings, his habits, his interests in the things about him and in the various phases of school life, his reactions to requests, to suggestions, and to criticisms are all important factors in the undertaking of beginning reading.

Is it possible for a teacher to make a child feel more secure in his home situation? Can she change his attitudes and interests in the importance of school? For five years little Joan has been "ruling the roost" at home. Will her teacher be able to change her attitude toward requests and suggestions? I wonder.

Parents put pressure on the schools and their teachers to take on responsibilities that belong to the home. They seem to think that the school can make up for their shortcomings. But this can not be done.

Yes, the preschool years are important and deserve much concern. But it seems to me that today's parents need to be more concerned. There are many things only parents can give. The school should not be expected nor forced into taking responsibilities belonging to the home. The home and school must work together. Neither can do the job alone.

#### **It's Time Teachers Spoke Up!**

When the local department store advertises a book or kit of materials "guaranteed to teach your child to read," there is a sellout. And when Johnny's report card shows a low grade in reading, his mother comes marching in armed to the teeth. There is no doubt that the whole matter of Johnny's reading is a burning issue in her mind. For on the subject of reading, almost all parents feel qualified to speak. They learned to read, didn't they? And they see reading as important in their everyday lives. "New math," science, and social science arouse only slight concern. Reading stirs them to their toes.

Yet in the face of this overwhelming interest, many parents seem to feel that they must keep hands off and leave reading to the teacher. This feeling may come from the fact that few parents know enough about the school's goals and techniques to provide appropriate direct help to their children. Nor do most parents have the

type of objective working relationship with their child that would permit them to teach him.

A surprising number of parents are so busy seeking their own pleasures, they simply can't find the time to be of any help in the development of reading readiness. On the other hand, the help offered by some parents does more harm than good. They become irritated and disgusted. They try to force their child to read at home and often talk about his reading difficulties in front of family or visitors.

When such a situation exists, it is clear that parents have a basic misconception of the nature of reading and the way children learn. As previously discussed, a child's reading is much bigger than the nine-to-three school day when the teacher can guide and direct. Everything he does outside of school can bear on his reading in school. If he has been read to since playpen days, he is likely to make progress in reading at school. Thus, the teacher needs the parents' help at home just as parents need the teacher's help in school.

The majority of parents today whole-heartedly agree that they need and expect help from the classroom teacher. Their cries for help are loud and clear. It is time teachers spoke up! When teachers speak up, the public listens. Their opinions and suggestions command respect. With the daily contact they have with parents, they can be the most effective spokesmen of our educational program.

Making parents aware of what reading readiness is and their importance to their child's reading readiness is a most important task of the primary teacher. Parents who were themselves reared without books around them would not know that they are depriving their youngsters of the next best gift to that of health and life itself. They would not know that, if introduced to books at an early age and allowed to taste the prideful joy of owning one's own books, many children would not exchange them for all the talking dolls and firetrucks in the world. It is important that teachers do all they can to make parents aware of their importance in getting their child ready to read.

There is much teachers can do to inform parents of their importance in the development and growth of the reading habits of their children. This means education through home visits, through group meetings of parents, and by demonstrations with children. It may mean showing films that explain the reading readiness program or distributing pamphlets and books which parents would find useful. Teachers and librarians can join forces in demonstrating to parents

how to read aloud to their children and how to select books and stories for reading aloud.

It might be well to recall a quotation from Anthony Trollope: "Love of books is your pass to the greatest and most perfect pleasure that God has prepared for his creatures. It lasts when all other pleasures fade. It will support you when all other recreations are gone. It will last you until your death. It will make your hours pleasant to you as long as you live."

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# FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING GOOD TEACHING OF READING

*Gwen Horsman*

Today we are teaching all of the children of all of the people. The less selective the school enrollment, the greater the number of deficiencies found among the student body. The enriched curriculum requires a knowledge of reading skills far greater in difficulty than those required to master the "reader" of twenty years ago. Social promotion sends into the secondary schools many students who have failed in one field or another. In a surprisingly large number of school systems, guidance in the teaching of reading ceases at the completion of the sixth grade; in all too many systems it is discontinued at the end of the third grade. The rapid social change from a quiet agricultural community to a confusing whirl of industrial living forces new demands on young people today. The greatly increased amount of reading materials requires a broader knowledge of reading skills and a keener insight for interpretation than ever before.

It is evident that the majority of students today will not learn in spite of the teaching process but only because of good teaching procedures. The responsibility of raising the standard of teaching to promote a higher level of learning rests directly on the shoulders of the teacher. Observance of essential principles in teaching should go far in combating retardation.

Because students are entering classrooms in droves with inadequate backgrounds for comprehension and interpretation of the subject matter to be assimilated, the need for an introduction period, or a readiness period, is evident. This calls for preparation on the part of the teacher—a time during which he goes over the subject matter he intends to teach with the idea of selecting the concepts or ideas, the words and phrases which represent these concepts, which will be new to the student body. In other words, he anticipates the difficulties the children will encounter. If these are carefully selected and recorded, the instructor is in a fine position for presenting the new material with an understanding heart and an enthusiastic

voice. During the presentation of the new material, he encourages students to contribute ideas and comments which come as a result of experience or observation. While *they* are learning about a new subject, *he* is learning about them. From their contributions a teacher is able to gain a fair idea of students' individual backgrounds and experiences. Instruction immediately becomes a personal thing instead of following the mass production plan. Questions can now be thrown to individual students or groups of students. Pupils who exhibit a lack of the background and experience necessary for learning can be seated in the front of the room where they may receive a greater amount of individual attention than would be possible if they were in the back.

During the introduction, or readiness, period when the teacher is presenting new words and phrases (or old words with new meanings), it is important that they be written on the blackboard in a large clear handwriting that can be seen from the back of the room. Since so many people are visual-minded, it is a valuable practice to write the words as they come up for discussion, especially when they are terms which are unique to a particular content field. The social studies instructor is responsible for the teaching of such terms as "radical" and "conservative" since they are words which require understanding in his field. It is true that many students may be able to read them but to understand their significance in social science is essential. In a reading or literature class students could read with understanding such a sentence as "The conservative old lady did a radical thing in purchasing a huge red hat," and still be unable to define the terms as they are significant to social studies.

In a literature class which was discussing the character traits of Frank Buck, one student insisted he was cruel. When asked to justify his statement he produced as evidence this sentence from the text, "Excited onlookers watched as Mr. Buck lashed the leopard cage to the foremast of the ship." A familiar concept of the word *lash*, plus careless reading, resulted in toppling Frank Buck from his heroic pedestal. A teacher of an American literature group, intent on establishing a background for the reading of Poe's "The Cask of Amontillado" wrote the word *catacomb* on the board and asked for a description of it. The first contribution was a glowing description of a steep waterfall gushing over rocks high on a mountain. The concept of *cataract* carried to Poe's story of a catacomb would render the reading of it difficult indeed! And yet, what a natural mistake! How many children have ever seen a catacomb? How many adults? Teach-

ing words and concepts peculiar to any selection or material is a fundamental principle of teaching. Without meaningful word associations, little real reading is accomplished. Thus, it follows, every teacher is a reading teacher.

A second fundamental principle of teaching is definite guidance in helping the child to comprehend the meaning of the printed word. What message is the author trying to impart? Many children are able to give back the words of printed text but fail woefully in the ability to attach any meaning or significance to them. Rote recitation or mere repeating of words, is no measure of learning. When a student is asked simple comprehension questions, such as "From what point did the journey start?" or "What did the pioneers do to protect themselves at night?" it is possible for him to give a correct answer without realizing in any way the real life lessons involved. "The journey started at Pittsburgh" may be the correct answer, but the significant fact that this would enable the party to travel swiftly by flatboat on the Ohio River instead of traveling slowly by covered wagon is entirely lost by the student. The pioneers may have "backed their wagons into a circle around the campfire at night" but all the advantages which accrue from such a procedure are entirely lost on the group as a whole unless a discussion is stimulated which creates so accurate a mental image that they are able to see at once the entire situation. Lively examination and consideration of the textbook material is an essential part of classroom teaching. Unless time for it is provided a dull and passive student body files from the room no richer for having been there and with a "so-what?" attitude toward learning in general. Again, it is not so much what they learn as how they learn it. An inquiring attitude accompanied by sound thinking and the exercise of good judgment can be developed, under thoughtful guidance, in all students. This attitude takes into the printed page not only an interest in what the author said, but an insight into much that he didn't say, and an idea of many things he would like to have said! Practically all children can be taught to read the line, many learn to read between the lines, and in the classrooms are those gifted enough to read far beyond the lines. Sound teaching promotes growth in each of these phases of learning so that the printed word becomes a vital experience.

Until a few years ago when a teacher was asked, "What is your ultimate goal in teaching?" the popular response was, "To teach the children to comprehend the material in my course." Today we realize that with this as an ultimate goal the job of teaching is far

from complete. Vast numbers of students are able to comprehend but are unable to live richer lives because of it. What they read and learn has no effect on them; they remain coldly impassive to the ideas gained through study. This lack of effect, or response to ideas, leads to another fundamental principle of teaching. Gray<sup>1</sup> states this principle as follows: "Good habits of recognition, comprehension, and speed of reading are not sufficient, however. Of even greater significance today in both school and adult life are the reader's reactions to, and his use of, the ideas apprehended. In this connection he not only recognizes the essential facts or ideas presented but also reflects on their significance, evaluates them critically, discovers relationships between them, and clarifies his understanding of them."

If a teacher accepts the responsibility of teaching so that students will experience a reaction, what are some of the techniques involved? Consideration of some of the reading problems faced by boys and girls will suggest a few of these techniques. After children leave the primary grades, where their aim is to learn to read, they begin intermediate grade work which stresses a complete about-face; they read to learn. This latter phase presents so many difficulties, as they continue it through life, that careful and considerate guidance is necessary. Experiencing, vicariously, events of other times and scenes in new places requires the skill most children must be taught before they can interpret any reading material which is so far removed from their experiences. The teacher can aid in the development of this skill by providing time in which he can help the students draw comparisons and contrasts between life as they know it and life in a remote time and place. Discussions of pictures, slides, movies, museum models, and exhibits will help build a background necessary for interpretation of concepts.

In many school systems emphasis is placed on "covering the curriculum." This emphasis makes the harassed teacher feel that time spent in reflection on ideas, in critical appraisal of them, and in discovering relationships between them is outside the purpose for which he was placed in the classroom! He feels he is there to get the pupils through the book. But when the emphasis is spent on reflection and critical appraisal of ideas and the relationships between them throughout a child's school career, he is able, as he progresses through the grades, not only to cover the curriculum but to read

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1. William S. Gray, "Recent Trends in Reading," Volume 1, University of Chicago Reading Conference Proceedings, 1939.

extensively printed materials that go far beyond the realms of the classroom textbooks.

Teaching students *how* to think conditions them in *what* they think. Would that the modern classroom were a place in which children were taught to reflect, meditate, and think profoundly on issues that govern the highest kind of living! In many schools it is.

The application of the ideas learned is the fourth important principle of education. And yet, today, our schools are filled with children who have committed to memory the weighty textbook disclosures without the remotest idea as to what to do about them. Why has this fourth fundamental principle of teaching fallen down in so many instances? Perhaps because it has been taken for granted that a fact memorized will be applied. When a science teacher has told the class that metal expands when heated, has he not done his job? No! When a child is caught in a spot where that piece of information might help him, he does not recall an image of the teacher, the classroom, nor the fact. He is just stuck. If, at the time the fact is taught, every possible effort were made to fit it into definite and specific life situations, the words would become a part of living. In fact, children will seek an opportunity to use ideas gained through reading. They are proud to know them and anxious to see them work.

A consistent attack on teaching reading, observing the four fundamental principles, will go a long way in reducing the numbers of pupils who fall into the category of "remedial readers."

---

Gwen Horsman is Supervisor of Reading for the Detroit Public Schools.

# NONREADERS ARE NONEXISTENT

*Vern L. Farrow*

Jack stared impatiently at the red traffic light and waited. He was anxious to get back to school after lunch. The light changed to green but as the boy stepped into the street, the sound of an approaching siren told him that the light must be ignored and he returned to the curb. The emergency car passed, the traffic light cycled green again and Jack made his way safely across the street where he was suddenly confronted by a very large dog. The boy's initial reaction of fright was instantly dispelled when he recognized the dog's friendly intentions by its wagging tail and playful manner.

As Jack sauntered along enjoying his new friend he became aware that the air was strangely sultry and still. Glancing at the horizon, the boy noted a large bank of black clouds rapidly building in the west. He stopped and studied the clouds uneasily. The formation was familiar. From past experience he recalled that just such clouds had developed into a tornado. Jack's thoughts were interrupted by the sound of the school bell which, although he could not tell time, told him he would be tardy if he did not hurry. The clouds bothered him and he appraised their growth frequently as he approached the school. Was there a funnel emerging from that angry black mass? It was still small and ill-defined but wasn't it clearly the beginning of a tornado moving toward town?

The tardy bell rang as Jack ran through the corridor. He was late and the expression of irritation on his teacher's face spoke eloquently to him of her disapproval until she pieced together the grave significance of Jack's breathless warning. The children were led to the safety of tornado shelters to wait out the storm. Jack, 15 years old with an IQ of 75, still laboring with first grade work; Jack, the "nonreader" for whom printed words were an enigma, had done a great deal of reading on the way to school that afternoon!

But, you may protest, what did he read? Certainly the story gave no indication of his having read anything. He merely saw a traffic light, heard a siren, met a dog, watched some clouds, heard the school bell, and observed the expression on his teacher's face. What did he read?

If this was your reaction, it was typical, for in the accepted definition of the term, Jack read nothing. But, it is my thesis today that one of the essential considerations in providing for individual differences among pupils with respect to reading is that of realistically

adjusting expectations and, more specifically, accepting a definition of reading which is broad enough and flexible enough to be appropriate for children of all intellectual capacities.

Because educators have generally defined reading as a process of recognizing printed language symbols which serve as stimuli to the recalling, interpreting, evaluating, or reconstructing of meanings from the reader's experience, the act of reading has been assigned a purely verbal connotation. This is most unfortunate since such a definition fails to recognize that reading, in its broadest concept, involves interaction with and behavioral adjustment to everything in the realm of sensation. When viewed in this way, it becomes clear that Jack did more than merely see a traffic light, he read it! The sound of the siren was more than an undulating sequence of vibrations stimulating his auditory sense, he read its meaning and modified his behavior. In like manner, Jack read the dog's intentions; read the meaning of the school bell, the ominous clouds, and the irritation evident in his teacher's facial expression. None of the foregoing involved skill in recognizing or interpreting verbal symbols. Yet in each case, interaction with sensory stimuli resulted in the recalling, interpreting, evaluating, or reconstructing of meanings in the light of the individual's experience and purpose. Therefore, I submit that an acceptable and useful definition of reading is one which makes allowance for perception and comprehension through all sensory channels. Within such a framework, it is amply evident that no individual who enjoys the state of consciousness can be properly classified a nonreader.

Again, you may protest that such a distinction is hair-splitting and serves no useful purpose. On the contrary, let me point out the vital importance of a definition of reading which allows for diversity of ability and achievement. We have long felt and are becoming increasingly convinced that at the root of most reading problems among intellectually able children, and to a significant extent among educable mentally retarded children, lies an attitude of discouragement, inability, and unworthiness (3, 4, 6). When we seek to discover the cause for such a negative self-concept we can only conclude that it has been communicated to such children by teachers, parents, siblings, and peers as a result of failure to meet the requirements of an inappropriate definition of reading (2, 5).

It is easy and, unfortunately, convenient to label children, but, human nature being what it is, labels cannot remain confidential. They soon become public knowledge and result in devastating conse-

quences for the educational growth, social adjustment, and development of worthy self-image for the less academically oriented or retarded child (3, 9). The proliferation and narrowing of diagnostic categories in the field of reading, while it may have clinical value, has served to elaborate the number of labels available. The most destructive among these is, of course, that of "nonreader."

When we indicate to a child, no matter how kindly, or inadvertently that he is a nonreader he will soon accept the label, as well as the concomitant self-defeating attitude. When we predicate reading achievement solely upon proficiency with printed verbal symbols, we leave no alternative for the mentally retarded or able slow starter but to see himself as a nonreader. The label will produce a negative and nearly irreversible mental set in opposition to further constructive contact with the reading program (7).

On the other hand, if we eliminate the nonreader label by broadening our definition of reading and concurrently adjusting our expectations to the needs and abilities of each child, we will obviate, or at least attenuate destructive feelings of inadequacy (1). If we capitalize upon every opportunity to show a child like Jack; for example, that his skill in interpreting daily experiences is actually reading, not something apart from but merely another facet of the total reading process, he is likely to view himself in a more worthy light and to see himself as a "can-read" person. Such a positive approach can be expected to produce a favorable self-image which can play a major role in motivating the child toward greater understanding of and enthusiasm for reading in the strictly pedagogical sense.

What I am suggesting here, although perhaps radical, is not new at all but is only an extension of accepted philosophy in beginning reading. At the heart of the reading readiness program is considerable emphasis upon "reading" pictures. We guide children in making identifications and literal descriptions; in interpreting sequences of events, drawing inferences, and predicting outcomes from pictures. But, wherein lies the difference between "reading" pictures and "reading" personal daily life experiences which are immeasurably more vital? I submit to you that to see, to hear, to touch, taste, and smell; to be aware of and to utilize all information obtained first hand is to read. I further submit that such a concept of reading does no violence to educational philosophy, goals, or curriculum. On the contrary, it makes truly meaningful the oft repeated admonition, to "start with the child where he is."

When we accept the point of view that no matter what age or



level of ability, all children come to us as readers, we are focusing on strengths rather than limitations. It is our obligation to build on this positive base and to assure that every child perceives himself as a reader. It is then our challenge to find ways to help children raise the level of their natural reading skills and to guide their growth along the broad continuum which encompasses the sum total of the reading process (8).

Indeed, there are no nonreaders. The unfortunate designation remains only as a useless artifact from the narrow educational catacombs of a less enlightened era.

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# THE SCIENCE OF LINGUISTIC LAISSER-ALLER

*Louis Foley*

Those of us who are unapologetically devoted to the cause of correct English are not necessarily so hopelessly oldfogyish as some of the "scientific" popularizers of linguistics take us to be. We are not harking back to any imaginary "good old days." Some of us would say unhesitatingly that the *best* English of today, all things considered, is the best there ever was. We are not disposed, however, to accept blithely on the ground of "usage" just any sort of careless confusion or ignorant corruption merely because it has considerable currency. Indeed, one may well contend that there is less excuse for such things now than ever before.

A favorite method of argument of those who espouse the blind worship of "usage" is to becloud the issue by confronting us with a mixed batch of specimens involving indiscriminately various sorts of things. Along with errors of ancient date which only the most pedantic-minded would fight against now, they include flagrant examples of slipshod confusion and muddled thinking.

They will, for instance, take a good deal of trouble to defend saying "It's *me*," which is surely one of the least offensive of common corruptions.<sup>1</sup> It seems trivial compared to the final establishment of *you* as a nominative, which took place long ago. Any reader of the King James Bible must know that in the older language the subject pronoun was *ye*, and *you* was used only for the object. So from a historical point of view, "You went" is no better than "Him and me went." Also *you* was always plural in meaning, and naturally was not used in addressing a single person. Now, except in the conservative style of traditional ecclesiastical forms and old-fashioned poetry, we have completely lost the second-person singular pronouns, *thou*, *thy*, and *thee*. (Insofar as *thee* persists in Quaker dialect, it is used with utter disregard for grammar, as in "Thee does.") Thus modern English is no longer capable of expressing, by the actual words, the very real difference in attitude between intimate familiarity and formal address, as other languages easily do.

These changes have irrevocably taken place. They have come to seem perfectly "natural," and no one would seriously contemplate

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1. e.g., Robert P. Price, "Who's There? It's Me," *The Torch*, July 1956.

trying to undo them. Such things could happen when our language was in a state of flux, when the bars were completely down, and when scholarly people who wrote in Latin despised English anyhow. In our day of widespread communication, of general literacy, and of much-vaunted education, there is nothing like the same excuse for allowing ignorance or sloppiness to triumph unhindered.

It is really a rather curious state of affairs when “new scientific principles” are mentioned in the same breath with saying that “English teachers and scholars . . . no longer regard such locutions as *ain’t*, *can’t hardly*, *to please sit down*, *these kind of*, *the reason is because*, and *can I have a cookie?* as unforgivable crimes.”<sup>2</sup> This collection of examples is indeed a mixed kettle of fish, going all the way from what everyone *knows* is incorrect to what never was really wrong at all.

Theoretical defense of *ain’t* as a contraction of *am not* has not much to do with reality. For one thing, elisions have shifted with the passing of time. Just as the *’tis* of our ancestors has change to *it’s*, so we now naturally say *I’m not*. This, however, is not the real point. It is perfectly clear that the typical *ain’t*-user employs the word as an all-purpose negative for all persons, singular or plural, with all verbs. It serves not only for past and present, but with “gonnuh” takes care of all negatives in future tense. So it is an unmatchable example of indiscriminate substitution for all manner of proper forms. Going along regularly with all sorts of other crudities, it is the “classic” example of the most shiftless speech, which it inevitably suggests. Of course, just *because* it is so obviously bad English, it may be “fun” to use when you know that people know it is not your natural way of talking!

Other items in the list display lack of regard for exactness in expression, but the last-named involves no question of grammar at all. As a fixed formula of politeness, “May I?” simply preserved the older verb *may* which has been generally replaced by *can*. The politeness is in the implication of authority in the person addressed; without his permission, you *can’t*. No one need be particularly shocked by the mere translation of a fossil formula into more modern idiom.

For anyone acquainted with the background of present-day English, it is no secret that here and there certain forms, made possible only by ignorance, crept in and were finally established. We know, for instance, that “pea” became settled as an artificial singular because *pease* sounded like a plural. Similar misunderstandings have fared

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2. *ibid.*

variously. Though generally forgotten now, a generation or two ago it was not uncommon to hear country folk refer to a dead body as a “corp” because *corpse* sounded plural to them. “Shay,” as in “the one-hoss shay,” a corruption of *chaise*, is now well-nigh sunk from sight with the passing of horse-drawn vehicles, and other examples have perished along the way. *Agenda* originally meant “things that must be done,” and *opera* was the Latin plural of *opus*, but these words were fixed in their modern singular meanings before becoming really current in English.

From one point of view, such instances simply demonstrate what the really *basic* “usage” is—the *system* which makes any language what it is, and which a person having a natural feeling for the language follows instinctively. Only by some education does he become aware of exceptions and the reasons for them. In our time, however, there is surely no longer the extenuation there might once have been for not distinguishing *medium—media*, *criterion—criteria*, *phenomenon—phenomena*, *stratum—strata*, or *datum—data*.

“Usage” is an indispensable support of language, but it is not everything. As our means of expression have slowly and painfully evolved through centuries, the real progress that has been made has been always in the direction of precision, of straight thinking, of discrimination, of recognizing finer distinctions. What makes bad English bad is differences of quality which are not difficult to demonstrate. Essentially it is the result of insensitiveness to anything but the grossest differences between ideas; in various degrees it indicates a lack of the mental discipline which we might legitimately expect of an intelligent person who has had the benefit of some education.

As an example of what he calls “use of *like* as a conjunction,” Dr. Bergen Evans quotes a sentence from Anita Loos’s *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* “Life is hard for a girl like I.” Of course he understood that the girl’s remark was *meant* to be “sub-standard” to show her as “an uneducated person,” but he seems to misinterpret the implication. It is rather absurd to speak of “implying the suppressed *am* [which] makes this *like* a conjunction.”<sup>3</sup> Not much detective insight is required to see how the satire was intended. Her thought-pattern was employing *like* as a preposition all right enough. Being her simple self she would have said “like *me*,” as anyone naturally does. She translates it to the ridiculously unidiomatic *I* because in her shallow-mindedness she takes that to sound more “refined.” She

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3. Address before Managing Editors of the Associated Press, 1963.

had dimly grasped that, for instance, "He and I went" is more respectable than the "Him and me went" which remains perennially current on the lowest levels of speech. So she supposes that "I" is a fancier substitute for *me* just about anywhere. She is putting on airs in the same crude way as those who say, "They invited he and I," though they would never say, "They invited I." What makes her talk amusing is that in her simple-minded affectation she distorts the idiom so unnaturally.

This reminds me of one time years ago when I was introduced to a young lady at a public dance. She was attractive in appearance, and had an air of poised assurance. To make conversation, I asked her if she had been present at a certain event of not long before, "Were you there?" Quite seriously she replied, "Yes, I *were*." The obvious deduction is irresistible. No doubt, in her customary environment, people used *was* in all cases: "we was," "you was," "they was." She had been around enough to sense that *were* had somehow a higher social tone. So, when you found yourself with a "were" person, the trick to show that you really belonged was just to substitute *were* wherever you would say *was*. She was a true blood-sister of the preferred blonde.

The typical kinds of error in grammar have been being made generation after generation for a long time. Yet it would surely be stultifying to claim that centuries of "usage" have made them *correct*. Characteristically they show the sort of fumbling that happens when a statement is not clearly conceived from the beginning as a coherent whole. And certainly there is nothing particularly *American* about such confusions.

Just for an off-hand example, Daniel Defoe in *Roxana* (1724) had the lady saying "there was none to dine but *he* and *I*," "jesting between her and *I*," "discourses which happened between my maid Amy and *I*." James Boswell in his *London Journal*, a generation later, spoke of "a day eagerly expected by Dempster, Erskine, and *I*."

Certain ways of muddling sentence-structure which are wearisomely common in modern journalism were fully exemplified in the reign of Queen Anne by Joseph Addison, the outstanding writer of that much-praised Augustan age of English prose. In *The Spectator* for July 20, 1711, he wrote: "My worthy friend Sir Roger is one of those who is not only at peace within himself, but beloved and esteemed by all about him." Immediately forgetting the false start "of those," he finished the sentence as if the phrase were not there. All he really had in mind was "one who is," as the subsequent "him-

self” and “him” clearly show. Avoiding the clutter of unnecessary words might have helped to keep in focus the plain thought: “Sir Roger is not only at peace within himself . . .” Needless to say, it is not a question of denigrating eighteenth-century prose. For its time, some of it was wonderful, but even its best is no peerless model for us to imitate now.

Everyone who has given the matter any thought must realize that words are continually acquiring new meanings through natural association of ideas. This process has been occurring since no one knows when, and only more rapidly as time has gone on. It operates in general through two different kinds of figure of speech, metaphor and metonymy; we start calling something by the name of something it seems to resemble or by that of something so closely connected with it that one immediately suggests the other. The common everyday vocabulary also is continually changing like styles in clothing, amusements, or household equipment. We forget the names of things we no longer use, and without effort learn those of new styles and new inventions. The elaborate terminology of mediaeval armor or of falconry, for example, is probably now familiar to fewer people than can easily speak Latin, and the working vocabularies of many activities of only one or two generations ago are a completely dead language for anyone living today. The new words of our own time—as dictionary-publishers seem never to realize—are the last words the average person who is in touch with current events ever thinks of looking up.

The mere matter of development of new words, and new meanings for old ones, has no necessary connection whatever with the question of what is correct English. Many inevitable changes one may readily accept or even welcome, and still object to expressions which represent nothing but careless confusion, without which they could never arise.

We do not have to countenance the heedlessness which confuses the opposite points of view of *imply* and *infer*. *Comprise*, which goes along with *comprehend*, *comprehensive*, *comprehensible*, and other words from the same root, stands for the idea of taking in, including, or containing. In recent times a good many newspaper writers have treated it as merely a somewhat fancier synonym for *compose*, which represents the opposite idea of combining constituent elements. How much miseducation has thus been perpetrated may be seen in the 1964 Republican platform: “. . . Republican leadership will move immediately to establish an international commission,

*comprised of* individuals of high competence in NATO affairs . . .”<sup>4</sup>

*Disinterested*, meaning impartial, not influenced by hope of personal gain, is carelessly assumed to be the same as “uninterested,” whereas they are based on quite different senses of *interest*.

In the last few years we have been seeing tank-trucks used for transporting oil and gasoline labeled “flammable.” This truncation of a well-established word was of course intended as an extra-fool-proof precaution to avoid all danger of confusion between our two very different prefixes *in-*. The negative prefix of *incapable*, *incompetent*, *incongruous*, or *inconspicuous* has nothing to do with the *in* (as opposed to *out*) of *inflammable*, capable of being set on fire—of carrying the flame *in*. With no risk of misunderstanding, we keep on as before with the figurative use of *inflammation* or speak of being “inflamed” with passion. “Flammable” simply adds to the inconsistency of which English already had quite enough. And there would hardly be any point in a label to say that something *could not* be set on fire!

Correct English is not, and never was, a matter of mere subservience to arbitrary “rules,” as the proponents of permissiveness blandly assume. For anyone having the true feeling for the language, a correct expression will commonly be the simple and natural one, rather than the cumbersome jargon of wordy affectation, such as the ungrammatical use of “due to the fact that” instead of *because*, or “prior to” instead of *before*.

“People often hurl at me the word *permissive*,” says Dr. Bergen Evans. “They say, ‘You are permissive.’ What do you mean ‘permissive’? There are 300 million who speak this language. What am I to do? Club them all over the head?”

Now there should be no mystery about what “permissive” means. It represents an attitude which, if we held to it consistently, would simply eliminate any real teaching of English. It means cheerfully accepting any kind of sloppy makeshift or ignorant confusion as soon as a good many people seem to find it comfortable.

Among the “300 million” who use some kind of English—if there are that many—naturally the language is used with all degrees of skill or lack of it. In speech as in any other form of human activity, there are those who value orderliness and clarity, who care for precision and clear-cut distinctions, and those who couldn’t care less. The ways of the latter do not need to be taught; these are easily acquired by just letting things go.

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4. *The National Observer*, July 20, 1964.

What is the real purpose of “teaching English” anyhow? Is it supposed to be the inculcating in students of the idea that any sort of crudity of expression is quite all right if a good many people use it? There is no need to *teach* “sub-standard” English; every alert person becomes sufficiently familiar with it in the process of growing up. Instruction in that is amply provided by radio and television programs and other media, as by the hit-or-miss conversation one can hear at any time. What does need to be taught by precept and practice is clear-cut thinking, decent respect for the honest meanings of words.

“Actually,” says Professor Price, “the scientific point of view does not ask for a complete overthrow of tradition, but rather a recognition that there are different kinds of English.” Well, we didn’t think anyone was really advocating a “complete overthrow” of all standards; rather it has been a matter of clouding the distinctions which they serve to mark. Common sense must enable anyone to perceive that there are “different kinds of English.” That they exist would be recognized by many who could not reliably point out exactly what it is that makes the difference. The harm that is done by the “scientific” approach is in creating the impression that by and large one kind is as good as another, that “usage” no matter how careless or ignorant is the only thing that matters. To be sure, if one pays close attention to “the fine print” of what the permissivists have to say, it transpires now and then that their views are not quite so extreme as appears at first. The general effect of their pronouncements, however, has been a softening of linguistic discipline, a weakening of decent standards which need to be upheld.

Commonly the people who are fond of talking about a “scientific” approach to expression, as against what they consider arbitrary theory, seem to regard “correctness” in English as a matter of artificially imposed rules. They assume that teachers who try to inculcate correct English spend their time making students memorize rules. Now many of us who do believe in correctness found out a good while ago that that was not the way to get it. You acquire a skill by working at it and seeing “how the thing works.” Then you do not *need* the “rule,” an abstract generalization which you could state anytime in your own words if you wished. For anyone of reasonable intelligence it is not difficult to see and to explain the differences between good English and bad.

It is perfectly possible to be quite at ease in using good English, or to teach it, without employing what Dr. Evans calls “horrendous



words" such as *pluperfect*, *future indicative*, *subjunctive*, or *nonrestrictive clause*, just as one can get along very well without such Latinisms as *horrendous*. The technical terms of grammatical nomenclature are naturally meaningless until *after* one is quite familiar with the things they stand for. They are merely convenient means of exact expression for the person who goes beyond the mere *use* of language to talking about language itself. For anyone educated to that point, they precisely express relationships which could only be clumsily described in any other way. As is well known, however, acquiring precise vocabulary in any field of thought can sharpen one's perception of the ideas which the words represent.

It is merely an arbitrary declaration to say that "rules of grammar" are "usually simply half a dozen shibboleths that assert status." Whether a person ever consciously learns "rules" or not, either in the main he will conform to the system or else he will be incoherent and unclear. In many situations, no doubt, he may manage to convey simple ideas well enough for his purpose in spite of crudity and confusion in their expression. He will merely be adding gratuitous information about himself, his taste, his perceptiveness, his self-respect. People who truly master good English, and habitually use it, must be motivated by something more deeply a part of them than desire for cheaply-won "status." They care for apt and graceful expression with the same kind of feeling for orderliness that makes us like to see cleanly-shaved faces, neatly-combed hair, well swept rooms, houses well built, gardens well tended, unlittered streets. They enjoy having things done right. Along with whatever else, at bottom that feeling is required for achieving what President Kirk of Columbia has called the first quality of an educated man, the primary duty of a college graduate, "clarity and precision in his spoken and written communication."<sup>5</sup>

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5. Commencement address at Bates College, reported in *The Christian Science Monitor*, July 24, 1964.

# THE RETURNING

*Lucille B. Reigle*

My home is inhabited by strangers.

I walk in the after-light

Of living laughter.

These strangers in child-like need

Reach out to me and I

Numbly reach back but my

Loss cannot be assuaged.

Walls echo my unuttered cries

As I turn and silently walk away.

## DID YOU SEE?

The article, "Relative Importance of Intelligence and Visual Perception in Predicting Reading Achievement," by Quentin R. Bryan published in the *California Journal of Educational Research* for 1964? The study concludes that "visual perception appears to have relatively more weight than intelligence and reading readiness in predicting reading success in the first grade."

J. McVicker Hunt's "The Psychological Basis for Using Pre-School Enrichment As An Antidote for Cultural Deprivation," which appeared in the July 1964 *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*? You may not agree with all the author has said, but you will be challenged by his ideas.

Arthur W. Heilman's *Phonics in Proper Perspective* published in 1964 by the Charles E. Merrill Company of Columbus, Ohio?

The September 1964 issue of *The English Journal* in which Dr. John R. Searles of the University of Wisconsin has published a listing of free and inexpensive material for teachers?

Morton Botel's article, "What Linguistics Says to This Teacher of Reading and Spelling," in *The Reading Teacher* for December 1964? You may appreciate the practical suggestions which the writer has made.

The *Proceedings of the College Reading Association* edited by Clay A. Ketchum? This volume was published in the fall of 1964 and is replete with excellent articles. To name only a few:

"The Library Is Your Reading Test," Nancy Larrick

"The First R: Implications for Teacher Education," Mary C. Austin

"Inconsistencies in Teacher Preparation," Ted Lane

"Improving Critical Reading," William Eller

"Developing the Reading Skills of Mathematics and Science," David L. Shepherd

"Motivation: Key Steps in Developing Lifetime Readers," Paul Berg

# TEN SECOND REVIEWS

*Blanche O. Bush*

If you would be pungent, be brief, for it is with words  
as with sunbeams—the more they are condensed the  
deeper they burn. —Southey

Albany, New York, *The Teaching of Reading*, Walter Crewson, Associate Director of elementary, secondary and adult education, The University of the State of New York, 1963.

The purpose of this publication is to provide teachers and administrators of the elementary schools of New York with some guidelines in providing effective reading instruction. The guide has been planned as a synthesis of the best that is known about the teaching of reading.

Angola, Indiana, Metropolitan School District of Steuben County, *Reading in the Angola Schools*, Betty Johnson and Sara Swickard, Special Consultants, 1964.

The purposes of this study of reading were threefold: (1) to look at the existing program, (2) to strengthen teachers' understanding of reading, and (3) to publish a study guide which could serve as a resource for all teachers. The resulting comprehensive course of study provides for individual differences, emphasizes continuity of instruction from kindergarten through high school, and stresses sequential development and integration of skills.

Axford, Roger W., and Alice H. Richardson, "Reading Improvement: Key to Knowledge," *Adult Leadership* (June, 1964), 13:55-59.

The authors suggest that study techniques be made an integral part of reading improvement programs for adults.

Battle, Jean Allen, "I Don't Have Time to Read," *Mental Retardation* (October, 1964), 2:273-274.

If it is true that teachers and administrators do not have time to read, then, according to the author, there is something basically wrong with our educational system. Battle believes that every educated man must constantly replenish his mind by discovering new ideas through reading, listening, and experimenting.

Beckett, Dorothy B., "Philosophical Differences in Reading Concepts," *The Reading Teacher* (October, 1964), 18:27-33.

Evidence from the past and future is presented relative to one of the major issues in elementary education today—"Shall formal reading be a part of the kindergarten program?"

Boutwell, William D., "An Easier Way to Learn to Read i/t/a, Questions and Answers," *PTA Magazine* (October, 1964), 59: 11-14.

From a question-answer series, Boutwell concludes that no one can afford to overlook the promise that i/t/a holds for reading improvement, creative writing, and interest in books. Authorities agree, he states, that our current efforts to teach all the children to read well leave much to be desired. He hypothesizes i/t/a will open the door to the creation of a truly literate society.

Brzeinski, Joseph E., "Beginning Reading in Denver," *The Reading Teacher* (October, 1964), 18:16-21.

Interim results reported by Brzeinski indicate: (1) parents can help their children begin to read, (2) boys and girls in a large public school system can be taught beginning reading successfully and (3) such early reading has a measurable, positive, continuing effect. Because the present study is of a longitudinal nature, final evaluation must await the end of the research.

Budoff, Milton, and Donald Quinlan, "Reading Progress as Related to Efficiency of Visual and Aural Learning in the Primary Grades," *Journal of Educational Psychology* (October, 1964), 55:247-252.

In this study, the learning efficiency of 28 average and 28 retarded second grade readers was compared when meaningful words were presented orally and visually in a paired-associates paradigm. The authors report that aural learning was more rapid for both the average and the retarded readers. Retarded readers were slightly slower visual readers than the average readers. The authors stated that this discrepancy was most evident in the early phase of learning and in the total number of trials required to attain the criteria.

Carlton, Lessie, and Robert H. Moore, "Individualized Reading," *NEA Journal* (November, 1964), 53:10-11.

Much of the disagreement over the usefulness of individu-

alized reading as an approach to the teaching of reading has been the result of a widespread misunderstanding about what is involved in the individualized approach. The question-and-answer sequence has been designed by the authors to clear up some of this misunderstanding. The questions are based on a survey covering materials, instructions, evaluations, and development of skills.

Carroll, John B., "Words, Meanings, and Concepts," *Harvard Educational Review* (Spring, 1964), 34:178-202.

According to Carroll, the difficulties that learners have in attaining a concept are due to the inadequate mastery of prerequisite concepts and to errors made by the teacher in presenting in proper sequence the information essential to the definition of the concept.

Duval, Frank H., Elizabeth Theiss, Sylvia Stryker, and Edith McKinnon, "American Classroom—Three Heads Are Better Than One," *Grade Teacher* (May, 1964), 81:61-68.

Three elementary teachers who were teaching on three grade levels launched an experimental program in team teaching. Their primary objective was to provide a better instructional program by using each teacher's talents and interests. As these teachers had the same basic daily schedule, it was possible to assign children to various learning activities in relation to their demonstrated development rather than on the basis of their particular grade or age. The teachers report, "Team teaching works."

Early, Margaret J., "The Meaning of Reading Instruction in Secondary Schools," *Journal of Reading* (October, 1964), 8:25-29.

Direct teaching of reading skills, according to Early, must proceed in an unbroken line from the first grade through twelfth and be superseded by a program which insures the application of skills in every subject where reading is an important means of learning. High school teachers, she feels, should realize: (1) they have something to contribute to the whole reading program, but they need not become reading specialists themselves; (2) even though emphasis on direct instruction decreases, it does not disappear; (3) the responsibility for this direct instruction is that of the reading teachers. This program requires expert teachers of reading and subject-

matter specialists who understand and respect each other's goals and can agree upon the means of achieving them.

Fox, Esther, "Considerations in Constructing a Basic Reading Program of Functionally Illiterate Adults," *Adult Leadership* (May, 1964), 13:7-9.

Locating the illiterate adult, administering a reading program, and diagnostic and progress testing are discussed.

Keislar, Evan, "Conference on Perceptual and Linguistic Aspects of Reading," *The Reading Teacher* (October, 1964), 18:43-49.

This conference, as reviewed by Keislar, focused upon the acquisition and transfer of beginning reading skills. A central issue was the way in which the teaching of reading should be guided by the correspondence between written and spoken English. It was generally agreed that if one considers the relation only of individual letters to their sounds in English speech, there is not one-to-one correspondence. Divergent views were expressed with respect to the significance of this fact for reading instruction.

Keppel, Francis, "Research: Education's Neglected Hope," *Journal of Reading* (October, 1964), 8:3-6.

In discussing research in education, Keppel points out that the greatest need today is in the field of reading. From the findings of one of the most important studies in reading recently completed, Keppel reports that the relationship between the spelling of a word and the sound of a word constitutes the major difficulty in learning to read and to spell. From another study it was learned that children have much larger vocabularies and speak in more complex sentences than are found in the traditional basic readers. Results of a third study indicate that the teaching of reading must be tailored to the language experiences of the child. The author believes that if we wish to keep our schools in tune with the needs of our time we must elevate research to the status it should have and adapt our methods and materials accordingly.

McCallister, James M., "Using Paragraph Clues as Aids to Understanding," *Journal of Reading* (October, 1964), 8:11-16.

To read paragraphs effectively, McCallister emphasizes that attention must be directed to the differing internal clues in the paragraphs instead of attempting to fit all paragraphs

into the single pattern of central thought and supporting details which is the accepted approach used by many teachers. Nine paragraphs illustrated the various kinds of internal clues and the differences in the mental processes of reading. Mature readers, the author avers, utilize internal clues as an important guide to understanding.

McManus, Anastasia, "The Denver Prereading Project Conducted by WENH TV," *The Reading Teacher* (October, 1964), 18:22-26.

McManus reports that this study has made a definite contribution in determining, within the limits of a small regional sampling, what positive benefits may be derived from instructing parents who are interested in working on prereading skills with their preschool children. A particular value of the project, as expressed by the parents, seemed to be the opportunity to work creatively with their children in a home situation.

Nicholich, Gloria F., "Picture-Story Books to Increase Reading Ability," *The Instructor* (October, 1964), 74:16+.

Nicolich believes that once the child has become interested in picture books, it is easy to encourage him to go to books in various curriculum areas. Books concerned with intermediate grade subjects, but presented in picture-story form, are listed.

Pincus, Morris and Frances Morgenstern, "Should Children be Taught to Read Earlier?" *The Reading Teacher* (October, 1964), 18:37-42.

The authors feel that much of the difficulty and some of the controversy that arises in considering the question, "Should younger children be taught to read?" could be avoided by asking more specific questions such as: "What characteristics enable children to learn to read successfully before they enter the first grade? How can we best help children who are already reading? Which methods and materials are most effective for introducing young children to reading?"

Sheldon, William, and Roma Gans, "ITA (Initial Teaching Alphabet) Sheldon and Gans Evaluate the New Alphabet," *Grade Teacher* (October, 1964), 82:34-36+.

Sheldon believes that ITA has something to offer educators both in terms of reading instruction and the process of learning. However, the question which he raises is, "Will the children



make an easy transition to the traditional orthography?"

Gans states that as yet there are not enough results from experimentation to warrant the extravagant claims that are being made for the ITA approach to reading. Only broad and longitudinal evaluation can determine its permanent place in the teaching of reading.

Smith, Helen K., "The Development of Evaluation Instruments for Purposeful Reading," *Journal of Reading* (October, 1964), 8:17-23.

This report on the development of evaluation instruments is a part of a larger study to determine if high school freshmen can learn to adjust their reading to specific purposes by systematic instruction. A secondary purpose of this study is to develop a test to assess the competence of high school freshmen in reading for different purposes. No normative information is available at the present time.

Stoltz, Mary, "An Honorable Profession," *Saturday Review* (November 7, 1964), pp. 45-46.

Stoltz, a well-known writer for teen-agers, younger children, and adults, asks, "What makes a children's writer? What nourishes the imagination and the pen of the writer for young people, as distinct from other sorts of writers?" Stoltz feels that one must have a genuine respect for youth and have a long memory—the author must feel within himself like a child.

Strickland, Ruth G., "The Contribution of Structural Linguistics to the Teaching of Reading, Writing, and Grammar in the Elementary School," *Bulletin of the School of Education*, Indiana University Vol. 50, January 1964.

This study was undertaken to discover what concepts in the published material of some of the linguistic scholars could be adapted and utilized to improve the teaching of reading, spelling, and grammar in the elementary school. Strickland states that few of the linguists have given specific attention to the needs at the elementary level, yet in their offerings are ideas which appear applicable. Interested teachers may be able to turn some of the ideas into actual teaching materials and procedures for trial in the school. Much work remains to be done, according to Strickland, before the ideas can be put into widespread application.

Tensuan, Emperatriz and Frederick B. Davis, "An Experiment with

Two Methods of Teaching Reading," *The Reading Teacher* (October, 1964), 18:8-15.

Data from this experiment lead to the conclusion that the combination or multiple approach method of teaching reading yields better results in teaching Pilipino, the national language of the Philippines, in grades 1 and 2, than the cartilla, direct-phonetic method. Furthermore, the data strongly suggest that training in learning to read Pilipino by the combination method facilitates the reading of English more than learning to read Pilipino by the cartilla method.

Wagner, Guy, "What Schools are Doing—Developing Reading Power in the Content Areas," *Education* (October, 1964), 85:122-125.

Wherever a strong reading program is achieved, the teachers of the content subjects will be found in supporting roles as teachers of reading. Criteria for judging whether teachers are assuming responsibility for the teaching of reading as it is related to special fields are presented.

Wattenberg, William W., and Clare Clifford, "Relation of Self Concepts to Beginning Achievement in Reading," *Child Development* (June, 1964), 35:461-469.

This exploratory study was an effort to determine which was the antecedent phenomenon, severe retardation in reading or low self-regard. Measures of mental ability and self concept were obtained for children in their first semester of kindergarten in two Detroit elementary schools. Two and one-half years later, measures were obtained of their progress in reading and the self-concept measure repeated. The measures of self-concept taken in kindergarten proved significantly predictive of progress in reading but not significantly related to mental test scores.

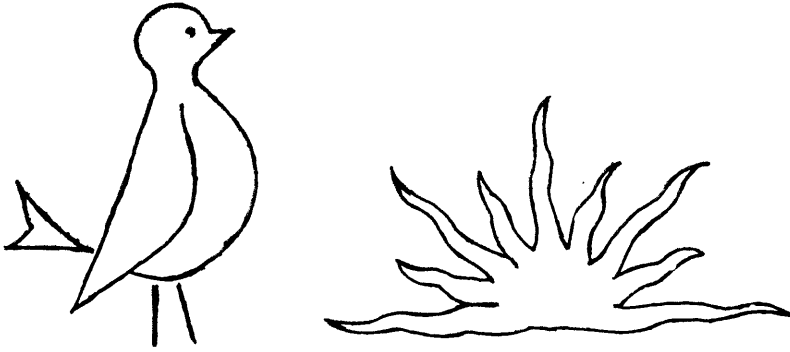
Witty, Paul A., "In a Developmental Reading Program, Many References are Essential," *Grade Teacher* (November, 1964), 82: 84-85.

Witty believes that to achieve a good developmental reading program, we need a balanced program, utilizing a wide variety of source material. Moreover, we need teachers who make an effort to understand every pupil and to obtain materials to meet his interests and needs.

Woods, Margaret S., "Four Year Olds Meet Books," *Grade Teacher*

(November, 1964), 82:38-41+.

The children's room of a public library in Seattle, Washington provides a place where hundreds of four-and five-year-old boys and girls are "meeting" books through a program sponsored for the past ten years by the Seattle PTA Council in cooperation with the public library. The purposes of the program are: (1) to develop in the young child an interest in books and in good literature, and (2) to give the child, through free dramatization of stories, a chance to express his feelings and to make the story truly his own.



## ROUND ROBIN

*Dorothy E. Smith, Editor*

Bouquets are always welcome and when one comes from as far away as Norway it is especially appreciated.

Dear Friends:

I am happy still to be on your mailing list, and the *Reading Horizons* still crosses the Atlantic bringing old memories and new ideas. Mr. George Egland's article in the last issue was especially interesting to read for a Norwegian speech therapist, since we combine speech and reading therapy. Thus many of the procedures we use in speech therapy we also apply in remedial reading, and we have many times experienced that reading also helps restore speech.

I still hold the same position as I had before I took my M.A. at Western Michigan University in 1962. Last year the remedial reading program was intensified. Silent reading tests were given to all first and second grades in May, and the object was twofold, (1) to help teachers individualize reading instruction and apply group work in reading, (2) to identify the ones who were lacking the basic skills. An individual diagnostic reading and spelling test was administered to this last group. Since few of the teaching staff are especially trained for educational therapy in reading, individual teaching programs have been set up for every pupil based on the individual test with recommendations of textbooks, and special techniques, exercises and procedures. These children are now receiving reading therapy,

and we are eager to see what we have accomplished next summer.

Best wishes for all of you for 1965.

Yours,  
Alf Preus

In the Fall, 1964, issue of *Reading Horizons* there was an enlightening article by Dena Heynen, called, "Challenging the Curious Mind." It dealt with the burgeoning problem of stimulating critical thinking and creativity in growing children. There is a tendency, Miss Heynen suggests, to stifle a child's interest in "why" and "how" questions and instead, for convenience sake, to concentrate on his interest in the "who," "what," "where," and "when" aspects of a problem.

To quote her article (page 18); "Many teachers and educators have acted and still, too often, do act upon the . . . assumptions . . . that the child goes to school to acquire knowledge and that knowledge is something that has existed for a long time and is handed down on authority; that subject matter, taken on authority, is educative; . . . that the answer to the problem is more important than the process . . ." She goes on; "Education must be a means for the teaching of problem-solving . . . we cannot solve (the child's) problems but should teach him ways to reach his own conclusions."

This viewpoint is gaining more and more favor with the experts, but it must be admitted that the acceptance is not universal. Consider the following letter from a man who does not claim to be an expert except in his own field of chemical engineering.

Dear Editor:

You suggest that it is more important to learn the process of solving a problem than it is to get the answer.

Once there was a man who built a bridge. He worked very carefully from each end toward the middle. He understood the *theory* of bridge building. He knew the *process*. But his structure lacked three inches of meeting in the center of the span. His *answer* was wrong.

There are many short-cuts in solving problems and creative people can come up with really unexpected short-cuts. I think this is good so long as their *answer* is right. Let's teach children

to get the right answer. Let's let them arrive at that answer in their own way.

J. Robert Strohm  
Chicago

Below are two letters on the same subject:

Dear Editor:

I am of the opinion that one cannot make a distinction between fact teaching versus process teaching. Both methods have their purpose and both are employed in teaching.

V. Burns

Dear Editor:

Two people use two different words. Each word is a good word as it is used. One wants to guide children as she teaches her fifth grade. She is responsible in her school situation. It is unique. Another wants his children to be creative and find right answers. Each is teaching individuals to lead worthwhile lives—"Each in his own way a star,"—and each in a different orbit, I think. Both have the same problem of individual variations. In the school-room the teacher is not free to let each child do as he pleases. The word education is from the Latin "educio"—to lead. With teachers today it implies that the child learns the basic skills and can use them.

Mary E. Cryan

## MAKE PLANS NOW TO ATTEND

- The Michigan Reading Conference, Kellogg Center, Michigan State University, East Lansing, February 25-26.
- The Eighth Annual Conference of the College Reading Association, Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, New York, April 9-10. For information write to Dr. Robert C. Aukerman, University of Rhode Island, Kingston, Rhode Island.
- The Tenth Annual Convention of the International Reading Association, Cobo Hall, Detroit, Michigan, May 5-8.

