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ABSTRACT
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expository passage orally. They were divided into two sample groups. The
control group was asked to read the passage with no prior instruction. The
experimental group was given prior instruction, which consisted of
pre-reading with vocabulary and text discussion. The basic premise of the
study was that fewer reading miscues would occur when readers were engaged in
an analytic previewing activity before reading the specific text aloud.
Findings suggest that children with high prior knowledge made fewer miscues
than the children with no prior knowledge. It is recommended that students be
given information to develop their schematic base before they are required to
undertake the text being presented. Support for these conclusions is
discussed. (Contains 66 references and 2 tables of data; an appendix contains
a sample reading passage.) (Author/RS)

The Effect Pre-knowledge of the Text has on Miscues in Reading

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Abstract

The effects of prior knowledge on miscues were examined by requiring 20 second-grade average to above average readers to read an expository passage orally. They were divided into two sample groups. The control group was asked to read the passage with no prior instruction. The experimental group was given prior instruction, which consisted of pre-reading with vocabulary and text discussion. The basic premise of this study, therefore, was that fewer reading miscues would occur when readers were engaged in an analytic previewing activity before reading the specific text aloud.

The conclusion of the study proved that children with high prior knowledge made fewer miscues than the children with no prior knowledge. It is recommended that students be given information to develop their schematic base, before they are required to undertake the text being presented. Support for these conclusions will be discussed.

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Many students are given reading passages about subjects of which they have little to no schematic understanding. The vocabulary and comprehension level of the passage is outside of the students knowledge base. It appears that if the child is made familiar with the information before the passage is read, the child will be more successful in the reading process.

Comprehension is the key element in reading. Basically, we read for comprehension. Comprehension consist of three elements: predicting what is anticipated in the context, confirming the prediction, and integrating the information into a schematic bank.

When initial engagement into a book occurs the reader predicts what will be in the passage printed. Will it be informational, such as a recipe or instructions on how to develop a concept? Will it be recreational, such as fiction or comics? Is it there to teach and instruct or for pleasure and relaxation? This type of predicting generally occurs without the readers conscious awareness .

When readers read, they do not make predictions on the basis of looking at every punctuation mark, letter, word or sentence. The fluent reader searches the page for clues to meaning. The searching is not a precise, letter-by-letter, or even word-by-word process, but rather one of prediction and anticipating meaning [Harris & Smith, 1986]. Reading is mainly a non-visual process. That is, readers use their own knowledge to construct new meanings from text; reading is mainly

a thinking activity that goes on in each reader's head. It's not just a process of establishing correspondences between sounds and letters [Manning & Manning, 1994]. It is important in teaching reading to promote understanding of the meanings of the written words rather than focusing solely on word parts [Ovando & Collier, 1985].

The reader reacts to all aspects of language as they predict. They interact with their knowledge as they predict graphemic units of language. Their knowledge of the rules of grammar are used as they predict the syntactic system of language. Their understanding of the world around them helps them to predict what the author means as they use the semantic system of language.

Readers use cues surrounding the print, such as pictures, symbols, graphic designs and contextual settings, in order to predict what the print might say. Readers use a wide range of relevant cues for predicting. They know that the cues communicate information to assist them in interpreting the reading passage. They use these cues to develop an understanding of the printed material.

Using significant graphophonic, syntactic and semantic cues, the reader predicts what the subsequent graphophonic, syntactic and semantic structures are going to be. The significance the reader gives to individual cues vary with the experiences and the language development they bring to the text and depends on the reader's

specific purpose for reading. The interaction of the cueing factors with the reading occurs so rapidly that it appear simultaneous.

As predictions are made, readers test these hypotheses to see if they are meaningful. To do this, they confirm or disconfirm their predictions. To test these predictions they ask two questions. They want to know if the passage makes sense both semantically and syntactically? If it does, and the material is worthwhile to read and they will continue on with the passage. However, if the passage does not make sense to the reader, the reader will reread for additional cues to generate enough understanding to decide whether to proceed. If the reading is too difficult, they will probably stop reading the passage all together.

The next ingredient in reading is integrating the information into schematic knowledge. Readers use various criteria to integrate what they are reading into their own system of knowledge. These criteria are dependent on the readers purpose for reading and their belief system. The reader must decide if the information is important for their purpose of reading and if it is relevant to their view of the world [Goodman & Burke,1980]. Readers with high prior knowledge of a topic should make fewer miscues which change the meaning of the text than readers with low prior knowledge of the topic. In contrast, readers with low prior knowledge must rely on another source of information, such as graphic cues. Thus, the miscues of readers with low prior knowledge would be

more graphically similar to the word in print than the miscues of readers with high

prior knowledge [Taft & Leslie, 1985].

The reader begins the reading process when they interact with an author through

the medium of printed material. They select the appropriate language cues

needed to predict what the author is portraying. Then based upon their language

knowledge, background experience and their schematic system, they confirm their

predictions by checking the syntactic and semantic acceptability of what they

think they are reading against their knowledge of their language and their

schema. They integrate what they believe to be significant into their established

meaning system.. The process of predicting, confirming and integrating proceeds

continuously and interactively. As readers read, they continuously add to, alter,

or reorganize their meanings. They are expanding their comprehension of the

world through the printed word [Goodman and Burke, 1980].

It is assumed that if a student is familiar with the text, the passage will be easier to

interpret. Previewing the text provides an opportunity for a learner to read or

listen to a selection or passage prior to reading [Rose, 1984b]. A strategy such as

previewing and prior discussion of vocabulary words would promote

understanding of word meaning and increase the students oral reading

proficiency. It would enable the student to experience success early in their oral

reading instruction [Rousseau & Kai Young Tam, 1991]. Listening previewing

with discussion of key words produces a higher percentage of words read

correctly. The most salient feature of the listening previewing component was the opportunity to hear the passage read. It provided a model for the learners [Rousseau & Kai Young Tam 1991].

Students select certain aspects of the written language available in the text. They usually know what is significant because of their backgrounds and experiences they have accumulated over the years. They select only the most significant cues to make their predictions [Goodman & Burke, 1980]. The predictions promote accurate pronunciations of the words in the text. Using contextual clues and predictions, the student will read with fewer miscues when compared with student who are not familiar with the text.

Hypothesis

To add information in this area of research, the following study was undertaken. It was hypothesized that if a student has prior knowledge of the information being read, he/she will not be able to better interpret and/or anticipate the correct pronunciation of words not in his/her present sight word vocabulary than if he has no prior knowledge.

Procedures

Twenty students, who are among the best readers, as identified by their teachers were selected from 2 second grade classrooms. The students were randomly assigned into one of two samples. Each sample was given a reading passage from "The Ice Cream King" by Greg McEvoy that is 750 words in length. Sample one was given the passage to read with no instruction other than to examine the story and then to read out loud. Sample two had the passage read to them by the examiner. The student read along and observed the words as they were being read. Immediately after, the student was asked to interpret what has been read by the instructor and was allowed to ask questions about the passage. The student then read the passage out loud. As the students from samples were orally reading the examiner marked the miscues. An analysis of the data was then made to determine if there was a significant difference between the mean number of miscues of the samples using the t Test.

Results

The results of this study, as indicated in Table I, identify that the experimental

Table I

Sample Miscue Mean, Standard Deviation and t Test Results

Sample	Mean	Standard Deviation	t Test
Experimental	22.40	12.70	4.18
Control	59.50	25.00	

Sig. <.01 level

group had an average of 37 fewer miscues when reading a 750 word passage.

This difference was statistically significant in that it was below the one percent

level.

Table II indicates the miscue analysis of the individual students who read the

Table II

Miscues of the Subjects

Student	Experimental	Control
1	45	66
2	9	61
3	39	80
4	5	92
5	22	68
6	30	21
7	24	29
8	20	46
9	13	40
10	17	92

passage. The students in the Experimental group had miscues ranging from 45 to

5, the standard deviation was 12.70. The Control group had miscues ranging from

92 to 21 with a standard deviation of 25.00.

Conclusions and Implications

The hypothesis of the study was that if a student had prior knowledge of the information being read, he/she would not be better able to interpret and/or anticipate the correct pronunciation of words not in his/her present sight word vocabulary than if he/she has no prior knowledge. The hypothesis would be accepted in that there was a significant difference between the two samples in favor of the experimental sample. Prior experience reduced miscues significantly.

The significant difference between the two reading samples occurred in the actual reading process. According to the statistics from the reading samples, the control group preformed significantly below the experimental group. Only one student in the control group actually had fewer miscues than the mean score of the experimental group. It is evident that the experimental group was better able to predict and pronounce words using their schematic understanding.

Most students in the control group did not attempt to use their decoding skills to identify words they did not know. Typically this group would skip over words unfamiliar to them, which hindered their comprehension of the story. There were vocabulary words unknown to 90% of the student. Without pre-teaching of these word, the control group missed the words in 100% of the attempts.

Students must have a pre-knowledge or schema of the text before they are able to

predict what is within the materials they are attempting to read. Discussion of the

reading text and the unfamiliar vocabulary words will reduce the reading miscues

and increase the comprehension level of the students. Developing the schematic

base of the students will assure that the students will be more successful in the

reading process.

Miscues and Pre-knowledge of Text: Related Research

"Piaget is often quoted as saying, 'We see what we know, we do not just know what we see. Our perceptions are influenced by our conceptions: our beliefs and our knowledge about the world'" (Y. Goodman 1996b). In the same way our pre-knowledge of information influences the concepts we bring to the materials we read. This pre-knowledge effects the ability to understand information and the accuracy with which the information is read.

When reading instruction first began in our nation the students were instructed with the printed word that was available at that time. The typical printed word in most homes was the Bible, hymnals, and possibly nursery rhymes. The students were familiar with these passages, poems and rhymes because they had been repeated regularly within their environment. Their schemata of these passages were highly developed. For this reason they did not have to initially read for information, but instead they read to develop their knowledge of printed language.

Pre-knowledge or understanding of the material read can increase the comprehension of materials when they are read for the first time. Whenever a person reads they do so from a particular identity, what some researchers (Ivanic,1994 and Bloome & Dail, 1997) have called a social position. Readers identities are not given or fixed but rather are taken up as part of a particular reading practice and as part of a particular reading event.

According to researchers (Moustafa 1995, Nicholson 1991, & Stanovich 1980) early readers typically read stories with familiar language and context better than stories which are unfamiliar, such as the language found in decodable text. We understand what is new to us in terms of what we already know (Anderson & Pearson, 1984). Students must be able to relate to what they read. They must be able to relate to the text, the sentence structure, and the story's content. When they can relate, successful reading will take place. When they can't relate, reading failure will occur (Rankhorn et al. 1998).

Hartman(1991) examined the pre-knowledge that readers bring to bear on their interpretation on a particular text and has found that there are variations based on background knowledge, situations, tasks and how the people around the readers influence them. The research makes it clear that readers will interpret any particular text in terms of other texts, both texts they have read and those they have heard, such as a lecture from a teacher, and in terms of their life experiences.

Topic familiarity influences the ability to integrate text information with prior knowledge more than the ability to simply comprehend information explicitly stated in the text. Studies (Marr & Gromley, 1982; Pearson, Hansen & Gordon, 1979; Stevens, 1980) conducted with school-aged children have assessed knowledge of a specific content prior to reading. These studies have examined the effects of having high prior knowledge versus low prior knowledge on the

comprehension of a passage written on a specific topic. Their results demonstrate that having more knowledge of the topic results in greater comprehension.

Reading is a complex human activity taking place in complex human relationship. Bloome & Dail (1997) believe that how a reader views a text may influence how he or she approaches that text. The reader will decide what effort might be expended, what goals a reader might have, what inter-textual connections might be made and what displays of comprehension will be exhibited. How a reader defines a reading event and their participation in the event involves what goals they will establish for their participation and how they will approach the target text (Bloome & Dail 1997).

When describing the development of pre-knowledge, Styles & Drummond (1993) see beginning readers as experienced, active, inventive meaning-makers. They see readers as accomplished speakers of language, who have had four or more years alive in a world groaning with printed matter and written language. They know that children have had experiences with the purposes of the printed word long before they set foot in a classroom. Children already use spoken language to explore their feelings, to inquire into the world, to report , to invent, to fabricate, to dream, to rhyme, to joke, to commiserate and to comfort. The child's mastery of his own language is a strength he brings to the reading task (Goodman, Y., 1970). Beginning readers should be given a diet that matches their experiences, and their capacity to learn. In developing reading skills their learning will be

uneven and untidy, individual and unpredictable. It will be exploratory and tentative, motivated by real feeling and an insatiable appetite for more (Styles & Drummond, 1993).

Everything readers do is caused by their knowledge – their knowledge of the world, their knowledge of language, and what they believe about reading and the reading process. Readers make decisions and problem solve as they read. They become critical of what they are reading and confident to make judgments about the way a published text is written and the quality of the work (Y. Goodman 1996a).

Word recognition is perhaps the most fundamental part of reading. Many studies of word recognition are conducted within an interactive framework. Rumelhart (1976) proposed an interactive model of the reading process designed to explicate the role of context during reading. His basic premise is that bottom up (data or text-driven) processing simultaneously interacts with top down (concept-driven) processing so that interpretations of the text is achieved. Rumelhart and McClelland (1981) described processing in an interactive model of reading as follows:

"The reader begins with a set of expectations about what information is likely to be available though visual input. These expectations, or initial hypotheses, are based on his/her knowledge of the structure of letters, words, phrases, sentences, and larger pieces of discourse, including nonlinguistic aspects of the current

contextual situation. As visual information from the page begins to become available, it strengthens those hypotheses that are consistent with the input and weakens those that are inconsistent. The stronger hypotheses, in turn, makes even more specific predictions about the information available in the visual input. To the degree that these hypotheses are confirmed, they are further strengthened and the processing is facilitated."

According to Harris & Smith (1986) both the teacher and the child need to understand that reading involves predictions and that prediction involves error. One way to reduce error in reading is to approach word symbols strictly on a visual level. Careful processing of letters and words, with great attention to detail, will result in accurate word-by-word reading. But reading for meaning necessarily involves less attention to visual cues or clues, and more attention to non-visual ones. Errors are a natural consequence of a search process involving anything as complex as retrieving meaning from the printed page. Neither the teacher nor the child should expect word-perfect oral reading or letter-perfect word identification.

When a child reads, there are complex interactions between the reader and the written language (Burke & Goodman 1970). Readers are users of language. They must use their knowledge of the grammatical and pragmatic systems to infer cohesive relationships in order to construct their own sensible text. We can expect reader's miscues to reflect the inferences and predictions they are making

as they transact with the text. We can expect readers to produce predictable miscues where the text cues are ambiguous and to change the text to reflect inferences they have drawn (K. Goodman 1973).

If Rumelhart's (1976) prediction, that semantic information affects word recognition, is taken in its broadest sense, then children with greater prior knowledge should use different sources and/or amounts of information to recognize words than children with less prior knowledge of the topic.

The knowledge sources (or levels of linguistic representation) that are activated during reading include: (a) perception of letters and words, (b)orthographic knowledge, (c) lexical knowledge, (d) syntactic knowledge, and (e) semantic knowledge. Perception of letters and words is accomplished by an analysis of their features. Syntactic knowledge is derived from word order and includes the construction of the phrases or part of speech the word represents. Orthographic knowledge derives from the way the letters are strung together to make words; it is a knowledge of the standardization of spelling conventions, spacing, changes in pronunciation, creative spelling, and historical events that changes spelling. Lexical knowledge refers to the conceptual knowledge of words. Semantic knowledge refers to prior knowledge as it is recorded abstractly in memory. Each knowledge source contains specialized information about some aspect of the message. An individual stores the accumulating information from these knowledge sources in a hypothetical "message center." A hypotheses may be

confirmed or disconfirmed. It may be removed from the message center, replaced, or joined by a new hypothesis. This process continues until the most probable hypothesis is determined to be correct and comprehension occurs.

Stanovich (1980) added a compensatory component to the interactive model. This component suggests that a reader who is deficient in processing information at any given level compensates by using a greater amount of information from the other levels, regardless of the particular deficiency. Poor decoding skills, for example, often lead deficient readers to rely more heavily on contextual information.

Whether words appear in isolation or in context, interactions among cognitive systems permit cross-referencing of information from stimulus and contextual sources. The relative weight accorded to incoming information of any type can be used to compensate for lack of information of another type. Considerable knowledge about the topic may compensate for poor decoding skills. Conversely, good decoding skills may compensate for limited knowledge of the material when reading text containing unfamiliar concepts.

Investigations based on an interactive-compensatory model generally show that good and poor readers are most clearly differentiated by their word recognition skills (Juel, 1983). More skilled readers can decode words efficiently, while less skilled readers compensate for their poor decoding abilities by relying on context

to achieve word identification (Pace & Golenkoff, 1976). Although poor readers are more likely than good readers to rely on contextual information, their slow and inaccurate word decoding processes may degrade the contextual information and render it useless (Stanovich. 1980). A compensatory model would suggest, however, that comprehension could be enhanced if the reader were provided with experiences that would increase the information flow from higher-order sources.

The role of prior knowledge and its effect on reading comprehension has been the topic of a considerable number of studies (Bransford, 1979; Hansen,1981,1984; Pearson & Johnson, 1978; Sachs, 1983; Spiegel, 1981; Rose, 1986a; Rousseau & Kai Young Tam, 1991). One strategy for augmenting the effects of prior knowledge has been to use previewing activities. These instructional interventions include conceptual statements related to the theme of the story (Bransford & Johnson, 1972), advanced organizers such as short verbal statements given by teachers (Smith & Hess, 1969), pre-reading concepts analysis activities (Sachs, 1983), and listening previewing with discussion of key words (Rousseau & Kai Young Tam, 1991). The object of previewing is to increase what Pehrsson & Denner (1985) have termed the proximity between the reader and the author of the text, by helping the reader to retrieve relevant knowledge or by supplying the reader with advance information about the content of the material itself. Previewing activates the reader's schemata and bridges the gap between the stimulus and the context.

Sachs'(1983) use of a concept analysis activity exemplifies the effects on subsequent reading to the reader's active involvement in relating prior knowledge to text. The results revealed that when poor readers' past experiences are used as a means for them to relate to the main concept of narrative discourse, the children become better able to evaluate the story. Allowed to read silently, these poor readers used the thematic context of the text to compensate for their poor decoding ability. Although silent reading and oral reading are different skills(Leu, 1983), previewing strategies that enhance silent reading may enhance oral reading fluency as well.

According to researchers (Manning & Manning 1994) reading is mainly a non-visual process. That is, readers use their own prior knowledge to construct new meanings from text; reading is mainly a thinking activity that goes on in each reader's head.

One way to examine the effects of prior knowledge on the processing of text is by examining how oral reading miscues are affected. Background knowledge has a significant effect on the proportion of miscues resulting in loss of meaning. Students with low background knowledge make significantly more miscues, which results in loss of meaning, than students with higher background knowledge (Taft & Leslie 1985). A broad interpretation would predict that readers with high prior knowledge of a topic should make fewer miscues, which change the meaning of the text, than readers with low prior knowledge of the

topic. In contrast, readers with low prior knowledge must rely on another source of information, for example, the graphic cues. Thus, the miscues of readers with low prior knowledge would be more graphically similar to the words in print than the miscues of readers with high prior knowledge. According to Taft and Leslie (1985) prior knowledge affects meaning-loss miscues independent of the accuracy level at which children were reading.

Miscue analysis was first presented by Kenneth Goodman (1965). It is a system for analyzing the points in oral reading where observed and expected responses do not match. Readers' miscues are used to understand the reading process and to develop a model and theory of the process. Miscue analysis was initially developed for the diagnoses of readers' strengths and weaknesses and in planning instruction (K. Goodman, 1973).

Kenneth Goodman first termed oral reading errors as "miscues" – that is , words mistakenly cued by the cognitive and linguistic systems of reading as they interact with the text (Goodman, K.,1965; Goodman, Y.,1970; Burke & Goodman, 1970). A miscue is any observed response which differs from the expected response to the text (Goodman, Y. & Burke 1972).

Miscue analysis was one tool that helped to develop new theoretical approaches to reading and reading instruction, and shifted the focus from word calling to reading comprehension (Bloome & Dail, 1997). Miscue analysis is currently

defined as a visualization of reading, involving a single reader and a single text (Bloome & Dail, 1997). The reader is viewed as a user of language who processes three kinds of information, grapho-phonic, syntactic, and semantic, as he reacts to the graphic displays on the page (Goodman, K.S., 1969). Miscue analysis assumed that reader's unexpected responses to a graphic display are not random, but, instead, are the product of the same kind of meaning-making strategies readers use when they produce more conventional or expected responses (Bloome & Dail, 1997). In comparing unexpected responses in oral reading to expected responses, the phycholinguistic reading process is revealed (Goodman, K.S., 1969).

Certain types of miscues are of higher order than others. Miscues of low order give way to miscues of higher order as children become more proficient readers. Miscues must be looked at not as mistakes, which are bad and need to be eradicated, but as overt behaviors which may unlock aspects of intellectual processing. Miscues in reading give insight into the reading process. Examining the words children omit as they read supplies some evidence of how miscues become qualitatively better miscues as readers become more proficient. Children develop the ability to produce miscues which show finer discriminations. These substitutions show a finer discrimination between the sound-symbol relationship. This finer discrimination produces more miscues differing by only a single grapheme. Proficient readers produced miscues which are more complex,

involve more integration of the meaning, integrate grammatical and sound systems of the language, and rely on the experience and background of the child.

Children learn to correct their own errors. Y. Goodman(1970) states that virtually every regression which the children, in the study she produced, made was for the purpose of correcting previous reading. They were less likely to correct miscues when the resulting passage sounded like language and was meaningful to them. When the children attempted corrections of their own miscues, they were successful at least 75 percent of the time (Goodman, Y., 1970).

In Retrospective miscue analysis (RMA) the reader is asked to comment on the miscues they have made (Goodman, Y., et al, 1987). According to Y. Goodman(1987), this process helps readers become aware that they are better readers than they think they are. As they revalue themselves they become confident and willing to take risks, this often leads to greater reading proficiency (Goodman, Y., 1996a). Y. Goodman(1996a) believes that it is important to engage in conversations with the reader, to talk about their reading strategies and the language they have used, as the they examine their own miscues.

RMA procedures develop understandings about how readers make shifts in their views about the reading process and in themselves as readers as a result of examining the power of their own miscues (Goodman, Y., 1996a). RMA

provides additional insight into how readers process text and what knowledge and strategies readers bring to the task of rendition and interpretation. It also provides a check on the tester's analysis of the significance and meaning of particular miscues (Bloome & Dail 1997). Miscue analysis involved a major shift in thinking about reading. Retrospective miscue analysis increases the readers' participation in generating insight about what is happening during the reading of the text. As currently defined, miscue analysis is part of a technological view of reading that defines reading as consisting of a set of cognitive and linguistic processes that readers use to interpret texts (Bloome & Dail, 1997).

The basic premise of this study, therefore, is that fewer reading miscues will occur when readers are engaged in an analytic previewing activity before reading the specific text aloud. To study the effects of context on oral word recognition fluency, errors or miscues, where the reader's rendition deviates from the actual text, must be identified. Leu (1983) suggests that error analysis as a process measure is extremely promising because it is high in ecological validity and constitutes one of the few observable manifestations of processing. Mulchahy, Lupart, & Price (1983) validated the different categories of miscues. Their factor analyses provided support for categorizing miscues as reflections of contextual and graphophonemic cues use. In this study, graphophonemic, syntactic, and semantic miscues will be evaluated while children read.

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Appendix

The Ice Cream King
By Greg McEvoy

Even when he was very young, Lionel knew two things for certain. One was that he had a terrible weakness for ice cream.

Every Saturday afternoon an old horse-drawn wagon rolled past his house.
"Ice cream! Getcher ice cream!" the driver would call.

It was Lionel's favorite day of the week.

The other thing was this. If he was going to grow up and work for a living, he might as well have the best job possible. It seemed to him that kings were pretty well paid and powerful people. Besides, he was sure they could have all the ice cream they wanted. Yes, being a king would be perfect.

His dog, Prince, was in complete agreement. Lionel and Prince would lie in bed for hours discussing the best way to run a kingdom. Then, late one night, they saw something amazing advertised on television – King School.
Lionel pleaded with his parents to enroll him. It took a long time, but finally they agreed.

The night before he was to leave for King School, Lionel lay awake thinking how he could change the world once he was king. There

would be no more wars, or pollution, or unemployment, or crime. But there would be ice cream – and lots of it – for everybody.

In the morning, Lionel's family drove him to the train station. His father was giving him some last minutes advice when the conductor yelled, "All abooooooard!" Lionel's mother tried not to cry, but she couldn't help it.

Everyone hugged Lionel as he boarded the train.

"Don't forget to write to us," his father shouted as the train pulled away.

"I won't," Lionel yelled back.

"And don't eat too much ice cream!" Lionel heard his mother call out to him, but he pretended he didn't.

The King school was magnificent. Lionel stood at the huge front gates and stared. It was the most exciting moment of his young life. For the next year this would be his home.

Hundreds of other princely little boys had come from all over the world, eager to begin their studies. After signing in at the front desk, they were shown to their rooms.

Once everyone was settled, classes began. The students were instructed in the many rules of royalty. They learned how to give speeches and royal decrees, how to sit up properly on their thrones, how to avoid tripping over red carpets, and how to keep their crowns on straight.

There was history about the lives of famous kings. There was a class on manners and how to invite important people to a royal ball. There were books to read and exams to pass.

Lionel studied as hard as he could and all the while he imagined what it would be like to have his own little kingdom. His long hours in the library were rewarded. He earned very high marks in all his subjects. Finally, the year was over and school was finished.

On graduation day there was a huge banquet for the students and their families. After dessert – the best ice cream he had ever tasted – Lionel was called to the stage to receive his diploma. It read:

This is to certify that **Lionel** *has completed*
all the courses at King School and is therefore qualified
*for a full time position as King.*

The students gave their teachers a standing ovation. Then it was time to go home.

The next evening Lionel began searching for the job of his dreams. He read the newspaper for "King Wanted" ads, but there were none.

He looked in the yellow pages under castles, but there didn't seem to be any. So he got out his map and studies it. Just when he was beginning to feel frustrated, Lionel noticed a building on the lower right hand corner. The printing beside it read "Royal Palace."

"Finally!" Lionel shouted. "I will apply to be king in the morning."

After a good night's sleep and a bowlful of ice cream Lionel grabbed his diploma, put on his best crown, called a taxi, kissed his mom, whistled for Prince, and headed out the door.

The palace was everything Lionel could have wished for. The walls and towers were solid marble and the spires were polished copper. A deep moat of sparkling water surrounded it, but the heavy drawbridge was down as if to welcome Lionel in. An enormous watchman stood guard at the front gate. Without further delay, Lionel rushed forward to speak with him.
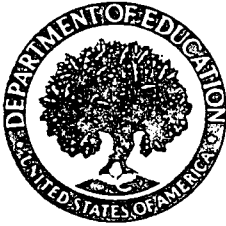
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