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ABSTRACT

This collection of essays examines component areas of constructing a reading curriculum, including the concepts, rationales, and practical aspects that affect curriculum development. The first essay calls for a reading curriculum that incorporates developing proficiency in word recognition and comprehension, and emphasizes quality literature. The second essay discusses various procedures for grouping students in reading, including homogenous and heterogenous grouping, interage grouping, programed reading, and computer assisted instruction. The third essay discusses word recognition techniques, including phonics, syllabification, sight words, and structural analysis. The fourth essay concentrates on comprehension, failure to comprehend, and reading to acquire facts, to follow a sequence of events, and to solve problems. The final essay outlines procedures for evaluating a reading curriculum and summarizes objectives, sequence of learning, learning opportunities, and appraising learner progress. (CRH)

# THE TEACHING OF READING
## (A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS)

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# THE LITERATURE CURRICULUM

What can the teacher do to encourage pupils to read library books in the classroom setting? Chambers[1] recommends the following:

> First, and above all, is our attitude about the role of reading--real reading--in the classroom. If we help students understand that the purpose of developmental reading and the acquisition of reading skills is to give them the key to the world of literature and all its wonders, we have moved forward, indeed. The library, or the library corner, should not be a place for free activity alone, or an extracurricular activity. Instead, it should be an interesting place to which children can go often, expecting to find an exciting, changing collection of good books. It should be a place of adventure and delight where children are encouraged to hunt, browse, and explore. It should be a place where he can choose books that will give him answers or provide delight. Weekly book talks can attest to our attitude about books. By our attention to a good trade book in the book talk, we indicate the worthwhileness of children's literature. Children are affected by our attitudes toward things. That is part of the way they learn. The way we view the role of children's literature as part of their lives does a great deal in teaching them the value of reading that literature.

Pupils need to experience a quality literature curriculum. Thus, the reading curriculum needs to go beyond goals of having learners identify new words as well as developing skills pertaining to diverse types of comprehension. There are numerous reasons for emphasizing a quality literature curriculum.

First of all, pupils cannot experience all facets of living directly. They can learn, however, from vicarious experiences, e.g., reading what others have done, achieved, acquired, and experienced. There are, of course, selected

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[1] Dewey W. Chambers, Children's Literature in the Curriculum. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1971, page 31.

experiences that none of us would wish to live through. Thus, a reader cna learn much from others' deeds, thoughts, and acts. A reader might then be able to formulate his/her own goals in life more adequately through reading what others have experienced. There are groups in society who wish to censor diverse selections from the literature curriculum. The censored selections appear much more so on the senior high school level than the elementary school level. The literature curriculum, however, must assist pupils to formulate their own goals and purposes in life.

Values can be dictated to pupils by parents, teachers, and others in society. Too frequently, dictation of values to the young has not been effective. Also, the dictated values may not be appropriate in a changing society. Conservative values then might not be applicable in the coming years. There are values, however, that have endured in space and time, such as doing unto others that which we would want done to us. Even then, in changing times and situations, the Golden Rule needs reinterpretations and modified implementations. From a study of literature, pupils can evaluate and adopt selected desired values. Donoghue[2] wrote:

> While the children's first exposure to literature is Mother Goose and other rhymes and stories, children should gradually experience every type and form of literature in a school program that is comprehensive and sequentially plotted throughout the elementary grades. Such a program not only strengthens the developmental reading curriculum but contributes in a significant way to the attainment of several other objectives of elementary education.

Secondly, reading quality literature can provide relaxation for the reader. Much is spoken and written about meands of coping with stress. Individuals in society need to cope with many unwanted situations. The involved person needs to find ways of dealing with stress. Reading can be a good way of restoring

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[2]Mildred R. Donoghue, The Child and the English Language Arts. Second Edition. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1975, page 85.

equilibrium. One can forget about stressful situstions when reading. The reader can become so thoroughly engrossed in reading ideas that little or no time is inherently available for worrying, regretting, or fearing.

The teacher and parents must be actively involved in assisting pupils to become proficient in reading. The teacher alone cannot perform this vital responsibility for the pupil. Parents must also like reading and support a quality reading curriculum in the school/class setting. The pupil must assume major responsibility in wanting to learn to read. Otherwise, how can a pupil learn to read in order to achieve goals pertaining to relaxing the self?

Thirdly, literature for pupils can provide a guidance resource. There are learners who experience grave personal and social problems. Difficulties are involved when identifying problems and attempting to assist pupils in overcoming these difficulties. No doubt, an adequate number of good counselors are lacking in the school setting. Children's literature can provide assistance to pupils in attempting to cope with personal and social problems. What kinds of problems do pupils experience? These might well include poverty, shyness, aggressiveness, hostility, ill health, obesity, excessive tallness or shortness, and loneliness. The teacher needs to guide pupils individually to choose library books which assist in coping with problematic situations.

Fourthly, each pupil may receive assistance from reading literature in becoming knowledgable about diverse kinds of careers. Too frequently, workers in society have drifted into a job or occupation. The "drifting" into the world of work has made for feelings of dissatisfaction in the occupational/vocational arena. Certainly, a quality career education program can provide pupils with selected understandings, skills, and attitudes needed to be successful ultimately in the world of work. Each person needs to achieve optimally in the career arena. Working at jobs/occupations that are not personally rewarding can make for feelings of futility. Literature on careers written for learners on different achievement

levels can provide necessary subject matter for pupils contemplating the world of work.

The centralized/classroom library needs library books and other reading materials on diverse levels of achievement pertaining to many relevant careers. The teacher needs to introduce learners to reading materials on careers. With appropriate readiness experiences, learners can be guided to read content pertaining to the world of work.

Fifthly, skills in reading can be developed when literature is being read by children. Too frequently, basal textbooks are read by learners. Basal materials may not meet the reading needs of selected pupils. Then too, library books generally are chosen by the involved learner; the subject matter in these books is usually not assigned to pupils, unless a specific purpose is involved. Teachers may feel that too many pupils are turned off in reading when basal materials are utilized in the reading curriculum. Library books chosen by the involved pupil may provide the needed spark to encourage reading.

Sixthly, pupils can learn much subject matter related to different curriculum areas when engaged in the reading of library books. There are library books written on diverse levels of achievement pertaining to many nations on the face of the earth. Thus, pupil achievement in diverse social studies units can be aided when selected library books are read. In other curriculum areas--science, mathematics, health, art, music, and physical education--related library books are in evidence which learners may read.

## Quality Literature in the Curriculum

Most basal reading programs tend to emphasize pupils' mastering diverse word recognition techniques, such as using configuration clues, phonetic analysis, syllabication, structural analysis, context clues, and picture clues. The ultimate goal in word recognition for pupils should be to recognize words immediately as sight words. In addition to word recognition techniques, a basal

reading approach emphasizes learners achieving comprehension skills such as reading to acquire facts, directions, a sequence of ideas, main ideas, and generalizations, as well as reading critically, reading creatively, and reading to solve problems. However, there are additional ingredients that need to become a part of a relevant literature curriculum for children.

## Setting of the Story

The language arts teacher needs to guide pupils to understand and attach meaning to the setting of a story or library book. Where did the events take place? Pupils need to understand if events took place in a rural, urban, or suburban area. Also, learners need to attach meaning to which city, state, or nation one or more events took place. Certainly, human behavior differs when events in literature take place in a rural, as compared to suburban or urban region. Behavior of human beings, of course, differs much among individuals within a rural, or a suburban, or an urban region.

In dealing with the setting of a story, pupils also need to understand when an event (or events) took place. Time is a significant factor to consider when the reader attempts to attach meaning to content in children's literature. Historical fiction, for example, pertains to a study of selected events in the past. Types of transportation, clothing, homes, schools, communication, recreational endeavors, and foods eaten might well depend upon the period of time being studied in history. Thus, a pupil needs to consider time elements, as well as geographical regions when attaching meaning to children's literature.

The specifics or details of the setting may either be suggested or stated directly. The setting of a story might also reveal characterization, as well as sequential ensuing events in the story.

## Characterization

In addition to the setting of a story, professional writers of novels also spend considerable time in describing the involved characters. What kind of a person (or persons) are specific individuals within a story? Do the individuals remain stable in terms of traits possessed, or are growth and change inherent? There certainly are numberous character traits that any one individual may possess. A person might then be shy but friendly, intelligent, hard working, and achievement oriented. The personal may also possess traits of being altruistic.

A different person might be aggressive, hostile, irresponsible, and handsome. The person may possess traits of being intelligent but not utilizing talents and abilities possessed. Thus, each learner should be guided to describe character traits of human beings in a story. Inferences must also be developed. Writers, of course, do not always state factually the kinds of characters within a story. To be able to attach meaning to content read, pupils need to understand the concept of characterization as it relates to actual human beings in a story or novel.

There are diverse means used by authors to describe personality and character of human beings. Thus, a writer may discuss the effects of one character on others. The feelings and thoughts within each character might be described. Also, the physical appearance, deeds, and speech of any character need adequate consideration within a story. Reasons for each character behaving as he/she did should be analyzed by pupils.

## Plot in the Literature Curriculum

Language arts teachers need to assist learners, inductively and/or deductively, to discover the plot in a given literary selection. Thus, the pupil is guided to ascertain what happened in a story. Too frequently, pupils have completed reading a library book without understanding what truly happened

in the selection. Diverse kinds of comprehension skills need to be developed within learners in order to understand the concept of plot. Two previous concepts discussed, related to a quality literature curriculum, involved setting and characterization. These concepts in any literary selection need understanding so that comprehensive meaning is attached to a sequence of happenings involving plot. If pupils do not understand what actually happened in a given selection, they have not understood the plot of a library book or story. Essential ingredients in a quality literature curriculum must be emphasized by the language arts teacher. Thus, the plot of a selection needs to be understood by learners; otherwise, comprehension and meaning are being omitted in the ongoing literature curriculum.

A quality literature curriculum involves pupils utilizing diverse word recognition techniques. Also, an adequate number of pouposes in comprehension needs emphasis in ongoing lessons and units. In addition to mastering word recognition techniques and developing comprehension proficiency, learners need to attach meaning to literary concepts, such as setting, characterization, and plot.

Tiedt and Tiedt[3] wrote:

> Literature has seldom been part of the reading program in the elementary school, for reading has been dominated by the basal reading series. What are the advantages of a literature-reading program over the traditional controlled-vocabulary anthology? The use of literature in a reading program for elementary school students offers quality content to a course of study which has concentrated solely on the teaching of skills. It is time that we acknowledge the value of provocative material in exciting the student about reading. Until we have this excitement present in the reading lesson, we will not develop a nation of readers.
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> Many titles from children's literature can be, and are being, used as reading text material. The advantages of Pippi Longstocking, A Wrinkle in Time, and Johnny Tremain over the familiar basal reader are overwhelming:
>
> 1. Excellent writing-imagery, use of words, storytelling ability.

2. Continuity of a long story--plot development, characterization.

3. Greater interest value--intrigue, atmosphere, entertainment.

4. Integration of literature, language, and composition studies.

## Point of View

In analyzing subject matter in a quality literature curriculum, pupils also need to be guided to understand who, in particular, is telling the story. Thus, from whose point of view are the events and incidents being told? Pupils need to notice if and when the characters in a story actually speak, or is a narrative account being presented? Is the first, second, or third person (noun or pronoun) actually presenting ideas, rather than sequential descriptions being utilized in presenting ideas?

Meanings attached to reading a story, novel, or library book may vary much depending upon who is presenting sequential content. Professional writers of novels pay much attention to point of view in developing literary works.

If the author or a character in the story tells sequential content, the story is delimited to the thoughts, experiences, perceptions, and expressions of that person relating ordered events in the literature being read. The narrator is the person telling the story. If the author tells the story, he/she generally remains anonymous and makes few or no references to the personal self. Generally, if a character in the story is narrating content, he/she refers to the self as "I".

## Theme in Literature

What is the main idea in the story, library book, or novel? Thus, pupils

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[3] Iris M. Tiedt and Sidney W. Tiedt, Contemporary English in the Elementary School. Second Edition. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975, page 359.

need to consider the concept of theme. Theme involves the author's idea or ideas pertaining to situations in life. The writer may directly state the involved theme. The theme might also be implied. Ordinarily, theme as a concept does not involve moral standards, or rules to live by. In reading a literary selection, the reader needs to ask what the consummable content says about nature, about people, and about life itself.

## Irony of the Situation

Each learner needs readiness experiences to achieve objectives in the literature curriculum. Never should teachers emphasize selected goals unless pupils can be successful in achieving the stated objectives. Pupils, as well as the teacher, become frustrated if the former are not ready to attain new ends. Feelings of failure hinder pupils in developing an adequate self-concept. Feelings of adequacy are necessary in order to achieve relevant goals. Thus, pupils need to be ready to understand the concept of irony of the situation, or it should not be emphasized in the literature curriculum.

What is irony of the situation? Events turn out differently for any one character, as compared to what the involved reader anticipated. Supposing, a character is portrayed as having experienced a noble undefiled background. As a surprise tactic, the writer reveals, directly or indirectly, that the character was involved in a series of thefts and robberies. Or, a person having grown up in highly unfortunate settings becomes a quality leader in the community. As a further example, a person in combat flies numerous successful bombing missions over enemy territory. The same character arrives home safely, only to die in an automobile accident involving travel to a routine destination.

In the concept of irony in literature, the author tries to hide his true feelings, pertaining to an incident, event, or deed. The character's deeds may not be consistent with stated beliefs.

## In Summary

Literature is a significant part of the total school curriculum. Each pupil needs to experience a quality children's literature curriculum. The reading curriculum needs to incorporate pupils developing proficiency in diverse word recognition skills, as well as in a variety of purposes involving comprehension. Also, quality literature needs adequate emphasis. Thus, concepts such as the setting of the story, characterization, plot, point of view, theme, irony of the situation, as well as satire need to be inherent in literature. Each pupil, however, needs to be ready to understand these concepts prior to their implementation in the literature curriculum. Learners individually need to attach interest, meaning, and purpose in ongoing activities and experiences.

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1. Chambers, Dewey W. Children's Literature in the Curriculum. Chicago: Rand McNally & Company, 1971.

2. Donoghue, Mildred R. The Child and the English Language Arts. Second Edition. Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1975.

3. Tiedt, Iris M., and Sidney W. Tiedt. Contemporary English in the Elementary School. Second Edition. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975.

## GROUPING STUDENTS IN READING

There are numerous means in grouping learners for instruction in reading. Teachers and supervisors need to study and analyze diverse plans. Adopted grouping procedures need to guide students to achieve optimally. Which approaches in placing learners into groups might be utilized to aid student progress in reading?

### Homogeneous Grouping

Many teachers group students homogeneously to minimize a wide range of reading achievement. Thus, a more uniform set of learners in demonstrating skills in reading is in evidence. Perfect uniformity will never be in evidence. It is easier to provide for individual levels in reading achievement if the range of achievement is somewhat uniform. Within a classroom, the teacher might then place the top, middle, and slower achievers into three different reading groups. A single series of basal readers may be utilized in teaching and learning. Or, multiple series might also be used in ongoing lessons and units. A major goal of reading instruction is to guide each student, whether in the fast, average, or slower group, to learn as much as possible.

Ediger[1] wrote:

> Teachers may find it easier to teach a given group of learners if homogeneous grouping is in evidence as compared to heterogeneous grouping since the range of achievement will not be as great within a class. However, teachers may not like to teach a class of slow learners as well as those who achieve at a faster rate of speed. The attitude of the teacher, of course,

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[1] Marlow Ediger, Relevancy in the Elementary Curriculum. Kirksville, Missouri: Simpson Publishing Company, 1975, page 162.

may be reflected within learners. Since the range of achievement in a class may be very great in heterogeneous grouping, it may pose a problem for some teachers in providing for individual differences. In certain methods of teaching it may not matter much if heterogeneous or homogeneous grouping is utilized. For example, in individualized reading, each pupil basically selects his own library book to read. He generally selects a book which is on his reading level. His own reading of the library book will involve a pace which should be in harmony with being able to comprehend the contents adequately. Each pupil in a class will read at a different rate of speed. Also, each learner will select a library book which differs in complexity form other library books selected for reading by other children in the classroom. Thus, individual differences can be provided for regardless of capacity and achievement levels of pupils in a class or group.

Advocates of the nongraded school emphasize students being grouped homogeneously based on reading achievement. Thus, teachers need to identify reading progress of students, as early as possible, perhaps in grade one. The top achievers are taught in one room,the next best achievers in the second room, and placing the slowest learners in reading in a separate room.

Adjustments, mo doubt, will need to be made if a learner progresses more rapidly or slowly in reading compared to previous times. He/she may then need to be placed in a different room so that increased homogeneity is in evidence. The teacher in a nongraded school will also have three reading groups within a room. The range of achievement within each group is then further minimized. Flexible grouping needs to be emphasized for each student in reading. The involved learner needs to be placed in a classroom and group within a room whereby continuous progress can take place.

Dufay[2] wrote:

> It is a startling truth: No two snowflakes are alike! But this fact regarding snowflakes is of small consequence to the destiny of our nation. Our greater concern must be for facts relating to a more complex group, infinitely more precious and more crucial to the future welfare of our society --our children. Common sense, as well as experience and intuition, tells us that children are indeed also in the no-two-are-alike category.

Homogeneous grouping in reading instruction does not emphasize:

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[2]Frank R. Dufay, Ungrading the Elementary School. West Nyack, New York: Parker Publishing Company, 1966, page 17.

1. mixed achievement levels of students within a set of learners.
2. rigid means of grouping which remain stable in time and space.

## Individualized Reading

Individualized reading emphasizes an open-ended curriculum. Thus, the learner may select sequentially which library books to read and to omit. An adequate number of book need to be available to learners to stimulate interest in reading. Also, the library books need to be on diverse levels of reading achievement. Thus, the slow, average, and talented reader may select a library book of personal interest on a level of complexity which meets personal aspirations.

After having selected and read a library book, the involved student then engages in a conference with the teacher to appraise reading achievement. The student and the teacher may appraise the following: interest in the library book, quality of comprehension of content read, and proficiency in oral reading. The teacher needs to record observations made, inherent in the conference.

Veatch[3] wrote:

> One of the advantages of individualized reading over other methods is the elimination of pressure and tension from the student in his attempt to meet the standards of his group. Why should he be compared with anyone else? He is not exactly like anyone else. When group competition is removed and the child is allowed to compete against himself, his own ability becomes the standard by which he is judged and tensions and pressures will give way to a more relaxed and more efficient type of study. The removal of this pressure should also eliminate the development of possible emotional blockages and undesirable attitudes toward reading.
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> Maximum efficiency in the use of a child's time is another advantage of individualized reading. The student does not drill with a group on words which only certain members in the group do not know. Instead, he spends time only on his own list of words he does not know. The amount of time which the student spends in silent reading is also increased because he need not wait while others are reading orally. Instead, he spends his time in doing his own silent reading or in activities related to this reading.

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[3] Jeanette Veatch, Individualizing Your Reading Program. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959, page 105.

Individualized reading does not emphasize:

1. teachers selecting reading materials for students. Guidance is given only to those learners who are not able to pursue the reading of sequential library books.

2. teachers solely selecting objectives, learning activities, and appraisal procedures.

3. a formal, structured reading curriculum in which scope and sequence has been determined for the learner.

4. the use of specific, measurable objectives.

5. management systems of instruction with sequential learnings determined for students.

Heterogeneous grouping is desired in individualized programs of reading instruction. Regardless of achievement and interest levels, each student can select sequentially those library books which meet personal needs, interests, and abilities.

## Language Experience Methods

Language experience approaches in teaching reading emphasize content to be read which comes from the personal experiences of involved students. Too frequently, students read content from textbooks which does not relate to their personal lives. Thus, to initiate and develop a language experience reading curriculum, learners need to have rich personal experiences. These experiences may include the use of excursions on the school grounds and into the larger community, films, filmstrips, slides, illustrations, transparencies and the overhead projector, and games/simulations.

Pertaining to the language experience method in teaching reading, Bush and Huebner[4] wrote:

In the initial stages when children dictate their own stories, the teacher as recorder points out letters that stand for sounds, good words the children have used to express their ideas, and sentence structure. He or she

[4]Clifford L. Bush and Margaret Huebner, Strategies for Reading in the Elementary School. Second edition. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1979, pages 256 and 257.

helps the child note similarities in beginning and ending of some words and helps the children build a basic stock of sight vocabulary useful in their reading and writing.

Meaningful experiences with clay, paint, and other materials provide opportunities for further self-expression. As children spontaneously talk about their activities, they are encouraged to write their own stories. They write again in content areas as they record information on topics of interest, contributing to class newspapers or class books. The teacher encourages self-expression and helps children as they ask for spelling, punctuation marks, and other aids to writing. Reading practice is obtained as children read their own writing, each other's, and, finally, the adult writing in published material.

Language experience approaches do not emphasize:

1. the use of textbooks and workbooks in teaching reading.
2. utilization of behaviorally stated ends in teaching and learning.
3. a formal, teacher determined reading curriculum.
4. homogeneous grouping procedures in reading.
5. commerically prepared materials in teaching reading.

## Interage Grouping

Interage grouping advocates believe that learners of several age levels should be taught as a group in reading. This harmonizes more with life in society in which individuals of several age levels interact with each other. Educators emphasizing interage grouping state that a single age level of learners in a classroom does not, by any means, guarantee homogeneity in the classroom. A cross age group may be more homogeneous in reading ability as compared to a set of students basically having the same/similar chronological age. Thus, students in grades four, five, and six may be regrouped so that the highest achievers in reading are in one classroom, the next best achievers in the second classroom, the third best attainers in the third room, and so on. The chances are that in any one classroom, there will be students from grades four, five, and six.

Interage age grouping does not stress:

1. Learners of a single chronological age being taught together continuously.
2. separating the school environment from society in terms of age levels.

3. heterogeneous grouping in the reading curriculum.

4. learners meeting grade level standards, based on the individual grade level they are in presently.

5. the self contained classroom, in which a given set of students is being taught continuously in all curriculum areas.

## Heterogeneous Grouping in Reading

Numerous educators recommend heterogeneous grouping of students in the classroom. Mixed achievement and capacity levels of learners are then inherent in a given set of learners. The gifted and slower learners may be taught in separate groups in a homogeneous setting. Many reading specialists believe that within a heterogeneous group, the teacher can provide for increased uniformity in achievement within a set of students by grouping learners homogeneously. Thus, three reading groups may be an end result within a room--the fast, the average, and the slower readers.

Pertaining to heterogeneous grouping, Shepherd and Ragan[5] wrote:

Heterogeneous instructional groups or classes are formed whenever no single factor governs the assignment of pupils to groups and classes. Heterogeneous classes are viewed as containing the same ranges of instructional and individual differences as the total group at that position on the vertical sequence.

ADVANTAGES CLAIMED FOR HETEROGENEOUS GROUPING.

1. The interaction of the various ability levels contributes to all aspects of development and achievement.

2. Heterogeneous groups are more analogous to the relationships in life.

3. The instructional models and participation alternatives available to pupils and teachers are more numerous.

4. Some research studies generally favor social, affective, and maturational advantages for children in heterogeneous groups.

LIMITATIONS CLAIMED FOR HETEROGENEOUS GROUPING.

1. The research evidence concerning achievement generally suggest that there are no differences between the two grouping plans.

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[5]Gene D. Shepherd and William B. Ragan, Modern Elementary Curriculum. Sixth edition. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982, pages 57 and 58.

2. The wider range of variations in achievement needs and capacities make it difficult for the teacher to provide for the individualization of instructions.

3. The pupils who learn more slowly are less likely to have opportunities for academic leadership and success because of the presence of brighter pupils.

Heterogeneous grouping does not emphasize:

1. Grouping top achievers in reading in one classroom, the next best achievers in a second room, followed by succeeding levels of slower achievers in other rooms.

2. Tracking learners within a classroom in terms of abiltiy levels. Each student, however, must be guided to achieve optimally in reading.

3. A certain ability level of students learning from each other only, in a classroom. Rather, students of mixed achievement levels are to learn from each other.

## Programmed Reading Instruction

Each student achieves on an individual basis when utilizing programmed materials. In using programmed textbooks, the programmer selects objectives for students to attain. Thus, the programmer chooses sequential learnings for learners. A small amount of content is presented to the involved student when reading from a programmed text. Next the learner answers a completion item covering the subject matter read. Generally, the response is written by the student in a separate answer book. Next, the learner uncovers the correct answer to the completion item as provided by the programmer. If the student responded correctly, reinforcement in learning should be in evidence and the learner is ready for the next sequential programmed item. No grouping of students is necessary. Each achieves at his own unique optimal rate. Should the involved student have responded incorrectly, he/she sees the correct answer as provided by the programmer and is still ready for the next sequential linear item in reading. The same/similar procedure in learning is used again and again--read, respond, and check by the involved learner.

Pertaining to Programmed Instruction, Skinner[6] wrote:

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[6] B. F. Skinner, "Reflections on a Decade of Teaching Machines," Teachers College Record, November, 1963.

An important contribution has been the so-called "programing" of knowledge and skills--the construction of carefully arranged sequences of contingencies leading to the terminal performances which are the object of education. The teacher begins with whatever behavior the student brings to the instructional situation; by selective reinforcement, he changes that behavior so that a given terminal performance is more and more closely approximated. Even with lower organisms, quite complex behaviors can be "shaped" in this way with surprising speed; the human organism is presumably far more sensitive. So important is the principle of programing that it is often regarded as the main comtribution of the teaching-machine movement, but the experimental analysis of behavior has much more to contribute to a technology of education.

Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) works in a similar manner as is true of using programmed textbooks. At a computer terminal center, the student, working on an individual basis, types in his/her name on the keyboard. The appropriate lesson number also needs to be typed in. The first item for the student to read appears on the monitor or screen. A small amount of subject matter appears on the screen. This is followed by a question to answer or a completion item to complete. The involved student types in the intended correct response. If the learner responded correctly, he/she is rewarded with the statement "that's good" appearing on the screen. The student is then ready for the next sequential linear item. If an incorrect response was given by the student, the words "try again" may appear on the screen. If a correct response to the same item is then given by the student, he/she progresses to the next sequential item. If incorrect, the learner now sees the correct response on the screen and is also ready for the next sequential task. Continually, the learner reads, responds, and checks using CAI in ordered, sequential steps of learning. Wohlwill[7] wrote:

It is interesting to note the fascination which subject matter characterized by a high degree of internal structure, such as mathematics, logic, and the physical sciences, have exerted on those active in the field of programing. These are, of course, precisely the subjects which lend themselves most readily to the construction of programs consisting of a rational sequence of small steps. Once this ladder has been built for the learner, it is assumed that he will inexorably move upward by dint of successive reinforcements. Thus, the need for any further attention to the learning process involved in the mastery of the material by the student is apparently obviated.

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[7]Joachim Wohlwill, "The Teaching Machine: Psychology's New Hobbyhorse," Teacher's College Record, November, 1962.

It may be noted in passing that this approach implicitly takes for granted the intervention of certain verbal and mediational processes in the learner, whose role in the learning process is hardly recognized, let alone understood. One may well ask by what magic the logical or semantic relations between successive items in a sequence built up by the programer are in fact responded to by the learner. That he may do so (provided he has reached the appropriate level of verbal and intellectual development, and the programer has done his work skillfully and diligently enough) is an undeniable empirical fact, but until some attempt is made to investigate just what the learner does in proceeding along such a sequence, this will remain a purely pragmatic enterprise, built essentially on guesswork.

## In Closing

There are numerous means of grouping students for reading instruction. Each plan needs to be studied thoroughly in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Ultimately, a method or combination of methods need selecting to guide each student to achieve as well as possible in reading.

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## WORD RECOGNITION TECHNIQUES IN THE READING CURRICULUM

There are selected means in guiding learners to recognize and identify new words. Individual differences among students need adequate provision. Each learner needs to attain optimally in reading. Quality objectives in word identification need selecting. Relevant learning opportunities to achieve the chosen ends must be selected. Ultimately, vital procedures of appraisal should be in evidence to ascertain student progress in unlocking unknown words.

### Phonics and Reading

If a student uses phonics, when needed, to identify new words, he/she relates phonemes (sounds) with graphemes (letters, singularly or in combination). Phonics instruction should aid students to associate individual phonemes with their related graphemes. Learners, however, should not develop skills in phonetic analysis merely for the sake of doing so. Rather, phonics skills should be utilitarian in nature. Thus, what has been learned must be applied. Phonetic analysis methods are then used to identify words.

DeBoer and Dallmann wrote:

> Over the years, children have learned to read by various methods, including the synthetic. The problem has been one of finding a general approach that would be effective with the largest possible number of children and that would lead to strong and continuing interest in good reading throughout life. On this ground, the numerous methods that may be described as analytic have been widely accepted. There is no meaning in phonemes. Only when they have been combined into word parts, whole words, phrases, and sentences do they yield meaning. And since there can be no true reading without the apprehension of meaning, adherents to the meaning approach

argue, the process should begin with the perception of the larger units--words and their affixes.

> Probably few persons in the field of teaching of reading would disagree with the point of view that no one becomes an efficient reader who has not learned--either by himself or with the aid of another person, most likely the teacher--at least part of the code giving the relation between the written symbols and the sounds represented by them. Furthermore, a number of people in the field of reading contend that many boys and girls will greatly profit from help in acquiring this complex skill. The dispute about phonics, therefore, is not over the whether but over the how, the when, and the what.
>
> A second question is whether the approach to word recognition should be synthetic or analytic. Advocates of the synthetic method favor teaching letters and graphemes, or phonograms, first, and then teaching children to analyze words into the sound elements that comprise them. This second method is sometimes called the whole-part-whole method.[1]

Teachers and supervisors need to develop vital objectives emphasizing phonics. Understandings, skills, and attitudes goals need emphasis in teaching and learning situations. Quality learning experiences need selecting for students to achieve the chosen objectives. Relevant appraisal procedures must be utilized to determine if students individually have/have not attained the desired outcomes. Those objectives not attained by individual students should be identified. Remedial practice needs to be provided so that chosen objectives can be achieved.

Which criteria should be utilized in developing a quality program of phonetic analysis in the reading curriculum?

1. objectives should be attainable by students.
2. appropriate sequence in objectives must be in evidence.
3. balance among understanding, skills, and attitudinal goals should be stressed.

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[1] John J. DeBoer and Martha Dallmann, The Teaching of Reading. Third edition. New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1970 page 120.

4. a comprehensive phonics curriculum needs to be emphasized.

5. a variety of learning activities should guide learners to attain desired goals.

The above listed criteria would hold true for any word recognition technique emphasized in the reading curriculum.

Phonics instruction is highly beneficial to learners if consistency between grapheme and phoneme is in evidence and yet the student is not attempting to make the needed associations. If the learner makes frequent errors in pronouncing consistently spelled words, a quality phonics curriculum may well increase reading proficiency. There are a few students who may not be able to hear sounds directly related to printed symbols. It is not advisable to force phonics objectives upon learners unless they can benefit from the chosen learning activities. Sometimes, students will infrequently make an incorrect association between grapheme and phoneme(s). Human errors do occur in reading, as is true of life's endeavors. Thus, no concern, in general, needs to be shown for phonics errors which are rarely made by the learner. Becoming proficient in the use of phonics aids students to recognize words independently and increase comprehension skills.

Consistency in grapheme-phoneme relationships is in evidence much more so in most consonants, than is true of vowel letters and sounds. The following consonants reveal this consistent emphasis--b, d, f, h, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, y, and z. It is advisable to stress whole word phonics rather than isolated sounds. Thus, a word, such as "tan", has close juncture in that the individual sounds come in rather close succession. If isolated grapheme-phoneme relationships are emphasized, the letter "t" is pronounced as "tuh," the letter "a," as "aa," and the letter "n" as "nuh."

In the preceding paragraph, the writer has omitted the consonants

"c," "g," "q", and "x" as being related to their respective sounds. The consonant "c" may make either a "k" or "s" sound, such as cane and city. The letter "g" can have a hard g sound (got) or a soft g sound (gem). The letter "q" is always followed by the letter "u", resulting in words such as quartz, quick, quiet, and quite. The letters in combination "kw" make the same sound as the "qu" sequence in the above listed words. "x" is also not needed in the spelling of words in English. In the word "x-ray," the letter "x" could well be represented by "eks." Thus, the letters c,q, and x are unecessary in consistant grapheme--phoneme relationships.

Vowel inconsistencies are much more numerous as compared to consonants. The common vowel letters are a, e, i, o, and u. The one vowel symbol in each of the five previous letters may provide for diverse phonemes or sounds. For example, the letter "a" is represented in each of the following correctly spelled words.

1. hat. The letter "a" has a short vowel sound.
2. bait. The letter "a" has a long vowel sound followed by the silent letter "i".
3. rate. The letter "a" has a long vowel sound with no silent letter in sequence.
4. rare. The letter "a" is neither short nor long in sound, but is governed by the letter "r".

Similar conclusions, as the above numbered items, can be made pertaining to the other vowel letters e, i, o, and u.

Major generalizations realized pertaining to using phonetic analysis in the reading curriculum, involve the following:

1. do not have students overgeneralize in the use of phonics. There are too many inconsistencies in grapheme-phoneme relationships.

2. emphasize phonetic analysis to guide students to unlock new words. There are many consistent sound-symbol relations which hold true in identifying unknown parts of a word or the whole word.

3. have students actually apply acquired phonics generalizations. Learners may then perceive that what has been attained is useable in unlocking new words.

4. do not have students isolate sounds in pronouncing words when phonetic analysis is being utilized. Distortions in word pronunciations occur when isolated phonemes are being pronounced. Close, not open juncture, is involved when pronouncing correctly sequential sounds within a word.

5. develop a sequential phoncis curriculum for students. Thus, learners might be successful individuals in goal attainment.

6. have students achieve relevant, not insignificant phonics conclusions. Much valuable time is wasted in teaching-learning situations if mundance objectives are being emphasized.

7. do not overemphasize the importance of phonics in the reading curriculum. Other word recognition techniques are also significant.

## Using Picture Clues

Pictures on a printed page may assist learners in identifying unknown words. This is especially true for young learners who are beginning to develop a basic sight vacabulary. For those who are developing initial reading skills, many basal readers, as well as library books, contain numerous illustrations on each sequential page of content. Thus, if a learner cannot identify an abstract word, the picture on that same page may unlock its correct identification. As students progress through diverse grade levels in reading achievement, the use of picture clues becomes less salient and eventually unnecessary. Why?

1. a basic sight vocabulary is developed, and the reader instantly identifies sequential words.

2. fewer illustrations appear in books as succeeding grade levels are reached by the involved student. College/university textbooks may contain no illustrations.

3. the ultimate goal in reading is to identify all abstract words as sight words. Rapid identification of words is then in evidence.

4. using pictures to identify new words as a word recognition technique should be only utilized as needed. Otherwise, it slows down the act of reading in comprehending ideas.

Ediger[2] wrote the following in emphasizing the utilization of picture clues in reading:

The teacher must develop a good file of pictures for use in classroom teaching. These pictures, among other ways, can be used in a reading readiness

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[2] Marlow Ediger, Relevancy in the Elementary Curriculum. Kirksville, missouri, simpson publishing Company, 1975, pages 73-74.

program. If pupils are studying a unit on the farm in social studies, they can develop background information pertaining to the names of farm animals, machinery, and buildings through the study of related pictures. Thus, later on when pupils may be reading content from basal readers on farm life, they will understand the concepts and generalizations better than if they had not had the unit relating to the farm. Building background information is an important facet of a reading readiness program.

Reading readiness books from a basal series contain many pictures. Here, the teacher must assist learners to develop interest in and discuss the pictures. Many valuable suggestions are given in the manual in helping teachers provide interesting, meaningful, and purposeful learning activities. The teacher must be creative in using the sugguestions for teaching. In some cases, the experienced teacher may think of better methods and approaches to use in teaching than those given in the manual. The manual is a guide and is not prescriptive.

As a result of studying pictures from the teacher's own file and from the reading readiness series of a basal reader, the child should think in terms of pictures supplying valuable information in learning. The learner when reading in a formal reading program can be aided in identifying and unlocking new words with the use of picture clues. For example, if a child is reading content on a specific page, he may not know the correct pronunciation of a particular word such as "lamb." He looks at a picture on the same page from which he is reading and in the illustration a lamb is pictured. This word makes sense whthin the sentence. Thus, the learner has used picture clues to determine the meaning of the new word. Pupils need to have ample opportunities to study pictures in a reading readiness program to develop background information as well as to be able to use pictures later in formal reading programs to unlock and identify new words.

How might the reading curriculum be improved when picture clues use is being emphasized in teaching-learning situations?

1. make certain the illustration used are understandable by learners. Meaningless pictures do not aid students in using the illustrations to identify new words.

2. guide students to use pictures to identify unknown words. Thus, an illustration may actually equal the unknown word.

3. do not have learners become too dependent upon the use of pictures to unlock unknown words. A major goal of reading instruction is to assist each student to develop and retain a basic sight vacabulary. The use of picture clues is a tool for students to use in being able to identify unknown words. No word recognition technique is an end in and of itself. Rather, word attack skills are used as means to an end and that is to identify new words.

Major conclusions involving the use of picture clues might well include the following:

1. picture clues and their utilization should not become a crutch to learners. Using clues involving illustrations chould be used if they aid in word recognition.

2. guide students to become increasingly independent in word identification. Thus, the use of picture clues should be deemphasized sequentially.

Recognizing sight words stresses maturity in reading comprehension. Pictures should, however, be utilized to develop background information within learners in order to achieve readiness for reading a given selection.

3. assist learners to become proficient in picture clue identification within the framework of a reading readiness curriculum.

4. illustrations may be utilized, as needed, to develop accuracy of concepts and generalizations in order to comprehend abstract content.

## Syllabication and Word Recognition

If a student cannot recognize a particular word, syllabication may be utilized to aid in recognition of what is unknown. Relevant objectives then need selecting which will stimulate students to utilize syllabication as a word recognition technique. Thus, if a learner is unable to identify the word "unlike," he/she may divide the word into two clearly discernable syllables "un" and "like." Maybe the involved learner has had previous experiences with words that begin with the prefix "un," such as in undo, unimportant, uncertain, and uninsured. Meaning, no doubt, has then been attached previously to the prefix "un," meaning "not." Surely, at this level of achievement, the student identifies and understands the root word "like" in "unlike." A new arrangement of previously acquired content assists the student to identify the original unknown word "unlike."

Students need to be able to identify and attach meaning to commonly used prefixes which have high transfer value. These prefixes include "un," "ex," "dis," "re," and "ir." Commonly used suffexes should also be mastered by learners. These suffixes, among others, might well include "er" (singer), "ful" (cupful), and "less" (endless). Lessons for students should emphasize affixes (prefixes and suffixes) which are applicable and transferable in unlocking and understanding new words.

Pertaining to the utilization of syllabication to identify new words, Bush and Huebner[3] emphasize the importance of pupils achieving the following syllabi-

[3]Clifford Bush and Mildred Buebner, Strategies for the Reading in the Elementary School. Second edition. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1979, page 82.

cation generalizations:

1. When two consonants, or double consonants, appear between two vowels, the syllable division is made between the consonants.

lum-ber sud-den car-ry

2. There are as many syllable as there are vowel sounds.

be-lieve dam-age write

3. A single consonant between vowels usually goes with the second vowel.
e-lect de-cide hu-mid

4. Consonant digraphs and blends are not divided.

tel-e-phone weath-er fish-er-man

5. Prefixes and suffixes form separate syllables.
un-wrap life-less dis-band-ing

6. The inflectional endings -ible, cle, -dle, -gle, -ple, and -tle form the final syllable.
subtle ta-ble sta-ple

7. When the letter x is preceded and followed by vowels, it is placed in the syllable with the preceding vowel.

ex-act tax-i ox-y-gen

Major conclusions emphasizing syllabication as a technique to identify unknown words include:

1. it is one tool, along with other methods, applicable to ascertaining correct identification of new words.

2. students should not overly analyze any unknown word. To do so may make for reading in a halting and overly analytical manner. The entire word needs to be pronounced so that sequential phonemes are stressed in correct pronunciation.

3. the use of syllabication can be a rather rapid means of unlocking unknown words. Once an initial prefix has been identified, the involved learner may then readily recognize the ensuing root word.

4. teaching commonly used prefixes and suffixes can greatly assist students to identify many new words.

5. excessive drill on affixes may destroy learner interest in reading.

## Structural Analysis and Word Recognition

Structural analysis is closely related to the utilization of syllabication in identifying new words. In fact, when new words are identified through the use of

prefixes, suffixes, and root words, both structural analysis and syllabication are being used. Each part is meaningful. Meaningful parts, which cannot be divided any further within a word are known as morphemes.

In selected situations, a word can be divided further then the number of syllables contained therein. Thus, in the following words, one syllable only is in evidence: boys, girls, cows, pigs, rags, dogs, chicks, and sheets. And yet the "s" ending for each word is a morpheme. A plural noun is in evidence. The first word listed above is boys." "Boy" is meaningful in and of itself and is singular in number. Adding an "s" to the noun "boy" indicates more than one or plural in number. The word "boy" as well as the "s" ending are morphemes. Each has a unique meaning of its very own. The "s" ending is an inflected form of the word "boy."

As further examples of structural analysis, the following words have one syllable: walked, talked, jumped, and bumped. The first listed word in its inflected form contains "walk" as one morpheme. It contains a meaningful unit in and of itself. The inflection "ed" also is a morpheme with its own special meaning. Thus, the word "walked" has been analyzed into "walk" and its inflected ending "ed." Two morphemes being in evidence as to its structure. The other listed words in the same set--talked, jumped, and bumped--also each contain a root word plus their "ed" inflected endings. These words then emphasize a pattern or a structure with a root or base word and their individual inflected endings.

If a learner meets an unknown word in reading, the ensuing word may appear unfamiliar until it is analyzed as to root word which has been identified previously. The only unknown may be that the familiar "s" needs to be added to the previously recognized root word in context. The unknown word then is recognized by combining familiar elements--a previously recognized root word and a previously identified inflection.

Relevant conclusions to be emphasized in utilizing structural analysis in

word recognition include:

1. students need to become proficient in noticing structural elements within a word. Words do possess a structure or pattern. Inflected endings of words come in patterns. Thus, changing words from singular to plural, in many cases, emphasizes adding the letter "s." Much consistency in patterning is in emphasis here.

2. Numerous other patterns also are in evidence in the English language. Words follow consistent patterns, such as ban, can, fan, man, pan, ran, tan, and van. Words also may follow a pattern in spelling but emphasize diverse pronunciations, such as cough, bough, dough, rough, tough, and through.

3. sentences can follow rather consistent patterns. Linguists have identified the following patterns of sentences:
(a) subject--predicate (noun--verb), Dogs run.
(b) subject--predicate--direct object (noun--verb--noun), Dogs chew bones.
(c) subject--predicate--indirect object--direct object (noun--verb--noun--noun), Bill gave John a gift.
(d) subject--linking verb--predicate adjective (noun/linking verb/predicate adjective), The box is large.
(e) subject--linking verb--predicate nominative (noun--linking verb--noun), John is a cowboy.
(f) subject--linking verb--adverb (noun--linking verb--adverb), Sarah is home.
(g) subject--predicate--direct object--adjective (noun--verb--noun--adjective) Jim painted the house red.
(h) subject--predicate--direct object--noun (noun--verb--noun--noun), Jack nam his dog Shep.

## Sight Words in the Reading Curriculum

Ultimately, the goal in teaching reading is to have students immediately identify words, phrases, sentences, and sequential paragraphs. Thus, the sight method is utilized to recognize words. Generally, prior to identifying unknown words, though the sight method, students need to develop proficiency in the use of phonics, picture clues, syllabication, and structural analysis.

To comprehend subject matter read, each student needs to use the sight method for fluent reading. Fluency in word recognition aids in comprehending meanings of abstract content. Word calling and/or excessive analysis of individual words hinders in the area of comprehension. Each person reads to understand and attach meaning to sequential graphemes.

Numerous studies have been made of basal sight words that each learner should acquire on the primary grade years. The sight words are essential to master in

order that frequently used words may be identified by students. The Dolch list represents research study results in selecting vital words for all to master as necessary sight words. The Dolch[4] list emphasizes the following 220 words:

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | six | no | sleep | new | would | kind |
| I | be | long | cold | well | hot | wish |
| too | today | yes | will | have | open | carry |
| to | not | an | pretty | how | light | know |
| two | little | three | them | keep | their | only |
| the | one | this | when | drink | pull | pick |
| in | black | around | round | sit | may | don't |
| see | my | was | am | made | goes | gave |
| into | at | just | white | went | small | every |
| and | all | ten | funny | has | find | which |
| up | so | get | put | seven | could | our |
| blue | by | if | take | right | fall | want |
| she | do | soon | of | why | think | thank |
| yellow | are | its | say | please | far | better |
| he | him | some | or | upon | found | clean |
| go | her | from | ran | give | read | been |
| you | on | fly | work | once | were | never |
| we | green | them | with | together | best | those |
| big | eat | but | there | us | because | write |
| red | four | as | about | tell | grow | first |
| jump | said | under | after | ate | fast | these |
| it | away | before | what | where | off | both |
| play | run | walk | ask | many | draw | shall |
| down | they | stop | sing | warm | bring | own |
| for | that | out | must | laugh | got | hurt |
| old | going | his | five | live | always | eight |
| is | did | make | myself | how | much | wash |
| me | who | your | over | come | does | full |
| look | like | ride | cut | buy | show | use |
| can | come | help | let | very | any | done |
| good | had | call | again | hold | try | start |
| brown | saw | here | | | | |

Why should learners be able to identify a core of words in terms of using the sight method?

1. the involved words are significant and relevant. Reading errors will become less frequent as these commonly used words are mastered.

2. an improved self concept should be an important end result when learners become proficient readers. Reading skills are aided by acquiring a basal sight vocabulary which are transferable to new content being read.

3. additional words can be mastered using sight methods after a core of essential words have been acquired. Sequential reading progress is then built upon the attainment of basal sight words.

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[4] E. W. Dolch, A Manual for Remedial Reading. Champaign, Illinois: The Gerrard Press, 1945, page 29.

## Context Clues in Reading

If a learner is unable to identify a word, context clues may be utilized to recognize the unknown. An unidentified word may be recognized by relating it to the known. Generally, a few words only, will fit the space of the unknown word as it relates to the other words in the sentence. Thus, context clues are utilized. A word must make sense or be meaningful with other words in terms of word order or syntax.

Sometimes, a student may substitute for the unknown a word that just does not fit in. Context clues are then not being utilized. Learners need to be guided to choose words for the unknown words, in order that a meaningful sentence results. It may also be necessary to utilize additional word recongition techniques if a word is selected to take the place of the unidentified word, makes meaningful content, and yet is not the correct word. With appropriate knowledge of phonics, the initial consonant letter of the unknown word will certainly aid in identifying the correct word within a contextual situation.

Pertaining to the use of context clues, Walcott, et. al.[5] wrote:

> The deduction of meaning from context, however, is extremely susceptible to error. Children, students, and adults alike may draw more false inferences than correct ones. People, furthermore, are often the prey of they first impressions. They get an idea about something, which fits there-upon into a system of ideas; thereafter, whether through habit or stubbornness, they do not get rid of it. Perhaps they cannot get rid of it; and one completely mistaken idea about the meaning of a word may lead to distortion upon distortion of the meanings of other words that are (or seem to be) related to it. Then there comes a point in the life of a student when he reads a passage of unusual difficulty--not great difficulty, but a difficulty that puts it just a bit above what he has been used to. He reads among a vocabulary containing numerous words that he has seen before and loosely defined from context; so every word is familiar--and yet he does not make any sense at all of the passage. He may reread it while his mind wanders. He may give up in frustration. He may become indignant because he finds the author so unclear. Or, worst of all, he may supply some general fog of meaning that in fact does not correspond very closely to what is there on the page.
>
> We have all had this experience, and virtually every adult we have consulted admits that he has had it too. A similar experience--but not the same--occurs when we are reading in a new subject or in new ideas, where the meaning

[5] Charles Child Walcutt, et. al. Teaching Reading. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1974, pages 269 and 270.

hangs not so much on a flow of partly known words but rather on just a few unfamiliar words, a few key words that absolutely control the meaning. We have dawdled and stumbled over such passages, too, guessing at the unfamiliar words and perchance making very bad or very hazy guesses; and we look up from the page in a daze, not having any clear sense at all of the meaning of what we have read.

Generalizations which are applicable involving the use of context clues may well include the following:

1. context clues and their uses are an important means of recognizing new words. Meaning is then attached to words selected to fill for the unknown.

2. the utilization of context clues is also applicable in defining meanings of words. Generally, the other words in the sentence will provide the contextual meaning of a word. Authors may also directly define a word or provide related synonyms or antonyms.

## In Closing

There are diverse techniques to be used as tools in aiding students to unlock unknown words. These word recognition techniques are not ends in and of themselves. Rather, they are means to an end, that is to aid in word recognition. Students need to develop skills in using word recognition techniques, as needed, to become increasingly proficient in identifying the unknown. What is read must be comprehended for meaningful learnings to accure.

The following word recognition techinques were discussed:

1. phonics with its emphasis upon grapheme (symbol) and phoneme (sound) relationships to identify new words.

2. picture clues which stress the utilization of illustrations on a printed page to aid in unlocking unknown words.

3. syllabication with its advocacy of dividing an unknown word into syllables and thus make a word recognizable through analyzing of its parts.

4. structural analysis with its emphasis upon noticing the structure of a word. Words may well pattern with other words when an initial consonant is changed and a new word results, e. g. bat, cat, fat, hat, mat, pat, rat, sat, and vat. Also there are numerous inflections with words. The "s," and "ed" endings are commonly recognized inflections, e. g. boy, boys, and walk, walked. Sentences in reading selections also follow patterns.

5. sight words which emphasize look and say methods. Ultimately, all words in reading ideally should become sight words.

6. context clues with its stress on words chosen for an unknown work in a sentence must make for inherent sence and be meaningful.

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## COMPREHENSION IN THE READING CURRICULUM

Why do individuals read abstract words? Persons read to comprehend and attach meaning to the content. Sometimes, a student goes through the motions of reading, but does not acquire facts, concepts, and generalizations. He/she may then silently or orally call words. These students might even be able to identify words appropriately in reading. Understanding what has been read, however, is lacking.

Why do students fail to comprehend what has been read?

1. An inadequate number of words are being identified properly. Thus, comprehension goes downhill.

2. Ideas expressed in the selection are too complex to understand.

3. The learner possesses a limited vocabulary and cannot understand content read.

4. Readiness for reading a selection was not in evidence. Background informatio was lacking and the student could not understand content being read. There needs to be enough familiarity with the selection to be read so that the learner may attach meaning to abstract materials.

5. Purpose or reasons for reading a given selection were lacking. Students need to perceive value in reading subject matter.

6. The selection to be read did not meet the interest needs of the student.

7. The learner was not able to determine what was salient and what was of lesser importance in the reading selection.

8. Personal and social problems afflict the student. Time spent on these problems hinder in acquiring ideas.

There are diverse kinds of comprehension in the reading curriculum. There is considerable agreement among reading specialists as to different categorized types of reading comprehension.

### Reading to Acquire Facts

It is significant to be able to glean relevant facts from content read. Facts are specific and provide raw materials for more complex levels of thinking. Thus, teachers need to guide students to become increasingly proficient in reading factual content effectively.

If the teacher guides learners in selecting vital facts from those less salient, this should aid students to determine relevancy. Many facts can be in print in a given reading selection, certainly selection needs to be involved in evaluating that which is to be retained. Vital facts need to be meaningful to the involved reader. Concrete materials (objects and items) as well as the semi-concrete (illustrations, films, filmstrips, transparencies, and slides) individually or collectively, when available, may well assist learners to understand factual content.

Prior to reading subject matter involving numerous facts, a purpose should be stated by the teacher as to which are salient to glean from the nonsalient. Thus, a teacher could ask students to read for the following purpose: Which facts tell us why World War II was fought? Lets read to find out. The reader then is to zero in on factual content which tell about causes of World War II. Other facts in the reading selection then may not need to be pinpointed.

Which problems might a teacher encounter in assisting students to comprehend factual content?

1. there are too many facts in a selection for students to read and retain. Using vital criteria to make selections in terms of those being worthwhile to grasp is important.

2. students lack background information in understanding facts read. Clarity of ideas is then lacking.

3. means in expressing the facts in written materials leave much to be desired. Facts can be stated in meaningful as well as vague ways. It will be up to the teacher then to guide students to attach meaning to a given selection in reading.

Pertaining to reading comprehension, Russell[1] wrote:

> Some writers define comprehension as the ability to get meaning from the printed page in the form in which the author presents it and interpretation as occurring when the reader goes beyond the stated meaning. The two often overlap. In the intermediate and upper grades it seems more exact to speak of many reading comprehensions rather than a single comprehension for all reading. As indicated above, pupils who are good readers for details may fail to grasp the significance of a whole section. In the primary grades the comprehension of many pupils is limited to individual words, to grasping sentence meaning, and to reading short paragraphs or stories for general impression or for some details. At some stage in the intermediate grades most children will be able to expand these abilities gradually so as to acquire a

[1] David H. Russell, Children Learn to Read. New York: Blaisdell Publishing Company, 1961, page 245.

wider range of comprehension. Analysis of reading activities in intermediate and senior grades indicates that a least ten or twelve comprehension abilities should be practiced and maintained in the intermediate and senior grades.

## Reading for Sequence

A second significant purpose for reading pertains to acquiring sequential content. Content then must be understood in a selected order and not at random. Thus, presidents, prime ministers, and kings in diverse nations appeared in a definite sequence--first, second, third, fourth, and so on. How something is done in terms of tasks completed may also stress a specific order of completion. Erroneous products have been completed; proper sequence in their completion left much to be desired. Each student then needs guidance to attach meaning to abstract content by developing appropriate order.

After developing readiness for reading a given selection, the teacher may have students read for the following sequence: lets read to find out the order of battles fought during the early phases of World War II. Sequence is highly significant when answering the above named purpose. Listing the battles in random order does not harmonize with the stated purpose. Learners, in general, may not understand what has been read due to inappropriate sequential thinking.

Which problems might students encounter when the purpose in reading is to gain sequential content?

1. learners may not understand what is meant by the concept "sequence."

2. students have not had adequate practice in reading for sequential content. Thus, reading for a sequence of ideas has been greatly minimized in the reading curriculum.

3. the teacher may have believed that there is one kind of comprehension, rather than specific purposes in comprehension, including reading to achieve sequential ideas.

Ediger[2] wrote:

It is very important for pupils to think in terms of sequence when reading content in many different curriculum areas. For example, if pupils are reading infor-

[2] Marlow Ediger, Relevancy in the Elementary Curriculum. Kirksville, Missouri: Simpson Publishing Company 1975, page 88.

mation on Eskimo's building sleds for use in the Arctic areas, the purpose may arise in reading as to how the sleds are built. The child would then read content pertaining to the order or sequence of steps involved in building the sled.

Historical content very frequently deals with order of happenings. Too many pupils have erroneously generalized that George Washington was the first president while Abraham Lincoln was the second president of the United States. The sequence, of course is incorrect. A purpose in reading historical content related to the appropriate unit could be the following: lets read to find out who the first four presidents of the United States were in order of their becoming president.

## Reading to Follow Directions

Among others, skill developed in following written/printed directions is very relevant. Students in leisure time activities read directions in order to make models, as well as complete products. In society recipes are read to prepare food items; manuals are followed to wire a building for electricity or to install an appliance.

In school, students need to read directions carefully in order to work an exercise in a workbook correctly or to answer questions correctly at the end of the chapter within a basal textbook. Incorrect responses to a test may come from inaccurate reading of ensuing direction.

In reading to follow directions, students need to:

1. analyze what is salient to follow in the instructions.

2. notice the order to follow in fulfilling requirements given in the directions. Many times, the order or sequence in following instructions is highly significant.

3. read content in an understandable manner.

4. perceive the given directions, as intended by the writer.

Ransom[3] listed the following directions as possible learning activities:

1. Following recipes.
2. Following written directions for making a desired art or craft object.
3. Following charted directions and rules for playing games.
4. Learning to read timetables.
5. Reading driver's manuals for procuring licenses.
6. Giving orders from menus which contain varied choices, an opportunity for role-playing.
7. Practicing ordering materials from a catalog or advertisement on a box or in a newspaper.

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[3] Grayce A. Ransom, Preparing to Teach Reading. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1978, page 336.

8. Following practice directions in special teacher-developed materials. For example,
   a. Put an arrow (↓) over the verb in this sentence: The teacher smiled sadly.
   b. Put a star (★) over the subject in this sentence: Cows like to eat hay.

## Reading to Achieve Generalizations

Each student needs to become proficient in developing generalizations which cover vital facts. The facts support one or more generalizations. Thus, several facts will substantiate a generalization. To remember isolated facts only, may well hinder retention of subject matter read. Facts should rather be related to and support a generalization. Content perceived as being related is easier to remember as compared to isolated content. It behooves the teacher then to guide students individually to achieve broad ideas (generalizations).

The teacher of reading can assist students to achieve generalizations. By asking learners to state in one sentence what a given reading selection tells us, students may then respond with appropriate sentences in a brainstorming session. Each sentence given may be evaluated by having learners give supporting facts. Erroneous generalizations which do not have adequate supporting facts are then discarded. The teacher or a student may list a generalization on the chalkboard as given by involved students. Underneath the generalization, related supporting facts may be listed. Thus, a statement may be substantiated or refuted as representing a generalization.

Problems directly related to having students read to acquire generalizations include the following:

1. inadequate facts are given to support a generalization.

2. overgeneralizing occurs. Students jump to a conclusion based on inadequate data.

3. factual information in and of itself is stated as one or more generalizations.

4. learners do not understand concepts pertaining to facts supporting a generalization.

Smith[4] et. al. wrote:

Skills need to be given prominence in teaching reading, particularly at the early stages of reading instruction. Whether one favors a skill-based curriculum in reading or a somewhat softer line in treating reading skill development, a focus on the important skills is a pragmatic matter. The identification of important skills is essential for efficient diagnosis, systematic organization of instructional materials and procedures, and effective assessment of the outcomes of reading instruction. Our discussion provides perspective for viewing skills and skill instruction.

Benefits and concerns associated with the development and inplementation of a skill-based approach to teaching reading are considered. Many apparent critics of teaching basic reading skills are, in fact, criticizing the trappings--such as instructional management systems, behavioral objectives, criterion-referenced tests, and accountability schemes--that are frequently part of skill-based programs. We maintain that the trappings often are ill conceived and/or badly used and so should not adversely affect attitudes toward teaching skills. Pragmatic ways for dealing with the problems encountered in teaching skills are suggested.

## Critical Reading

With the explosion of knowledge, increased skill needs to be developed by students to read content critically. Thus, subject matter is being analyzed. Facts are separated from opinions, accurate from inaccurate content, and fantasy from reality statements. A higher level of cognition or intellectual endeavors is being emphasized when critical reading is in evidence.

Critical reading involves reading for facts, sequence of ideas, and for acquiring directions. However, within the framework of the previously identified purposes, students need to analyze. The facts, sequential content, and relevant directions are separated into what is significant, as compared to the insignificant.

Problems involving critical reading pertain to the following:

1. students may not have adequate background information.

2. cognition levels are not adequately developed to engage in higher levels of thinking, such as critically evaluating what has been read.

3. abstract ideas might be emphasized to the exclusion of concrete conclusions.

Involving critical thinking for learners in the reading curriculum, Benjamin Bloom and associates identified the following ascending levels of complexity in the cognitive domain:

[4] Richard J. Smith, et. al. The School Reading Program. Boston: Houghton—Mifflin Company, 1978, pages 61 and 62.

1. knowledge or recall level
2. comprehension of content
3. application of previously acquired subject matter.
4. analysis, such as separating facts from opinions, and fantasy from reality.
5. synthesis-developing a hypothesis.
6. evaluation in terms of criteria or standards.

## Creative Reading

To live well in society, individuals need to be creative. Unique, novel means then are needed to identify and solve relevant problems. Traditional approaches in solving problems may not work. Also, most persons like and enjoy being creative. What is within the student then comes to the surface in terms of ideas, products, skills, and attitudes. That which is novel to an individual amounts to creative endeavors. It is difficult to come up with content which is creative for an entire group. However, for the involved individual, that which is new and unique needs prizing. The latter situation truly involves the creative.

In the area of reading, individuals reveal creative behaviors by:

1. providing unique interpretations of subject matter read.
2. perceiving gaps in the reading materials being pursued.
3. raising novel related questions.
4. being skillful in playing with ideas.
5. desiring to reveal comprehension of content in unique ways.
6. being able to play roles of individuals in content read.
7. wishing to alter the setting, characters, and plot in stories read.
8. answering "what-if" questions in a creative manner.

Pertaining to creativity in the curriculum, Tiedt and Tiedt[5] list the following traits of the creative person:

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[5] Iris M. Tiedt and Sidney W. Tiedt. Contemporary English in the Elementary School. Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975, page 151.

1. Nonconformity of ideas, but not necessarily of dress and behavior
2. Egotism and feelings of destiny
3. Great curiosity, desire to discover the answer
4. Sense of humor and playfulness
5. Perserverance on self-started projects
6. Intense emotions, sincerity
7. Tendency to be shy
8. Lack of rigidity

Creativity in reading does not emphasize:

1. conformity behavior on the part of students.

2. right answers to questions in the reading curriculum. Rather, questions are open-ended allowing for speculation to identified problems.

3. teacher determined behavior for students.

4. memorization of facts, concepts, and generalizations.

## Reading to Solve Problems

Life itself demands the identification and solutions to problems. Thus, it is significant for students also to engage in problems solving experiences. Numerous educators identify the following flexible steps in problem solving:

1. identification of the problem.

2. gather data in order to solve the identified problems.

3. develop a hypothesis (or hypotheses).

4. test the hypothesis in a realistic setting.

5. revise or modify the hypothesis, if necessary.

In the above named steps in problem solving, learners may well identify problems when reading. One approach, among others, in data gathering is to read vital content. The chosen hypothesis, among other methods, may be tested through reading. Through reading, the original hypothesis may experience revision or modification.

Pertaining to problem solving Ediger[6] wrote:

> The teacher in each unit of study must ask stimulating questions of pupils. Thus, pupils may be guided in using a variety of reference sources in attempting to solve these problems. Ultimately, a hypothesis relating to the problem may be developed and evaluated. In gathering content to solve problems, no effort

[6] Marlow Ediger, The Elementary Curriculum, A Handbook. Kirksville, Missouri: Simpson Publishing Company 1977, page 130.

should be given to utilize a specific academic discipline only. Emphasis rather should be placed upon obtaining information relative to solving specific problem areas.

Problem solving does not advocate:

1. teacher determination of problematic situations.
2. students memorizing predetermined content.
3. the use of programmed instruction.
4. the utilization of measurable, behaviorally stated goals.

## In Summary

There are diverse plans available in reading to guide learner comprehension. Among others, these include:

1. reading to secure vital facts.
2. reading to gain sequential content.
3. reading to follow directions.
4. reading to attain relevant generalizations.
5. reading content critically.
6. reading ideas in a creative manner.
7. reading to acquire solutions to problems.

Teachers and supervisors need to become highly knowledgable of the above named purposes. Skill needs to be developed by teachers to implement comprehensive programs to aid learners in reading comprehension. Appropriate learning activities then need to be in evidence to aid students to comprehend what has been read. Ultimately, a quality program of evaluation needs to be in evidence to determine if each student has achieved relevant comprehension skills.

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## EVALUATING THE READING CURRICULUM

Teachers and supervisors need to provide quality experiences in reading for each learner. Students individually must achieve optimally in learning to read. How might a school system appraise the effectiveness of the present reading curriculum?

### Evaluation of Objectives

Each objective needs to be assessed thoroughly. The ends need to be vital to guide students to attain as well as possible in word attack skills, comprehension, and work study skills. Word attack objectives include utilizing context, picture, configuration, structural ahalysis, phonetic, and syllabication clues to unlock unknown words.

To emphasize comprehension objectives, learners should achieve skills in reading to acquire facts, directions, and a sequence of ideas. Also, students need to read critically and creatively, as well as scan vital ideas.

Work study ends might stress the effective use of:

1. dictionaries and encyclopedias.
2. thesaurus and almanacs.
3. multiple series textbooks.
4. glossaries, the index, and table of contents.
5. atlases, maps, globes, and charts.
6. graphs, tables, and figures.

Objectives provide direction in terms of <u>what</u> students are to learn. Balance among understandings (learning facts, concepts, and generalizations), skills (applying what has been learned), and attitudinal (feelings, values, and beliefs) goals need to be stressed in ongoing units of study.

Objectives for student attainment should meet selected criteria. Among other standards, objectives should be:

1. vital and relevant.
2. purposeful and acceptable for learners.
3. interesting and meaningful.
4. challenging and provide for individual differences.
5. utilitarian and useful in new learning situations.
6. attainable on the part of students.

Issues to consider in the selection of goals in the reading curriculum might be the following:

1. general versus measurably stated.
2. activity centered versus subject matter emphasis.
3. process as compared to product orientated.
4. student centered versus teacher determined.
5. inductive versus deductive emphasis.
6. multi-media versus textbook-workbook emphasis.

Lapp and Flood[1] wrote:

After determining specific behavioral objectives, you need to adjust the program to the students' needs. This can be accomplished through formal and informal assessments of your students. Informal assessment might include an analysis of:

1. the reading levels of the texts to be read
2. which children can easily read the texts; who will require minimal help; and who needs a great deal of help
3. the writing, listening, and speaking skills required to complete each task
4. the types of abilities each child has as they related to each area
5. the content area concepts being explored
6. what the children know about the content areas that are being explored.

Procedures for informal assessment might include: (1) a general class discussion, (2) knowledge from previous assignments, or (3) a game, worksheet, or reading assignment. After determining the relationship between the goals to be accomplished and the skills and information possessed by each child, you can begin to determine basic grouping patterns.

## Sequence in Reading

There certainly needs to be an order of inductively and/or deductively

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[1] Diane Lapp and James Flood, Teaching Reading to Every Child. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1978, page 180.

acquiring understands, skills, and attitudinal goals effectively. Which objectives then should be attained first, second, third, and so on? Proper sequencing of objectives is important in that learners need to attain optimally in moving from the simple increasingly to the more complex or from the concrete to the semi-concrete and then to the abstract.

One approach in emphasizing sequence is to have students choose the order of experiences within a flexible environment. Thus, for example, in individualized reading, a learner selects which library books to read sequentially. After reading a book, the student has a conference with the teacher to appraise progress. After the completion of each conference with the teacher, the learner is ready to select the next library book to read. The teacher intervenes in library book selection if the student is unable to choose and complete the reading of a book.

In situations involving individualized reading, the pupil orders his/her own experiences. Sequence, it is felt, resides within the involved learner. Others, the teacher included, cannot select the order of goals for a learner to attain. The student in individualized reading must do the processing of content. A teacher determined reading curriculum does not work, according to advocates of individualized reading. Humanism, as a psychology of learning, strongly advocates concepts such as the following:

1. student-teacher planning of the curriculum.
2. learners choosing from among diverse objectives which to achieve and which to omit.
3. learning centers from which students may sequence their own tasks.
4. students being involved in determining objectives within a contract system.

Veatch[2] wrote:

The difference lies in the instructional role of the teacher. For example, in recreational reading, we find the following:

A weekly or biweekly period
Little or no actual instruction

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[2]Jeanette Veatch, Individualizing Your Reading Program. New York: G. P. Putnams Sons, pages IV and X.

Teacher largely free and inactive once books are chosen
Little attention to skill development
Reading entirely silent

A quite different picture is found in the individualized approach, to wit:

A daily reading period
Continual instruction
Teacher active and in demand
Concern for skill development
Reading silent with frequent opportunities to read orally to the teacher and to the class

As such it has certain prime characteristics that occur regardless of the variations in practice found throughout the country. There are: 1) self-selection of material by pupils for their own instruction, 2) individual conferences between each pupil and teacher, and 3) groups organized for other than reasons of ability or proficiency in reading.

Many teachers confuse an individualized approach and recreational reading because both entail self-selection of books.

Somewhat toward the other end of the continuum, teachers and supervisors might sequence measurably stated objectives for learner attainment. The ends can be announced to students prior to each lesson presentation. The objectives are specific in that the teacher may measure if a learner has or has not been successful in goal attainment.

The teacher also selects learning opportunities in order that students might achieve each objective. The activities must guide students to achieve the announced ends for each lesson. Only those stimuli necessary to attain each objective should be contained in the daily lesson plan. After instruction, the teacher should measure /observe to ascertain if objectives stressed in the lesson have been achieved. Mastery learning is then being emphasized.

Mastery learning advocates stress the significance of:

1. teachers and supervisors deciding upon what (the objectives) pupils are to learn. They also determine sequence for student learning.

2. behaviorally stated objectives and their use. These goals are precise and specific, not general.

3. teachers and supervisors need to choose learning activities and evaluation procedures sequentially. Pupil-teacher planning generally is not advocated.

4. educators in the school setting are in the best position to determine sequence in learning for pupils. Teachers and supervisors possess the education, training, and experience to choose quality ordered goals for students to achieve.

Pertaining to behavioral technology, Woolfolk[3] and Nicolich wrote:

Programmed instruction offers a systematic application of the principles of behavioral learning in which students teach themselves using specially prepared materials. These materials present information broken down into very small steps, require students to actively respond as they read the materials, and present students with immediate feedback. Computers are often used to present very sophisticated programmed instruction as well as to help keep records of student work, present simulation games, and respond to student inquiries. This use of computers in the classroom is generally described as computer assisted instruction (CAI). Another method making use of behavioral principles is the Keller Plan, or the personalized system of instruction (PSI). In this approach to learning, students read small units, take frequent tests, and receive immediate feedback from proctors.

Issues involved in sequencing objectives include the following:

1. should the pupil be involved in ordering objectives or is the teacher in the best position to sequence ends for learner attainment?

2. does order in learning reside with the pupil or might teachers stimulate a selected sequence within students?

3. would an eclectic approach be best in ordering experiences for students with pupil-teacher planning, as well as teacher determination of ends for learner attainment?

## Learning Opportunities

There are numerous activities which may be provided for students. Thus in addition to diverse experiences in reading, the learner may participate in using the following:

1. films, slides, and filmstrips.
2. study prints and illustrations.
3. maps, globes, charts, tables, and graphs.
4. transparencies and the overhead projector.
5. single concept film loops and the opaque projector.

With the utilization of a variety of activities in the reading curriculum, a multi-media approach is in evidence. Diverse media rather then one or a few means are then used to provide learning opportunities for students. A single medium might well involve the use of basal readers in the curriculum. Multi-

[3] Anita Woolfolk and Lorraine McCune Nicolich, Educational Psychology for Teachers. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1980, page 157.

media. methods emphasize the utilization of the enumerated items above plus the use of diverse types of reading materials, such as textbooks, library books, pamphlets, brochures, and other printed materials.

Learning opportunities selected must:

1. aid in achieving desired objectives.

2. guide each student to attain optimally.

3. provide for each learner's present abilities, needs, and interests.

4. emphasize sequence in terms of pupils experiences.

Why do selected reading specialists emphasize a multi-media approach?

1. provision can then be made for students of diverse levels of capability in learning.

2. diverse learning styles can be provided for when a variety of activities are utilized in teaching and learning.

3. interest in learning may be stimulated within pupils. Each student may find that which is of interest to learn.

4. students may find more purpose in learning for one activity compared to a different media used in learning.

5. experiences for learners may be sequenced most appropriately if students can experience a variety of activities.

Somewhat toward the other end of the continuum, there are reading specialist who emphasize students achieving the basics in the curriculum. Essential learnings need to be acquired rather than frills or fads. Thus, reputable basal readers, as well as related workbooks and worksheets need to be in the offing. With these materials used as learning activities, students acquire basic word recognition skills, such as skill to utilize phonics, syllabication, context clues, structural analysis, as well as abilities to use configuration and picture clues.

With the use of basal materials in reading, students individually may attain reading comprehension skills, such as acquiring facts, directions, sequence of ideas, generalizations, and concepts, Critipal and creative reading add to comprehension abilities to be attained by learners.

Each learner needs to attain optimally in a sequential manner when utilizing

basal textbooks, workbooks, and worksheets in teaching-learning situations.

Polson and Dillner[4] wrote the following in the use of basal materials in the reading curriculum:

> Although the exact words used to teach reading and the amount and type presented at each level vary from publisher to publisher, several generalizations may be made about all basal reader series. (1) They usually consist of a sequence of books containing reading materials of increasing difficulty which teach all the reading skills in an orderly fashion. (2) The vocabulary used in creating stories in the series is carefully selected and limited to words in print which are thought to be already known to the children in listening or speaking situations, (3) The number of new words presented in each succeeding reading selection is carefully controled and based on the premise that children learn to read best through a planned continuum of introducing and maintaining vocabulary. (4) The number of words per sentence is carefully controlled. (5) Most of the stories in the series are primarily narrative in nature and based on concepts that are believed to be familiar to the child. (6) The series view themselves as capable of being a "total program" and as such consist of a great variety of sequenced, integrated components.

Why do essentialists lean heavily upon the use of basal materials in the curriculum?

1. essential understandings and skills can be attained effectively by students when stimuli are adequately delimited. Excessive use of audio-visual materials hinders learners in developing needed skills to read and understand abstract words.

2. abstract content contains its own sequential understandings and skills to be developed by pupils. Order in learning is deemphasized when a variety of concrete and semi-concrete materials are inserted into the reading curriculum.

3. the abstract words, phrases, sentences, and paragraphs must be mastered by students in order that vital goals in reading are attained. Reading involves attaching meaning to the abstract and not to various audio-visual materials appearing in the environment.

4. learners individually must develop a <u>will</u> to learn to read the abstract. Interest is not the essential ingredient in learning to read; rather effort in mastering skills in reading is vital.

5. teachers, properly educated and trained, are in the best position to select objectives, learning activities, and appraisal procedures in an essentialist reading curriculum.

Issues involved in choosing learning opportunities in the reading curriculum involve the following:

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[4] Joanne P. Olson and Martha H. Dillner, <u>Learning to Teach Reading in the Elementary School</u>. New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1976, page 78.

1. using a variety of activities in reading as compared to the rather complete use of basal readers and related abstract content. In using a multi-media approach, background information is provided for learners in an interesting way to aid in developing purposeful readers. In an essentialist reading curriculum, will to learn, not interest per se determines sequential ends, means, and appraisal procedures.

2. learners with teacher guidance sequencing their own learnings as compared to teachers effectively ordering reading opportunities for students.

3. providing for an activity centered versus a subject centered curriculum.

4. emphasizing concrete and semi-concrete experiences along with abstract reading materials versus ordered abstract learnings, in general, utilizing basal readers.

5. student input into the reading curriculum as compared to a teacher determined curriculum.

## Appraising Learner Progress

How should student achievement in learning to read be appraised? Toward one end of the curriculum, learners with teacher guidance need to assess their own progress. Thus, after the completion in reading of a library book in individualized reading, a conference may be held involving the reader and the teacher. The learner himself/herself may determine means of appraisal, such as

1. drawing one or more illustrations pertaining to content read.

2. discussing main ideas in the reading selection.

3. developing an outline of sequential content inherent in the library book.

4. listing a specific number of vital facts gleaned in reading.

5. writing a different setting or plot for the library book.

Or, the learner and teacher cooperatively may ascertain evaluation procedures, such as:

1. developing different characters in the library book.

2. writing one or more poems directly related to content read.

3. pantomiming a portion of the book.

4. participating in a creative dramatics presentation with another student who has read the same library book.

Toward the other end of the continuum, the teacher may determine appraisal techniques for learners in reading. A teacher determined curriculum is then in evidence. The teacher might assign selected pages, a chapter, or chapters for pupi to read. After student have completed reading the selection, the teacher could:

1. select questions for the former to answer.

2. require learners to summarize orally or in writing what has been read.

3. have students list ten salient facts acquired from the reading.

4. assign play parts to be written from the reading selection.

5. write true-false, multiple choice, essay, matching, or completion items, for learners to respond to.

Ranson[5] wrote:

> As for actual teaching, there are several points of view as to what works best. In some schools (especially in upper grades), teachers have assumed that independent practice--without instruction--will produce optimal reading improvement in students. In others, teachers have operated on the assumption that they must teach directly for every step in the learning process. But at the Ransom schools, we have found that a combination of these approaches is best; the teacher is needed to introduce new steps in reading progress and to re-explain lessons to children who have not understood them, but a student who is simply a passive observer of the teacher's activities will not fully absorb or know how to use what has been taught. He, too, must be an active participant in the learning process, both during teacher directed lessons and during independent reinforcement and enrichment activities. You therefore need to provide both instruction and opportunities for students to learn on their own.

Issues involved in appraising learner progress involves the following:

1. To what extent should the learner be involved as compared to the teacher in appraising the former's performance in reading?

2. Which techniques should be utilized to evaluate reading achievement? There are numerous means available such as teacher written tests, standardized tests, teacher observation, anecdotal statements, discussions, and oral reports, among others.

## In Closing

There are numerous issues involved in evaluating the reading curriculum. These include:

1. Who should select objectives in the reading curriculum?

2. How should learnings be sequenced for pupils?

3. Which appraisal procedures should be utilized to ascertain reading progres of learners?

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