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Echoes From The Field

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The West Ottawa Public Schools, Holland, Michigan, are using the SRA Reading Laboratories on a rotating basis throughout our eight elementary buildings. The staff of each building may use this supplementary tool for one semester in whatever way seems most satisfactory in relation to the basic reading program.

One of the most effective uses has been developed in Beechwood School, a grade 3-6 building. All children use SRA immediately in the fall for a period of six weeks. The SRA placement test pinpoints the starting place for each student, and his progress in the Lab adjusts this point, if necessary. The teacher is not confronted with the problem of grouping her children for reading instruction until she has actually observed their performance.

After the six-week period, each teacher completes record forms which are returned to the Reading Consultant. On the basis of these data, two questions pertinent to grouping are answered: 1) What children could use the same instructional materials? and 2) Would our reading instruction be more effective if we crossed room or grade lines, and exchanged children for 45 minutes, three days a week? Sometimes only two grades or rooms exchange students, leaving the other children in their own rooms for instruction. Student achievement and teacher preference determine our action.

On Thursdays and Fridays when the children remain in their own rooms for reading, SRA or individualized reading is used. In this way, both the reading teacher and the home-room teacher are aware of the student's performance.

This plan considers the child's reading performance as of instructional time in the fall, and does not require sole dependency on last year's records. Since current information is usually the more accurate information, more effective grouping should be the result.

Joy Muehlenbeck
Reading Consultant