DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 304 843 EC 212 538

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TITLE	Reading. Chapter Fifteen.
PUB DATE	88
NOTE	25p.; In: Robinsin, Greg A., Ed., and others. "Best Practices in Mental Disabilities. Volume Two"; see EC 212 523.
PUB TYPE	Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Guides - Classroom Use - Guides (For Teachers) (052)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Curriculum; Elementary Secondary Education; Integrated Activities; *Mental Retardation; Prompting; *Reading Instruction; Reading Interests; *Reading Material Selection; Reading Strategies. Student Evaluation; *Teaching Methods; Time on Task
IDENTIFIERS	Direct Instruction

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to provide an overview of several techniques for teaching reading to students with mental disabilities. Basic considerations include the following facts: (1) the effectiveness of the teacher is more important than the teaching method used, and (2) the teacher's view of reading should match the reading approach selected. The curriculum should be both functional and interesting; the curriculum should base new tasks upon tasks that are already familiar and that relate to the students' experiences. In conjunction with this practice, the paper includes a list of 100 survival words and phrases; a list of approximately 130 patterned language and predictable books; and suggestions of interesting material for use with secondary students, such as newspapers, magazines, biographies, and high interest materials. Other suggestions to improve the effectiveness of teachers include: demonstrate rather than tell; provide for successful practice; use direct instruction; provide for high levels of task involvement; provide wait-time, cues, and prompts; integrate subject matter; measure behavior change; and provide opportunities to respond in a manner consistent with achievement measures. (JDD)

Chapter Fifteen

Reading

Linda Higbee Mandlebaum

OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to provide teachers with an overview of several techniques for teaching reading to students with mental disabilities. The techniques included were selected because they allow the teacher to capitalize on the characteristics of effective teachers described in Best Practices in Mental Disabilities: Volume One, (1987).

The chapter is organized in two sections. The first section deals with basic considerations in teaching reading. The second section is further divided into characteristics of effective teachers with specific examples of teaching strategies described.

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

In selecting the approach to be used in teaching reading, the practitioner will want to keep two things in mind. First, the effectiveness of the teacher is probably more important than the teaching method used (Kirk, Kliebhan, & Lerner, 1978). With this in mind, the instructor will want to select a reading method with which he or she is comfortable and enthusiastic. The teacher can demonstrate the effectiveness of the program to his or her satisfaction and to the satisfaction of others by using appropriate measures as discussed in the section on measuring reading behaviors.

A second, related aspect a teacher will want to consider is how he or she views reading because this will have an impact on the reading approach that is selected. To be comfortable and enthusiastic about a program, the teacher's view of reading should match the reading approach. For instance, a teacher who believes reading is learned by first learning to identify letters and their sounds will select an approach to teaching reading which focuses on phonics instruction. Another teacher who believes that students first need to know a list of frequently used words will select a reading program that teaches sight words. A third teacher who believes students learn words that are already in their vocabulary might select a language experience approach for beginning reading instruction. A fourth teacher may consider all of these to be important in beginning reading and would choose a program that includes all of these features.

Several techniques for teaching reading will be discussed in this chapter, although a full discussion of the techniques is beyond the scope of the chapter. Therefore, the methods described here are briefly overviewed and a list of references is provided for those who want to read further.

Teaching Reading

Teaching students to read is not an easy task, nor is there one best method for teaching reading. Teachers need to know a variety of techniques and have access to different materials for teaching. That way, if one technique fails, another technique can readily be used. This section is organized by statements that describe effective teachers followed by one or more methods that illustrate the statement.

Effective Teachers Use Appropriate Curriculum

Students are entitled to a curriculum that is both functional and interesting. In addition, the curriculum should base new tasks upon tasks that are already familiar and that relate to the student's experiences (Tisdale, 1985).

Functional Curriculum

A functional curriculum allows students to get around in their environment both in and out of school. For this reason, words that are used in everyday life should be taught. Figure 1 includes a list of survival words and phrases compiled by Polloway and Polloway (1981) that should prove useful to teachers of students with mental disabilities. In teaching these words, teachers will want to plan for generalization; therefore, the words will be most effectively taught in the context in which they are found in the environment. Teachers, of course, will also want to teach the meanings of the words and what actions the students should take when they see the words. For instance, the word "stop" is usually found on a stop sign and means cease all motion and look both ways before going on; "poison" on a jar or bottle means that the contents can cause illness or death and should not be eaten; "thin ice" on a body of frozen water means the ice cannot support your weight and you should not walk or skate on it. While it is not feasible to bring all examples to the students or to take the students to all the examples, it might be possible to find pictures in the newspaper and magazines or to take pictures of examples such as a sign on a condemned house. Parents and other teachers might be willing to help collect examples if they were given a list of the words and phrases for which you were looking.

Other examples of functional reading materials are menus, checks, labels on cans and boxes, coupons, directions (e.g., how to find a restaurant), instructions (e.g., how to put a bicycle together), forms, grocery lists, medicine bottle labels, newspapers, telephone books, recipes, timetables, television guides, want ads, and vending machines. Each example of functional reading material has its own vocabulary and style of writing and the more types of writing students can read, the more independent they can be as adults.

Interesting Material for Elementary Students

Regardless of the teaching method used, students and teachers alike benefit when the reading material is interesting. On the one hand, the materials mentioned in the previous section tend to be interesting to students of all ages since these are things seen in their environment and students can see benefits in being able to read them. On the other hand, the stories in many of the readers which are usually used to teach reading are written with a limited vocabulary and tend to be uninteresting. However, if teachers utilize the many excellent books on the market today they can capitalize on appealing stories. A wide variety of books are available that can provide practice through repetition (i.e., patterned-language books) and predictability (i.e., predictable books).

Patterned-language books are those that repeat a phrase throughout the book such as "I don't know why she swallowed a fly! I guess she'll die" (Bonne, 1961). An example of a patterned-language book that begins with a familiar phrase but that ends with a new and intriguing twist is Cat on the Mat by Wildsmith (1982). While this book begins "The cat sat on the mat," it is unlike other linguistic readers in that Wildsmith adds a variety of animals (that do not rhyme with cat) to the mat, and he focuses on the natural desire of cats to be left alone. It is beautifully illustrated, repetitive, and is written in very large print that is easy to see. Once the students have learned to read the book, to ensure that they have not just memorized the order or that they are reading the pictures, the sentences could be put on sentence strips for the students to sequence.

Patterned-language books have been shown to be effective in teaching beginning readers (Bridge, Winograd, & Haley, 1983) In addition, the presence of words which appear frequently within a story facilitate word identification by students with mental disabilities (Allington, 1980).

Figure 1

A List of Survival Words and Phrases

50 Most Essential Survival Words		50 Most Essential Survival Phrases	
1. Poison	26. Ambulance	1. Don't walk	26. Wrong way
2. Danger	27. Girls	2. Fire escape	27. No fires
3. Police	28. Open	3. Fire extinguisher	28. No swimming
4. Emergency	29. Out	4. Do not enter	29. Watch your step
5. Stop	30. Combustible	5. First aid	30. Watch for children
6. Hot	31. Closed	6. Deep water	31. No diving
7. Walk	32. Condemned	7. External use only	32. Stop for pedestrians
8. Caution	33. Up	8. High voltage	33. Post office
9. Exit	34. Blasting	9. No trespassing	34. Slippery when wet
10. Men	35. Gentlemen	10. Railroad crossing	35. Help wanted
11. Women	36. Pull	11. Rest rooms	36. Slow down
12. Warning	37. Down	12. Do not touch	37. Smoking prohibited
13. Entrance	38. Detour	13. Do not use near open flame	38. No admittance
14. Help	39. Gasoline	14. Do not inhale fumes	39. Proceed at your own risk
15. Off	40. Inflammable	15. One way	40. Step down
16. On	41. In	16. Do not cross	41. No parking
17. Explosives	42. Push	17. Do not use near heat	42. Keep closed
18. Flammable	43. Nurse	18. Keep out	43. No turns
19. Doctor	44. Information	19. Keep off	44. Beware of dog
20. Go	45. Lifeguard	20. Exit only	45. School zone
21. Telephone	46. Listen	21. No right turn	46. Dangerous curve
22. Boys	47. Private	22. Keep away	47. Hospital zone
23. Contaminated	48. Quiet	23. Thin ice	48. Out of order
24. Ladies	49. Look	24. Bus stop	49. No smoking
25. Dynamite	50. Wanted	25. No passing	50. Go slow

Polloway & Polloway, 1981, pp. 446-447.

Predictable books are those that enable a student to make a good guess about what will come next or how the story will end. An example of a story in which the reader can predict what will come next is Teeny Tiny (Bennett, 1986). In this story, the 'teeny tiny woman put on her teeny tiny hat and went out of her teeny tiny house to take a teeny tiny walk." Not only are the words "teeny tiny" repeated frequently in the sentence, but it is fairly easy to predict what the emphasized words would be if they were unknown. An example of a story in which the ending can be predicted is Hey Kid! (Gelman, 1977). In this story Sam, a friendly creature who talks non-stop, is getting on the kids' nerves and students can predict that he is about to be put back in the crate he came in and given to someone else.

"Predictable Storybooks" (Allen & Allen, 1986) includes three sets of predictable books that are spiral bound and printed on cardboard stock in large print. In addition, the teacher's guide comes with lesson plans and directions for students to make their own copies of the books--a bonus for students who do not have books at home.

A list of patterned-language and predictable books is included in Figure 2. Teaching methods using these materials will be provided in sections that follow.

Interesting Material for Secondary Students

Many methods can be used at all grade levels if the material selected is appropriate to the age and interests of the learner. Finding interesting materials for secondary-level students who read at an elementary level is, however, more difficult than finding materials for elementary students. One concern of all teachers of older students is that reading materials do not appear to be designed for elementary students. Material that has an elementary look will result in students avoiding reading. With this in mind, several materials are suggested that may be of use to secondary-level teachers. The materials may be used with many of the reading techniques described in this chapter.

Newspapers. Newspapers can provide material on a wide variety of topics. While some articles will be too difficult, those written about topics students have an interest in and some background information about may be easier (Henk, 1987). Many students will want to read the comics section only, but with some encouragement they will find other sections of the newspaper to be of interest.

Magazines. Magazines are available on most topics in which students express an interest. For example, there are magazines on popular singers, lyrics to hit songs, wrestling, motorcycles, bicycling, hunting, cars, war, hairstyles, clothing, horses and other animals, cooking, and hobbies and crafts of all types, etc. The "Real Reading Program" (EBSCO Curriculum Materials) features activity cards students use with magazines.

Star. Star (Truman Publishing Company, 200 West Marcus Street, Seattle, WA 98119) is a publication about popular singers, athletes, and other well-known people secondary students are interested in. It is published each month during the academic year and each issue contains about 15 articles. The articles, written on approximately a third- or fourth-grade level, always contain one or more pictures of the featured star along with a one-page story, questions over the article, and activities to do. Also, the publisher gives teachers permission to duplicate the articles for use in the classroom.

Figure 2

Patterned Language and Predictable Books

Adams, P. (1974). This old man. New York: Grossett & Dunlap.
Alain. (1964). One, two, three, going to sea. New York: Scholastic Press.
Aliki. (1962). My five senses. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
Aliki. (1968). Hush little baby. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
Aliki. (1974). Go tell Aunt Rhody. New York: Macmillan.
Antle, N. (1985). The good bad cat. Grand Haven, MI: School Zone Publishing Co.
Asch, P. (1977). Monkey face. New York: Parents' Magazine Press.
Balian, L. (1972). The animal. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
Balian, L. (1972). Where in the world is Henry? New York: Scholastic.
Barret, J. (1970). Animals should definitely not wear clothes. New York: Antheneum.
Barton, B. (1973). Buzz, buzz, buzz. New York: Scholastic Press.
Baskin, L. (1972). Hosie's alphabet. New York: Viking Press.
Battaglia, A. (1962). Old Mother Hubbard. New York: Golden Press.
Baum, A. & Baum, J. (1962). One bright Monday morning. New York: Random House.
Becker, J. (1973). Seven little rabbits. New York: Scholastic.
Beckman, K. (1969). Lisa cannot sleep. Danbury, CT: Franklin Watts.
Bellah, M. (1963). A first book of sounds. New York: Golden Press.
Bennett, J. (1980). Teeny Tiny. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons.
Berenstein, S. & Berenstein, J. (1971). The B book. New York: Random House.
Bonne, R. (1961). I know an old lady. New York: Scholastic Press.
Brand, O. (1974). When I first came to this land. New York: G.P. Putman's Sons.
Brandenberg, F. (1970). I once knew a man. New York: Macmillan.
Brooke, L. (1968). John Crow's garden. New York: Frederick Warne & Co.
Brown, M. (1957). The three billy goats Gruff. San Diego, CA: Harcourt, Brace & Javanovich.
Brown, M.V. (1947). Goodnight moon. New York: Harper & Row.
Brown, M.W. (1949). The important book. New York: Harper Row.
Brown, M.W. (1952). Where have you been? New York: Scholastic.
Brown, M.W (1954). The friendly book. New York: Golden Press.
Brown, M.W. (1956). Home for a bunny. New York: Golden Press.
Brown, M.W. (1971). The bus ride. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.
Burningham, J. (1970). Mr. Grumpy's outing. New York: Scholastic Press.
Camereon, P. (1961). I can't said the ant. New York: Coward, McCann & Geoghegan.
Carle, E. (1975). The mixed up cameleon. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
Carle, E. (1977). The grouchy ladybug. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.
Carle, E. (1981). The very hungry caterpiller. New York: Putnam Publishing Group.
Charlip, R. (1964). What good luck, what bad luck. New York: Scholastic Press.
Charlip, R. (1971). Fortunately. New York: Parents' Magazine Press.
Considine, K. & Schuler, R. (1965). One, two, three, four. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Cook, B. (1962). The little fish that got away. New York: Scholastic.
deRegniers, B. (1961). The little book. New York: Henry Z. Walck.

deRegniers, B. (1965). How Joe the bear and Sam the mouse got together. New York: Parents' Magazine Press.
deRegniers, B. (1967). The day everybody cried. New York: Vicking Press.
deRegniers, B. (1968). Willy O'Dwyer jumped in the fire. New York: Atheneum.
deRegniers, B. (1972). May I bring a friend? New York: Atheneum.
Domanska, J. (1971). If all the seas were one sea. New York: Macmillan.
Duff, M. (1972). Johnny and his drum. New York: Henry Z. Walck.
Duff, M. 91978). Rum pum pum. New York: Macmillan.
Einsel, W. (1962). Did you ever see? New York: Scholastic press.
Emberly, B. (1967). Drummer Hoff. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
Emberly, B. (1969). Simon's song. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
Emberly, B. & Emberly, E. (1966). One wide river to cross. New York: Scholastic Press.
Emberly, E. (1974). Klippity klop. Boston: Little, Brown & Co.
Ets, M. (1955). Play with me. New York: Viking Press.
Ets, M. (1972). Elephant in a wall. New York: Viking P. ess.
Flack, M. (1932). Ask Mr. Bear. New York: Macmillan.
Galdon, P. (1973). The three bears. New York: Scholastic.
Galdon, P. (1981). The three billy goats Gruff. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Galdon, P. (1984). Henny Penny. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Galdon, P. (1984). The three little pigs. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Galdon, P. (1985). The little red hen. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
Gelman, R.G. (1977). Hey Kid! New York: Avon.
Ginsburg, M. (1972). The chick and the duckling. New York: Macmillan.
Greenburg, P. (1968). Oh Lord, I wish I was a buzzard. New York: Macmillan.
Gregorich, B. (1984). Jog, Frog, jog. Grand Haven, MI: School Zone Publishing Co.
Guilfolle, E. (1957). Nobody listens to Andrew. New York: Scholastic Press.
Guilfolle, E. (1962). The house that Jack built. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Hoban, T. (1972). Count and see. New York: Macmillan.
Hoffman, H. (1968). The green grass grows all around. New York: Macmillan.
Hutchins, P. (1968). Rosie's walk. New York: Macmillan.
Hutchins, P. (1971). Titch. New York: Collier Books.
Hutchins, P. (1972). Good night owl. New York: Macmillan.
Joslin, S. (1968). What do you say Dear? New York: Scholastic Press.
Kalan, R. (1981). Jump, frog, jump! New York: Scholastic.
Keats, E. (1971). Over in the meadow. New York: Scholastic Press.
Kellogg, S. (1985). Chicken Little. New York: William Morrow & Co.
Kent, J. (1971). The fat can. New York: Scholastic.
Klein, L. (1958). Brave Daniel. New York: Scholastic Press.
Krauss, R. (1948). Bears. New York: Scholastic Press.
Krauss, R. (1952). A hole is to dig. New York: Harper & Row.
Krauss, R. (1970). Whose mouse are you? New York: Collier Books.
Krauss, R. (1971). The lion's tail. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.
Krauss, R. (1972). Good night little abc. New York: Scholastic Press.
Langstaff, J. (1955). Frog went a-courtin'. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Javanovich.
Langstaff, J. (1957). Over in the meadow. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Javanovich.

Langstaff, J. (1971). Gather my gold together: Four songs for four seasons. New York: Doubleday.
Langstaff, J. (1974). Oh, a-hunting we will go. New York: Atheneum.
Laurence, L.E. (1969). We're off to catch a dragon. Nashville: Abingdon Press.
Lexau, J. (1969). Crocodile and hen. New York: Harper & Row.
Lobel, A. (1975). King Rooster, Queen Hen. New York: Greenwillow.
Lobel, A. (1979). A treeful of pigs. New York: Greenwillow.
Mack, S. (1974). 10 bears in my bed. New York: Pantheon.
Martin, B. (1967). Brown bear, Brown Bear, what do you see? New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Martin, B. (1967). Spoiled tomatoes. Oklahoma City, Bowmar
Martin, B. (1970). A ghost story. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Martin, B. (1970). Monday, Monday, I like Monday. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Martin, B. (1970). The haunted house. New York· Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Mayer, M. (1968). If I had. New York: Dial Press.
Mayer, M. (1975). Just for you. New York: Golden Press.
McGovern, A. (1967). Too much noise. New York: Scholastic.
Memling, C. (1961). Ten little animals. New York: Golden Press.
Memling, C. (1972). Riddles, riddles from a to z. New York: Golden Press.
Moffett, M. (1972). A flower pot is not a hat. New York: E.P. Dutton.
Nodest, J. (1963). Who took the farmer's hat? New York: Scholastic Press.
O'Neill, M. (1961). Hailstones and halibut bones. New York: Doubleday & Co.
Palmer, J. (1969). Ten days of school. New York: Macmillan.
Patrick, G. (1970). A bug in a jug. New York: Scholastic Press.
Peppe, R. (1970). The house that Jack built. New York: Delacorte.
Petersham, M. & Petersham, M. (1971). The rooster crows: A book of American rhymes and jingles. New York: Scholastic Press.
Polushkin, M. (1978). Mother, Mother, I want another. New York: Crown Publishers.
Quackenbush, R. (1965). Poems for counting. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Quackenbush, R. (1973). She'll be comin' around the mountain. New York: J.B. Lippincott.
Quackenbush, R. (1975). Skip to my Lou. New York: J.B. Lippincott.
Rossetti, C. (1965). What is pink? New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Scheer, J. & Bileck, M. (1964). Rain makes a difference. New York: Holiday House.
Scheer, J. & Bileck, M. (1964). Upside down day. New York: Holiday House.
Sendak, M. (1962). Chicken soup with rice. New York: Scholastic Press.
Sendak, M. (1963). Where the wild things are. New York: Scholastic
Dr. Seuss. (1963). Dr. Seuss's abc. New York: Random House.
Shaw, C. (1947). It looked like spilt milk. New York: Harper & Row.
Shulevitz, U. (1986). One Monday morning. New York: Macmillan.
Skaar, G. (1972). What do the animals say? New York: Scholastic.
Sonneborn, R. (1974). Someone is eating the sun. New York: Random House.
Spier, P. (1961). The fox went out on a chilly night. New York: Doubleday.
Tolstoy, A. (1968). The great big enormous turnip. Danbury, CT: Franklin Watts.
Watson, C. (1971). Father Fox's pennyrhymes. New York: Scholastic Press.
Welber, R. (1974). Goodbye, hello. New York: Pantheon.
Wildsmith, B. (1962). Brian Wildsmith's abc. Danbury, CT: Franklin Watts.
Wildsmith, B. (1972). The Twelve days of Christmas. Danbury, CT: Franklin Watts.

Wildsmith, B. (1982). Cat on the mat. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
Withers, C. (1967). A rocket in my pocket. New York: Scholastic Press.
Wolkstein, D. (1977). The visit. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
Wondriska, W. (1970). All the animals were angry. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Wright, H. (1965). A maker of boxes. New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.
Zemach, H. (1965). The judge. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
Zemach, M. (1965). The teeny tiny woman. New York: Scholastic.
Zemach, M. (1976). Hush, little baby. New York: E.P. Dutton.
Zolotow, C. (1958). Do you know what I'll do? New York: Harper & Row.

Biographies. Biographies written for younger students frequently do not appear to be at an elementary level. For example, the series "Women of Our Time" was written for students from 7 to 11 years old, however, the size of print and illustrations would also be appropriate for secondary students. Dorothea Lange: Life Through the Camera (Meltzer, 1985), one of the books in the series, is written at approximately the sixth-grade level, but a high school student would not be embarrassed to read it. Troll Associates is another publisher that prints a series of biographies for readers experiencing difficulty.

High Interest. High interest, low vocabulary materials are available from several publishers. A few of those companies and the books they carry are noted below. Fearon Education features books for almost any area of interest (e.g., horror stories, sports, mysteries, romance, classics); Jamestown Publishers has two series of books written at about second and third grade levels that include comprehension activities (i.e., Attention Span Stories, Adult Learner Series); Dell Publishing Company lists several books on a variety of topics that students should find interesting. Finally, Janus Books offers several series of books that focus on survival skills.

Familiar Material. Students find materials with which they are familiar relatively easy to learn to read. Nursery rhymes, poems, and stories they have heard make it easy for them to predict what will happen next. For instance, if they have learned the finger play "Incy Wincy Spider," they will find it fairly easy to learn to read the book by the same name (Hawkins & Hawkins, 1985). Materials such as these can be used even when they are above a student's reading level because the student can predict what the words are going to be and can experience success.

Building on Students' Experiences

Students are naturally interested when reading material focuses on them and their experiences. For this reason, the language experience approach can be successful when other materials and methods have failed or are too difficult. The difficulty of the material can range from a one-word label for a picture to a story several pages in length. In addition, the story can be dictated by an individual or group and written by the teacher; or the story can be written by the student himself/herself as in the technique used by Fernald (1971) in which the student traces the word while saying it until he or she can write it from memory before writing the word in the story. The important aspect of the language experience approach is that it utilizes something the student already knows; the words are in the student's vocabulary and the experience is in his or her own background rather than the vocabulary and background of an author. This approach can be successful for secondary students (Eldridge, 1985) and adults (Rigg & Kazemek, 1985) as well as with elementary students (Spache, & Spache, 1986).

Effective Teachers Demonstrate Rather than Tell

Teachers can have a profound influence on students through the demonstrations or models they provide in the classroom. Three ways in which teachers can demonstrate reading behavior are described in this section: reading to students, sustained silent reading, and the ReQuest technique.

Reading to Students

Though it is sometimes difficult for teachers to find time to read to their students, it is nevertheless important to do so on a regular basis. Consider the student who is a poor reader and is either in an individual reading program or in a reading group which consists of other poor readers. If the student does not hear adults read (and many parents do not or cannot read), the only model heard is apt to be other poor readers. It is difficult to learn to enjoy books or to be encouraged to learn to read if the only model of reading is someone who does not read well. Students need to learn what good reading sounds like; this is an excellent reason to read aloud to students. Furthermore, reading aloud can be a springboard for discussions about problems students face in their daily lives (Sullivan, 1987).

Sustained Silent Reading

While the use of sustained silent reading (SSR) alone has not been demonstrated to improve students' reading ability, it has been shown to have a positive effect on student attitudes toward reading and a positive effect on reading ability when combined with a regular program of reading instruction (Moore, Jones, & Miller, 1980). In addition, the use of SSR provides the teacher with another opportunity to model reading behavior for students. The length of the silent reading period will depend to an extent on the ability of the students to read independently. While some classes may be able to maintain silent reading for only two minutes, over time the length of the sessions can be increased.

Three important aspects relating to the success of the program should be considered. First, the students should be expected to read during the entire session (have them mark, write down, or skip words they do not know). Second, the teacher must model the behavior that is expected of the students; that is, the teacher must read during that period. If a teacher does anything other than read during silent reading time, the message that is conveyed to the students is that reading is not a worthwhile activity. Third, the silent reading should be followed by an opportunity for students to share information about the books they are reading.

ReQuest Technique

The ReQuest technique, designed by Manzo (1979), is intended for use with students who can "read" the material but do not comprehend what they have read. Using this technique the teacher demonstrates question-asking behavior which encourages students to comprehend the text.

In order to use this method effectively, both the teacher and student should have copies of a passage that is at the student's instructional level and that has a predictable ending. In brief, the procedure follows these steps:

1. The teacher explains to the student that the purpose of the method is to improve the ability to remember and understand what is read.

2. Next, the teacher and student look at the title or picture and discuss what the story might be about. The student is asked to explain why he or she gives an answer (e.g., You said this story was going to be about school. What is in this picture that makes you think it is going to be about school?).

3. The teacher and student read the first sentence silently. The teacher then closes the book while the student asks questions about the first sentence. Even a simple sentence can lead to several questions. For instance, "Jeff ran to school" could lead to questions such as: Who is the story about? Where did Jeff go? How did he get to school? Do you think Jeff was in a hurry? Why do you think so?

4. When the student has run out of questions, he or she closes the book and the teacher asks questions. The teacher should try to model question-asking behavior by asking as many higher-order questions as possible (e.g., Why do you think Caren got mad?)

5. Continue the reading-questioning format until a point in the story is reached where the end of the story can be predicted. At that point, have the student predict what might happen.

6. The student then reads the rest of the passage silently and discusses the end with the teacher.

Not only does this technique improve comprehension skills, but the student is also given the opportunity to formulate and ask questions. With the teacher providing a model of question-asking behavior, that behavior is likely to improve in the student.

Effective Teachers Provide for Successful Practice

Effective teachers ensure that their students work on material on which they can obtain at least 80% accuracy (Rosenshine, 1983). Applying this concept to reading requires finding materials appropriate to the student's reading level and not simply giving them the next reader in the series. In order to provide students with material at the proper level, the teacher will need to determine what that level is.

Finding the Student's Instructional Level

In reading, the student's instructional level is that level at which he or she reads 55-75 correct words per minute with no more than eight errors (Deno, Mirkin & Wesson, 1984). To determine this level, follow these steps:

1. Collect at least three passages approximately 150 words long at each of several grade levels.

2. Have the student begin reading one-minute passages at the level at which you think the student will read at least 55 correct words per minute with no more than eight errors. Say to the student: "When I say 'start,' begin reading aloud at the top of this page. Try to read each word. If you wait too long for a word, I'll tell you the word. At the end of one minute, I'll say 'stop.'" (Deno, Mirkin & Wesson, 1984).

3. If the student reads fewer than 55 correct words per minute or makes more than eight errors, go to a lower level. If the student reads more than 75 correct words per minute, go to a higher level.

4. Continue testing until the student has read three passages at the same level at the rate of 55-75 correct words per minute with no more than eight errors--that is the student's instructional level.

Once the teacher has established the student's instructional level, comprehension questions should be asked to determine whether the student needs specific instruction to improve comprehension (e.g., ReQuest technique, cloze procedure). If instruction in comprehension is needed, it can be done using materials written at this same level.

Selecting Independent Reading Material

While not supported through research, a method students can use on their own to help guide them in selecting books to read is the five-finger technique. To use this technique, students open a book at random and begin reading a page. Each time they find a word they do not know, they put up a finger. If they have all five fingers of one hand up before they get to the bottom of a page, the book is probably too hard for them. They may choose to check the book out anyway, but at least they will have a warning that the book may be difficult for them. In addition, students can use this technique surreptitiously when they are in the library and other students will not usually be aware of what they are doing.

Effective Teachers Use Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction

Direct instruction has been demonstrated to be effective in numerous studies (Carnine, 1983). It is characterized by teacher-led group instruction which is academically focused and individualized. Direct instruction involves three steps: (a) demonstration, (b) student practice with teacher prompts and corrections, and (c) independent student practice (Baumann, 1984; Stevens & Rosenshine, 1981).

Demonstration. In this step the teacher demonstrates the skill providing the students with some structure or a method to use when they apply the skill on their own. For instance, in teaching students to find the main idea of a paragraph when no topic sentence is in the paragraph, the teacher may read aloud a sample paragraph. The teacher then demonstrates how to use the supporting details in the paragraph to determine what the main idea is (Baumann, 1984).

Student Practice with Teacher Prompts and Corrections. While the teacher continues to direct the activity, students are required to take an active part by applying the skills just taught. The teacher remains active by providing immediate feedback and by reteaching the skill if necessary. Using the example from above, the teacher would pass out copies of several short paragraphs. The students work on one paragraph at a time, reading silently and determining the main idea, with the teacher providing immediate feedback and giving prompts or reteaching if necessary (Baumann, 1984).

Independent Student Practice. Finally, the students practice the skill independently using materials that are similar to those that were used in the instruction phases. The final step in the above example would be for the teacher to give the students several paragraphs of which they are to find the main idea by working independently (Baumann, 1984).

Much of the initial research done with direct instruction focused on decoding skills. However, more recent research has demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach in teaching comprehension skills (Baumann, 1984; Hansen, 1981; Patching, Kameenul, Carnine, Gersten, Colvin, 1983). No matter what approach teachers take to teach beginning reading, they may find the use of direct instruction to teach higher order skills to be effective.

Effective Teachers Provide for High Levels of Task Involvement

Typical group reading lessons involve a group lesson followed by round-robin oral reading in which each student reads aloud a paragraph or a page. If the round-robin approach is used on a regular basis, it is not uncommon to find the attention of the students in the group wandering away from what is being read even if the teacher admonishes them to follow along in the text. Teachers might want to try one or more of the following alternatives.

Following Along While Listening

Hennings (1986) suggests that teachers read a story expressively to students while they follow along. The students then work in pairs re-reading the story to each other. This technique helps them learn the part words play in the importance of the whole story.

Reading in Unison

All students can actively participate when the whole group reads a selection aloud. In addition, there is always likely to be at least one person (e.g., the teacher) who knows a word, thereby eliminating the pressure or embarrassment some students feel when faced with an unknown word. If the material being read is at the instructional level, students will be able to keep up without much difficulty. While some teachers may be concerned about using this technique because they determine how students read independently, this can be resolved by using a monitoring system as the one described in the section on measuring behavior change.

Choral Reading

Similar to reading in unison, choral reading helps students learn the rhythm of language and gives them the confidence of reading with the support of a group. Choral reading, typically used with poetry, has six possible arrangements (Hoskisson & Tompkins, 1987; Tierney, Readency & Dishner, 1985):

1. Echoic in which the leader reads a line which is repeated by the group;

2. Refrain in which the leader reads the main part of the poem and the group, the refrain;

3. Antiphonal or dialogue in which two or more groups each read a part of the poem;

4. Line-a-child or line-a-choir in which three or more individuals or groups read parts, with some parts being read in unison;

5. Unison in which the entire group reads together; and

6. Cumulative in which one group or person starts the poem and another group or individual joins in with each line or stanza.

When reading a poem using one of the choral reading techniques, a group usually practices several times to master the rhythm and timing. Students may even want to add sound effects to increase the effectiveness of the reading.

Repeated Readings

The method of repeated readings has been demonstrated to improve fluency and comprehension (Bos, 1982; Herman, 1985). While students are usually directed to read as quickly and accurately as possible, there is some evidence that to improve comprehension it may be necessary to ask students to remember as much as they are able as they are reading.

The material for this procedure should be at the student's instructional level and should be short enough to be read in about three minutes. This will allow the student to read the material several times in a short amount of time. Any of several different procedures could be followed in using repeated reading. Some possibilities are described below.

1. Have the student read the passage several times silently or aloud to himself/herself and then aloud to someone else.

2. Have the students read the passage once to themselves and then work in pairs, each reading a passage to the other. When they have both finished, they switch partners and read the passages again.

3. The teacher or a volunteer can record a passage on a cassette for the student to listen to and follow along several times before reading the passage aloud. In using this technique the person doing the recording will want to tell the student when to turn the page. Commercially prepared recordings can also be used; however, the recording should also have some indication of when to turn the page.

4. Another version of the taped story is for the student and teacher to read a story in unison while it is recorded. The student then listens to the tape several times. This type of unison reading is similar to the Neurological Impress Method that has been used with some success with disabled readers (Memory, 1981). The difference between this version of the taped story and the Impress Method is that the student reads the material several times, whereas in the Impress Method the material is read only once without a tape recorder.

Some teachers may hesitate to use a repeated readings approach because of a concern that students may become bored reading the same passage several times. However, if passages that the students enjoy are selected for this technique, they will not quickly tire of the passage. In fact, repeatedly reading a passage can be a confidence builder for a pupil who becomes aware of his or her improvement. Teachers who are also parents will recall that their own children ask for favorite stories to be read repeatedly and never seem to tire of them. If boredom does become a problem, one motivation for improvement might be to arrange for a student to read a story, once it is mastered, to a younger class.

Shared Book Experience Using Big Books

The use of big books as the focus of shared reading activities can give readers positive experiences with printed material (Slaughter, 1983; Tierney et al., 1985). In utilizing either teacher-made or commercially published big books, teachers can read aloud to students while pointing to the words being read, have students join in during rereadings, and have students match or identify individual words in the text.

Using Peers, Volunteers, and Aides

To prevent teachers from having to hear the same stories hundreds of times and to give students additional practice, they could be allowed to read to other persons in the classroom, such as same-age or cross-age peers (Chiang, Thorpe & Darch, 1980; Cooke, Heron, Heward & Test, 1982; Nevi, 1983), classroom aides, and adult volunteers. Persons used in this capacity on a regular basis need to be instructed on what to expect, how to respond to students when they make an error, and how to give praise.

Providing a Wider Audience

As students improve and gain confidence in their reading, they enjoy sharing this ability with others. Such an opportunity also gives them additional practice and a reason to master a story. The principal, the secretary, a crossing guard, a custodian, a cook, or the librarian can each occasionally be called upon to listen to a child read a book which has been mastered. Many teachers are happy to have students read a book to their class. In addition, persons in retirement homes are often delighted to provide an ear for a young reader.

Effective Teachers Provide Wait-Time, Cues, and Prompts

Ignore Errors that do not Matter

Goodman (1967) was one of the first to recognize that all errors are not equal. A student who sees the word "father" but says the word "dad" is comprehending the text and substituting a word that means the same as the one printed. The error, or miscue, is irrelevant and attention does not need to be called to the substitution. After all, good readers are not perfect readers since they make miscues that do not matter when they read. What good readers do instead is monitor what they are reading and, when they make a relevant error, they reread and correct that error using the strategies they know. When teachers insist that students read every word correctly, they are creating word-callers rather than readers. However, attention does need to be called to errors when they change the meaning of the text. Two suggestions for handling these errors follow.

Give the Student Wait-Time. Teachers spend many hours carefully teaching students to use phonetic analysis, structural analysis, and context cues to decode unknown words. Unfortunately, when a student makes an error or miscue while reading, teachers may fail to allow the student sufficient time to apply those skills that have been learned. Instead, after only a brief hesitation, the teacher fills in the word or begins giving prompts to help the student decode the word. In fact, teachers have modeled this behavior so well that if they do not respond quickly enough, another student will say the word.

Focus on Meaning. When a student does not self-correct errors that do not make sense in the text, it is possible that he or she is not monitoring the passage for meaning. One way to help students improve their self-monitoring and word identification skills is to use an oral reading for meaning strategy (Taylor & Nosbush, 1983). This procedure involves four steps used with the student on a one-to-one basis.

1. As the student is reading aloud, record any miscues that the student has made that do not make sense.

2. When the student has finished reading, give praise for something that was done well; focus particularly on self-corrections. Encourage the student to do this more often when the miscue does not seem to make sense to the text.

3. Discuss one or two miscues that the student made that did not make sense and were not self-corrected. Read the sentence with the miscue that the student made and ask which word did not make sense. Use contextual and phonetic analysis strategies to help the student figure out what the word should be. For example, if the student read "The frog jumped into the poured," the teacher could ask two questions: Which word did not make sense? What word that begins with p would make sense?

4. Provide instruction on the skills the student had trouble with during oral reading.

Effective Teachers Give Independent Assignments that Relate to the Lesson

To be effective, seat work should reinforce what was taught in the lesson and provide additional practice (Sedlak & Paulson, 1985). Most workbooks and worksheets that accompany basal texts are structured to provide practice on the entire spectrum of reading skills. As a result, the workbook pages and worksheets focus on isolated skills that the student may or may not need and they often have little to do with the content of the story. Teachers should keep this in mind as they select assignments to reinforce a skill that has just been taught or to extend the topic of a story.

Related Reading Assignments

The more students read, the better they read (Guzzetti & Marzano, 1984). With this in mind, have students extend the lesson by reading additional material. Whether the reading program is based on library books or on a basal program, material related to the lesson can usually be found. For instance, if the story in the basal was about a bear, a librarian will probably be helpful in locating several other books at different reading levels about bears. Students could be assigned to read at least one book and be prepared to report on the book to the group. Books that are too difficult for the students to read independently might be recorded on cassette for students to listen to as they follow along in the text.

Other materials that relate to the topic could be located for students to read, such as bookmarks with bears, cereal boxes (whose spokespersons happen to be bears), greeting cards with bear illustrations, plays featuring bears (e.g., "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," Big Book of Plays, 1983), poems about bears, posters with pictures of bears, recipes for making bear claws, and wordlists with words about bears, etc. When parents and other teachers know you are collecting material about a topic, they will usually offer appropriate materials.

Related Seatwork Assignments

Numerous seatwork assignments related to a reading topic can also be located. Among the many activities available for the topic of "bears" are (a) a sequencing activity for "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" (Evans & Moore, 1982), (b) a "bare facts" book report form (Evans & Moore, 1984), (c) a word categorizing activity with "bear" as the featured word along with several other bear activities (Bauman & Zinkgraf, 1985), and (d) a matching sizes activity featuring "the three bears" (Church, 1984). Activities related to the topic (e.g., bears) that focus on a skill a student needs can be selected as seatwork. Teachers who are willing to share materials will probably learn that they have a wealth of activities of many topics available within their own building.

Effective Teachers Integrate Subject Matter

When a topic is introduced in reading, it can be extended by integrating it into the other areas of the curriculum. With a little imagination a topic could be the feature of the day or week. Some suggestions to extend the topic of "bears" are:

Listening

After asking the students to listen for specific information, the teacher could read a story about bears. The students would then give the information they had learned.

Speaking

While students look at the wordless picture book Deep in the Forest (Turkle, 1976), they could tell the story of the little bear who finds himself in Goldilock's place. Talk about the meaning of terms such as "bear hug" or "hungry as a bear."

Writing

Have students write the story of "Goldilocks and the Three Bears" in their own words or write a new ending to the same story. Other students could write a report about different kinds of bears.

Study Skills

Students could use the card catalog in the library to look up other books about bears or make a bibliography of books in the classroom that are about bears.

Mathematics

Have students answer story problems about bears.

Social Studies

Study how the expansion of man has effected the bear population and what areas of the word bears live in today.

Science

What hibernation is, how bears prepare to hibernate, and what other animals hibernate could be studied.

Art

Bear puppets could be constructed. Bears could be drawn or painted using a wide variety of materials.

Music

Songs about bears could be sung. Students could make up their own songs about bears.

Physical Education

Bears could be utilized in any number of activities such as tossing a ball or bean bag at a bear or running a relay race in which students pass a bear to the next runner instead of a baton.

Effective Teachers Measure Behavior Change

No discussion on the teaching of reading would be complete without a section on measuring behavior change because of the profound influence it can have on teaching. One requirement of most special education teachers is the use of standardized tests to demonstrate the improvement that students make over a school year. However, while annually administered tests can provide some useful information, such tests do not provide information on the daily or weekly basis that teachers need to evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction. One of the most important parts of an effective reading program is the continuous measurement change. Research has indicated that students of teachers who measure reading behavior on a regular basis will make more progress than those whose teachers do not (Deno, Mirkin & Chiang, 1982). The measurement itself does not make the difference in reading progress; instead, the measurement allows the teacher to make changes to improve the student's program when an approach is not working.

One method of continuously measuring reading progress which correlates highly with standardized measures of reading is described by Deno, Mirkin, and Chiang (1982). This technique involves counting the number of correct words read per minute and is similar to the technique for finding the student's instructional level described earlier.

1. In determining the student's instructional level, the teacher finds the level at which the student could read three passages at one grade level at the rate of 55-75 correct words per minute. The median number can used as the pretest data and plotted on a graph.

2. At the opposite end of the graph, the teacher plots the goal or the rate at which the student should be reading at the end of the instructional period (e.g., nine weeks, semester, year).

3. An aim line is drawn which connects the pretest data and the goal.

4. Three times each week the student reads for one minute from a passage at his or her instructional level. The teacher graphs the median number from these three measures.

Any time the point determined in the previous step falls below the aim line three times in a row (i.e., three successive weeks), it is time to change the reading program because the current program is not effective.

Effective Teachers Provide Opportunities to Respond in a Manner Consistent With Achievement Measures

Once teachers know what achievement measure will be used to assess students' progress, they will know what behaviors will be measured and how they will be measured. Students need to be given opportunities to practice their responses in the way they will be tested. The method described above for measuring continuous progress in reading requires students to read out loud. This is a familiar behavior for most students since they frequently read out loud as part of their reading lessons. However, many measures used to show progress require behaviors that may not typically be required of them.

Most school systems require students to take group-administered achievement tests. The format for these tests often is one in which the student reads an item in a booklet and marks an answer by filling in a circle with a pencil. Unfortunately, this is not a format students use frequently in the classroom. As a result, their performance on the test may be lower than they are actually capable.

Even individually administered tests can have formats with which students are not familiar. One individually administered reading test has students complete an item following this format: hot,cold/sun:__. Students who have never learned this format will probably do poorly even if they can read all of them items.

Teaching the test items is not the solution being suggeted for this dilemma. Rather teachers should teach students how to respond to these formats using items that are not on the test and then give them an opportunity to practice the format until they are comfortable with it.

SUMMARY

This chapter included descriptions of several approaches to teaching reading which are illustrative of the characteristics of effective teaching. The importance of selecing approaches about which the teacher is enthusiastic is stressed as is the importance of placing students in materials at the appropriate level of difficulty and monitoring student progress. Teachers are encouraged to select the approaches they like and which they can demonstrate are effective with their students.

Teachers are further encouraged to remember that students are taught to read because they have a need beyond basal readers. Reading should be made relevant for the student whether it is reading a sign to know which bathroom to enter, reading the menu at Burger King, filling out a job application, reading for entertainment, or reading to learn how to put a bicycle together.

The biggest challenge to the teacher will probably not be teaching children who see their parents read every day and who have been read to frequently, but the children who never see their parents read and see no use for reading. Teachers are asked to surround their students with reading and with a need to read and to make reading relevant. Finding ways to do this may not be easy, but it will certainly make teaching interesting and challenging.

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