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ABSTRACT

Prepared for a White House Conference on Children (December 1970), this report describes the Corrective Reading Program of Wichita, supported in target areas by funds from ESEA Title I and considered an effective large-scale remedial program which operates in the public schools. Special classes are held in each school building in which the program operates, and a standardized system of referral has been set up. A number of schools not in the target area have adopted a similar approach, but are funded by the school district. Thus the concept of governmental grants as "seed money" has been realized. The program is note-worthy in the light of the student's reception of it--they regard participation in it as a privilege--and also in the light of its low cost--only 200 dollars per pupil above Wichita's normal expenditure of 603 dollars per pupil. The program focuses on corrective reading in the elementary and junior high grades rather than in the high schools, though the board of education has successfully experimented with multimedia learning laboratories at the high school level. Attention has also shifted to the lower graders, so that the second grade is now a major source of corrective pupils. A summer school is in operation. For other booklets in the series, see UD 011 120-124. (Author/JM)

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Model Programs

Childhood Education

OE-20158

Corrective Reading Program

Wichita, Kansas

A special program designed to improve the reading grade level, vocabulary, comprehension, and self-concept of disadvantaged youths

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
Elliot L. Richardson, *Secretary*
Office of Education
Terrel H. Bell, *Acting Commissioner of Education*
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY
Donald Rumsfeld, *Director*

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FOREWORD

This booklet is one of 34 in a series of promising programs on childhood education prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. The series was written under contract by the American Institutes for Research for the Office of Economic Opportunity, and the Office of Child Development and the Office of Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

Within the broad area of childhood education the series includes descriptions of programs on reading and language development, the disadvantaged, preschool education, and special education. In describing a program, each booklet provides details about the purpose; the children reached; specific materials, facilities, and staff involved; and other special features such as community services, parental involvement, and finances. Sources of further information on the programs are also provided.

The Corrective Reading Program of Wichita is an effective large-scale remedial program which operates in the public schools. Special classes are held in each school building in which the program operates, and a standardized system of referral has been set up. The program is supported in target areas by funds from title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act; a number of other schools not in the target area have adopted a similar approach but are funded by the school district. Thus the concept of Government grants as "seed money" has been realized. The program is noteworthy in light of the students' reception of it--they regard participation in it as a privilege--and also in light of its low cost--only $200 per pupil above Wichita's normal expenditure of $603 per pupil.

THE COMMUNITY

Wichita is a city of 280,000, located in a region rich in agriculture and oil. Its chief industry is aircraft construction; four major firms operate plants in the city. As a result of the current cutback in the aerospace industry, unemployment is almost 10 percent. The median income is estimated at $6,600. The city-wide non-Caucasian population is almost 15 percent; less than 1 percent of the population have Spanish surnames.

Wichita now has 91 elementary schools, 44 of which participate in the Corrective Reading Program; 15 junior high schools, all but one of which participate; and six senior high schools, which have programs characterized as developmental rather than corrective. Eighteen elementary schools are now identified as title I target schools. About 200 pupils in title I target areas are bused to other parts of the city. In these cases the Corrective Reading Program follows them to their new schools.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROGRAM

Wichita's system of compensatory education was begun in the spring of 1966, as a title I project, with corrective reading as its focus. The initial work was done by a team from Wichita's Curriculum Division, assisted by Dr. Nicholas Silvaroli of Arizona State University. The primary aims of the program are to teach word recognition and comprehension. Stated objectives are:

•To improve the pupil's reading instructional grade level*

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*The reading instructional grade level is the grade level at which the pupil can read with only slight teacher assistance.

- To improve the pupil's reading vocabulary
- To improve the pupil's reading comprehension
- To improve the pupil's attitude toward reading, toward himself, and toward others

The program focuses on corrective efforts in the elementary and junior high grades rather than in the high schools, though the board of education has successfully experimented with multimedia learning laboratories at the high school level. Attention has also shifted to the lower grades so that the second grade is now a major source of corrective pupils.

A summer school is in operation, free to pupils from title I target areas and $36 for others. Special courses are offered for pupils with reading difficulties, though these are presented as part of a correlated language arts program.

Another project is operating in the only junior high school whose students all come from a title I target area. This is Project REACH (*R*eading *E*xperiences *A*udiovisually *C*ustomed for *H*orace Mann), which was designed for the 30 percent of the student body whose reading scores fell below the 20th percentile.

THE CORRECTIVE READING PROCESS

Both standardized test scores and teacher evaluation are used as criteria in selecting students for the Corrective Reading Program. One important indicator is the pupil's level of attainment in Betts' Basic Readers. Another is a score below the 20th percentile on a reading or reading-readiness test. Ordinarily students with IQ's below 85 are not considered for the Corrective Reading Program. Since group intelligence test performance is so strongly influenced by reading ability, the group tests of pupils receiving low scores are augmented by the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children or the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale.

Next the pupil is screened and diagnosed by a special reading teacher and team. Four levels of corrective reading need are identified:

Basic: Less than 1 year below grade level

Mild corrective: One to 2 years below grade level

Corrective: Over 2 years below grade level

Severe corrective: Nonreading

Help is given to those most likely to profit by it; mild corrective and corrective cases are given preference over the more

serious cases of reading disability. Pupils whose reading difficulty appears to stem from physical or emotional causes are referred to other school services. Preference is also given to pupils in the lower grades, where reading and resulting social problems have not yet solidified.

Results from the battery of tests given the pupil provide the basis for diagnosis of his reading problems. He is then assigned to a group for appropriate instruction, using suitable taped lessons and reinforcement materials which are chosen according to the teacher's knowledge of the individual child.

In Wichita schools, the average class size ranges from 21 to 27. Corrective reading class size is from 1 to 8, with an average of 5. Assigning the student by instructional grade level sometimes leads to a diversity of ages within a single class. Students of the same age group are assigned to the same class when numbers permit, but this is not always possible. The functional reading grade level is usually two grade levels behind the child's formal school placement. In the junior high years, it is thought preferable to separate the sexes when convenient.

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A corrective reading class can dissolve--its members phased back into regular classroom work--or expand at any time. Students are evaluated every 9 weeks to determine their progress. They leave the program when they achieve the goals set for them, or when it becomes apparent they are making no progress. The average stay in the Corrective Reading Program is about 15 school months. In 1969-70, 30 percent of all the corrective reading pupils were in the program for the second year. A few stay for longer periods, but in no case is the Corrective Reading Program regarded as a permanent arrangement for a pupil.

METHODS AND MATERIALS FOR INSTRUCTION

Each child spends about 40 minutes 4 days a week in the corrective reading class; the fifth day is reserved for testing, conferences, and home visitation. Scheduling of classes is difficult, since the children continue with their regular school work; the practice is to take the child out of a class in which he is doing badly rather than one in which he is doing well. Such children need all the success they can get.

No standardized surroundings are required. Some of the classes are held in regular classrooms, some in movable prefabricated buildings, and some in cubicles of a large room fitted up as a

language laboratory. The rooms are airy, bright, and cheerful, with reading materials attractively displayed.

Half of the class may be working with tapes or other teaching materials, and half with the teacher. Each student reads to the teacher every day. Four sets of earphones are provided each class. Tapes are nonerasable and used on both sides to eliminate the need for rewinding. Some tapes are recorded in whispers to eliminate tonality, avoid noise, and focus the pupil's attention. Only the earphone on the side of the child's writing hand conveys sound. Noise is sometimes a problem; some pupils attempt to attract the attention of their peers. The teachers in one school's program agreed to come back only if acoustical-tile ceilings were provided.

The remedial systems used are eclectic, depending largely on class needs and teacher preferences. Each teacher is allowed $100 a year for the purchase of materials, in addition to the $200 initially spent to provide materials for each teaching station. A catalog of remedial reading materials is furnished, but materials not in the catalog can also be ordered. Thus the teaching materials are tailored to the needs of the children. Teachers are

free to develop in each building the kind of reading program that best suits their pupils' needs. This encourages the development of innovative methods and wider adoption of successful ones. Teachers are encouraged to experiment, and a wealth of inventiveness is displayed in the materials and methods they have devised.

Learning games have proved to be one of the most effective devices for teaching reading to elementary school pupils in the corrective classes. There are bingo games in which success depends on rapid word recognition, dominoes that carry syllables instead of dots, and word wheels in which a syllable such as *-ing* in the center is matched with *th*, *r*, *s*, etc., on the movable rim. Many verbal games, some requiring no equipment, help to build vocabulary. For junior high students, teachers have had success with the use of artificial (nonintrinsic) rewards such as lemon drops and comic books of the classics.

Systems chosen by the teachers include the Initial Teaching Alphabet and "Learning 100, a Multi-Media Communication Skills System." A series likely to be present in a corrective reading classroom is Lyons and Carnahan's *Phonics We Use*. Project REACH is also experimenting with a machine known as Aud-X, which

presents the student with a visual display and audio inputs to which he responds kinesthetically. About a third of the reading period is spent on this machine, another third on a teacher-led group activity, and the remainder on visual work with controlled readers, tape recorders, and other audiovisual aids.

Voluntary reading is encouraged, and a corrective reading room is likely to contain a shelf of easy-to-read paperback books. Comic books of the classics enable even poor readers to follow a story line. Homework is assigned on a very limited schedule--no more than the child could accomplish in 15 minutes of concentrated effort.

Although the various corrective reading classrooms employ a rich variety of materials and methods, a common feature is emphasis on the delight of learning by using processes that make "games" of the learning experience. Overhead projectors are used not only for factual material but also for material that lends itself to lively and often humorous discussions. Modern versions of the old-fashioned spelling bee arouse excited rivalry. Teachers know that children find it hard to sit still, and provide many opportunities for them to come up to the front of the room and point out answers on large printed charts.

PUPILS AND TEACHERS

In 1969-70, 2,775 pupils in grades one through nine were taking part in this program. About 20 percent had organized preschool training such as Head Start or Follow Through. There were slightly more black pupils than white, reflecting the racial makeup of the target areas. Six percent of the corrective reading pupils belonged to other minority groups. An interesting shift in the sex composition of the classes took place between fourth and sixth grade. In the fourth grade the sexes were approximately equal; in the sixth there were nearly 3 times as many boys as girls.

Four of the 75 corrective reading teachers are black, and one is Mexican-American. One of the 50 in elementary school work and six of the 25 at the secondary level are men; their average age is in the early forties. There are no teacher aides. Corrective reading teachers must have a State reading certificate, which requires at least 12 hours in graduate reading courses. Most teachers have 2 or more years' experience in remedial teaching. Workshops and inservice meetings provide them with additional training and enable them to exchange observations and methods with other teachers of corrective reading. Four inservice meetings are held each year, under the leadership of the director of reading. The annual workshop is open to other teachers as well as corrective reading teachers.

RESULTS

A study was made of pupils in the 1969-70 Corrective Reading Program for whom both pre- and post-tests were available. These pupils were classified according to their instructional grade rather than their formal grade. In vocabulary, all pupils in the second through the eighth instructional grades registered the expected 8 months' gain with the exception of the second, fourth, and sixth grades. In comprehension, pupils in the third, seventh, eighth, and ninth instructional grades exceeded the expected 8 months' gain. For both vocabulary and comprehension the Gates-MacGinitie reading tests were used. No data are yet available on the success of Project REACH, since it has not been in operation long enough for data to be accumulated.

The following percentages of pupils, by instructional reading grade level, gained one or more grade levels:

Instructional Reading Grade Level	Percent
Second	51.8
Third	67.1
Fourth	80.9
Fifth	74.6
Sixth	69.6
Seventh	64.1
Eighth	63.6
Ninth	69.8

Some individuals made enormous gains; a few regressed.

Although the Corrective Reading Program does not insure that the children will learn at faster than normal rates, it does prevent most of its pupils from falling farther behind. It brings some pupils closer to normal performance, and to others it brings great gains. Some former corrective reading pupils are now in college.

The school system feels that there may also be gains, such as improvement in attitude toward learning, that do not show up in the standardized paper-and-pencil tests.

Since the program began in 1966, negative attitudes toward participation in the corrective reading classes have been virtually eliminated. Some parents even report that their children have deliberately done badly on the fall series of standardized tests in the hope of gaining admission to the classes. There are also instances of voluntary attendance from the study hall. "The kids want in."

FUTURE PLANS

Sponsors believe that the program should be begun in the primary grades, at least b the second grade. They recommend a strong testing program, using more instruments to measure skill mastery. There are no plans for an extensive controlled study of the program, which is expected to continue as long as there is need for it.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on the program can be obtained from:

Dr. James Howell, Director of Reading
Division of Curriculum Services
Wichita Public Schools
Community Education Center
1847 N. Chautauqua
Wichita, Kansas 67214

or from:

Dr. Donald E. Youngland
Director of Compensatory Education
428 South Broadway
Wichita, Kansas 67202

Visitors are welcome between November and April, or at the Summer School, which runs from June 8 to July 17.

Material on the program, also available from Dr. James Howell at the above address, includes:

- *Wichita Program for Educationally Deprived Children: Evaluation Report of Title I, 1969-70, Corrective Reading Instruction.* Free while supply lasts.

- *Team Approach to Reading Success: A Handbook for Corrective Reading*, Curriculum Services Division, $1.
- *Secondary Reading Handbook*, Curriculum Services Division, $1.
- *Summer School Curriculum Guide - Reading*, separate booklets for grades 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, $1 each. These give summer activities in unusual detail, and present many reading games.
- *Reading Improvement Materials Catalog*. Availability limited.

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MODEL PROGRAMS--Childhood Education

This is one in a series of 34 descriptive booklets on childhood education programs prepared for the White House Conference on Children, December 1970. Following is a list of the programs and their locations:

The Day Nursery Assn. of Cleveland, Ohio
Neighborhood House Child Care Services, Seattle, Wash.
Behavior Analysis Model of a Follow Through Program, Oraibi, Ariz.
Cross-Cultural Family Center, San Francisco, Calif.
NRO Migrant Child Development Center, Pasco, Wash.
Bilingual Early Childhood Program, San Antonio, Tex.
Santa Monica Children's Centers, Calif.
Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Salt Lake City, Utah
Dubnoff School for Educational Therapy, North Hollywood, Calif.
Demonstration Nursery Center for Infants and Toddlers, Greensboro, N.C.
Responsive Environment Model of a Follow Through Program, Goldsboro, N.C.
Center for Early Development and Education, Little Rock, Ark.
DOVACK, Monticello, Fla.
Perceptual Development Center Program, Natchez, Miss.
Appalachia Preschool Education Program, Charleston, W. Va.
Foster Grandparent Program, Nashville, Tenn.
Hartford Early Childhood Program, Conn.
Philadelphia Teacher Center, Pa.
Cognitively Oriented Curriculum, Ypsilanti, Mich.
Mothers' Training Program, Urbana, Ill.
The Micro-Social Preschool Learning System, Vineland, N.J.
Project PLAN, Parkersburg, W. Va.
Interdependent Learner Model of a Follow Through Program, New York, N.Y.
San Jose Police Youth Protection Unit, Calif.
Model Observation Kindergarten, Amherst, Mass.
Boston Public Schools Learning Laboratories, Mass.
Martin Luther King Family Center, Chicago, Ill.
Behavior Principles Structural Model of a Follow Through Program, Dayton, Ohio
University of Hawaii Preschool Language Curriculum, Honolulu, Hawaii
Springfield Avenue Community School, Newark, N.J.
Corrective Reading Program, Wichita, Kans.
New Schools Exchange, Santa Barbara, Calif.
Tacoma Public Schools Early Childhood Program, Wash.
Community Cooperative Nursery School, Menlo Park, Calif.