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Provisions for Remedial Readers in First class District High Schools in the State of Washington

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PROVISIONS FOR REMEDIAL READERS IN
FIRST CLASS DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOLS
IN THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington College of Education

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Mary Elizabeth Little
August 1957

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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Reading has long been believed to be a subject taught and mastered in the elementary school. With an ever increasing number of boys and girls attending school and advancing to high school a need for a continuing reading program has developed. The task of teaching all reading skills to all pupils can no longer be completed in the elementary grades.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. It was the purpose of this study to determine what the provisions are for remedial readers in first class district high schools in the State of Washington.

Importance of the study. Blair estimates that twenty to thirty per cent of the pupils in high school have serious reading difficulties.¹ With these difficulties it is impossible for pupils to do satisfactory academic

¹Glenn M. Blair, Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching (New York: Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 4.

work. Teachers of all subjects find their jobs increasingly difficult when they are confronted with pupils having reading disabilities. Gray confirms this when he says, "... many poor readers are promoted annually to high school, with the result that problems relating to grading and teaching become increasingly numerous and complex."² An attempt was made in this study to find out how first class district high schools in the State of Washington are meeting and solving the problem presented by remedial readers in the hope that other schools can profit from the experience of a few.

Limitations of the study. For the purposes of this study first class district high schools in the State of Washington were surveyed. The inclusion of all school districts would insure a more reliable estimate of the total program, but the difficulties such a study would present made this impractical.

Data in this study are based on returns from the questionnaires which totaled 72.9 per cent. Of the forty-eight first class district high schools interviewed, thirty-

²William S. Gray, The Appraisal of Current Practices in Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 44.

five returns were received.

Some of the items among the returned questionnaires were answered in such a way that they had to be interpreted by the researcher. Many of the high schools included comments and remarks that also had to be tabulated according to the author's judgement.

Although the questionnaire is usually considered less accurate than the personal interview, for the purposes of this study it was deemed the most practical way of securing the needed information.

Because individuals differ in their interpretation of material, other investigators may differ slightly from the author in their understanding of the findings.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Remedial readers. Throughout this study the term "remedial readers" refers to those boys and girls reading two or more years below their grade placement.

Remedial or specialized reading program. The remedial or specialized reading program indicates the plan whereby special classes are conducted for remedial readers. These classes are designed to help students improve all of the various reading skills and to develop the genuine desire

to read. A special teacher trained in the field of reading is usually in charge of these classes.

Developmental reading program. The developmental reading program indicates the plan whereby all teachers and classes are concerned with teaching reading. All students, not just remedial readers, have the opportunity to improve their reading skills. Each teacher assumes the responsibility of teaching the reading skills necessary for understanding of his particular subject matter. A special reading teacher often supervises the program.

CHAPTER II

PROCEDURE

For the purpose of analyzing the problem of remedial readers in the high school the author examined two areas of concern. The first of these was to investigate current practices in first class district high schools in the State of Washington. This was done by means of a normative survey based on a questionnaire. The second area of concern was to investigate literature in the field concerning the problem and its possible solutions. The approach to the questionnaire investigations is discussed in the remainder of this chapter and the results in Chapter IV. A discussion of the literature in the field is presented in Chapter III.

The survey of current practices. The forty-eight high schools in the thirty-seven first class districts in the State of Washington were selected to be surveyed because of their comparative size and probability of like problems. They were considered by the writer to be representative of practices in the State of Washington. Because these high schools were situated in widely separated areas, the questionnaire approach was considered the most practical method for the survey.

The questionnaire used consisted of items selected by the author to be of the most concern as gathered from pertinent reading. The questionnaire was sent to the principal of each high school involved in the study, and either the principal or a remedial reading teacher was requested to supply the desired information. Returns were received from thirty-five of the forty-eight high schools, giving a 72.9 per cent return.

The questionnaire was composed of five basic questions used to determine how each high school handled the problem of remedial readers. Each question included a list of possible responses which could be answered by a check mark in the appropriate place. The five questions used were:

1. What criteria is used to determine which students are remedial readers?
2. When remedial readers are discovered, what provisions are made for them in your school?
3. If special classes are provided, how are they organized?
4. If remedial readers are helped within the regular classroom, how is this done?
5. If special provisions are provided for remedial readers in your school, what are the effects

- a. On students?
- b. On teachers?
- c. On parents?

Each item on the questionnaire was tabulated separately, and the totals were converted to percentages. These percentages were interpreted to reflect common practices, weaknesses, or trends among high schools in the State of Washington.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Much has been written in regard to remedial reading in the elementary school, but material is rather limited regarding the subject in the high school. A brief summary of the work relating to remedial reading in the high school is reported in this chapter.

I. RECOGNITION OF THE READING PROBLEM

With an increasing percentage of boys and girls attending high school the wide variety of interests and abilities has become a problem facing all teachers. The range of reading ability is one of the main difficulties encountered. "High school surveys using certain standardized tests show a range of reading ability from third grade level to junior college level."¹ Classes and instruction must be altered to take care of this wide range. As a result of further study, Blair reports that twenty to thirty per cent of pupils in high school have serious

¹Esther G. Nolan, "Correcting Reading Difficulties of High School Students," Education, 67:500, April, 1947.

reading difficulties.² These difficulties are almost impossible to correct within the regular classroom.

It is apparent that "many pupils entering the secondary school fail to make a satisfactory adjustment because of reading deficiencies."³ They become discouraged and feel their inadequacy. A study was recently made to determine the relationship between reading ability and high school drop-outs. Five hundred ninety-three poor readers and five hundred ninety-three good readers in the Battle Creek, Michigan, high schools were the subjects of this study. It was found that 49.9 per cent of the poor readers left high school while only 14.5 per cent of the good readers dropped out.⁴ Poor readers who dropped out were interviewed. Three-fourths of these boys and girls reported they had received no help with their reading difficulties while in high school.⁵ Ruth Plenty who conducted the study concluded:

²Glenn M. Blair, Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching (New York: Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 4.

³Denver Public Schools, Toward Better Reading (Denver: Denver Public Schools, 1945), p. 25.

⁴Ruth C. Plenty, Reading Ability and High School Drop-outs (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College: Columbia University, 1956), p. 51.

⁵Ibid., p. 37.

The prevalence of drop-outs in the tenth grade points to the need for special help in reading between the sixth and the tenth grades. It is also undoubtedly desirable to continue the giving of reading help throughout the high school grades.⁶

It must be realized that there are two major aspects of the reading problem in secondary schools. There are those who are reading as well as they are able and those who are retarded in their reading progress.⁷ These students require different types of reading programs. Those who are reading as well as they are able need a special program adjusted to their interests and limitations. Those students who are retarded can benefit from special help aimed at correcting their reading difficulties.⁸

There are certain characteristics of the reading problem in high school to consider. Poor reading habits have been firmly established and are difficult to correct. Students with poor reading habits have acquired emotional blocks that must be overcome before reading improvement can succeed. The problems of reasoning and interpretation are added to the existing problem concerning the mechanics of

⁶Ibid., p. 77.

⁷Guy Bond and Eva Bond, Developmental Reading in High School (New York: Macmillan Company, 1941), p. 46.

⁸Leo C. Fay, Reading in High School (Washington, D.C.: Department of Classroom Teachers, American Educational Research Association of N.E.A., September, 1956), p. 10.

reading. There is also a dearth of material which interests adolescents who are seriously retarded in reading. These retarded students can not develop a genuine desire to read when adequate materials are not available.⁹

II. CAUSES OF THE READING PROBLEM

There are many possible causes for retarded or remedial readers. No one thing brings about all the difficulties, and many adolescents are remedial readers because of a combination of various factors.

Most authors in the field agree with Gray and Nolan who list the general causes for remedial readers as psychological immaturity, educational immaturity, poor social or family background, and physical defects.¹⁰

Psychological immaturity can be found in the background of many remedial readers. Authors agree that emotional problems often lead to serious reading difficulties.

⁹Los Angeles City School Districts, Instructional Guide for the Teaching of Reading Improvement in Secondary Schools (Los Angeles: Los Angeles City School Districts, 1954), p. 2.

¹⁰William S. Gray, Keeping Reading Programs Abreast of the Times (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 112-116; and Esther G. Nolan, "Correcting Reading Difficulties of High School Students," Education, 67:500, April, 1947.

When boys and girls have such problems they fail to concentrate on their studies and to keep up with the progress of their classmates. The sense of failure that often follows can lead to even greater emotional upset. Personality problems follow much the same pattern. Most reading authorities agree that improvement can be accomplished only when emotional difficulties have been alleviated.

Educational immaturity is perhaps the main cause for remedial readers. A survey by the Los Angeles city school districts says lack of educational opportunity is one of the most outstanding reasons that children become retarded in their reading progress. Many students never have satisfactory instruction involving reading skills. Many schools fail to recognize difficulties and therefore do nothing to correct them. Schools also fail to continue instruction in reading beyond the elementary grades. The need for this continued instruction is either ignored or the schools have failed to recognize such a need.¹¹ Blair and Bond both state that lack of practice in reading is prevalent in the secondary schools.¹² It is taken for granted that adolescents have received the necessary background for reading.

¹¹Los Angeles City School Districts, op. cit., p. 5.

¹²Blair, op. cit., p. 76; and Bond, op. cit., p. 254.

Often methods and materials are inadequate to cope with the reading problem.¹³ The teacher's attitude has a great deal to do with reading progress. Pupils must be encouraged and must develop an interest in reading if they are to overcome their difficulties. It is the teacher's duty to develop this interest.¹⁴

Most authors agree that the background given in the home influences reading progress. The family and social backgrounds of children can either encourage or discourage school achievement. The interest and the desire to learn should begin in the home. In homes where this interest is not formulated many children have been found to be retarded in achievement.

Physical defects are an understandable cause for remedial readers. All authors agree that low intelligence normally leads to retarded reading. Adolescents who read as well as they are able often read below normal when judged according to their grade placement. Bond says that defective vision, speech, and hearing affect the reading progress of children.¹⁵ Boys and girls with one or more of

¹³Arthur I. Gates, Teaching Reading (Washington, D.C.: N.E.A. Publications, June, 1953), p. 7.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 9; and Blair, op. cit., p. 76.

¹⁵Bond, op. cit., p. 263.

these difficulties must have their defects corrected and must receive special help before they can advance satisfactorily. Authors in the field agree that the general appearance of a child can influence his reading progress. Often children develop feelings of inferiority because of their appearances, and serious personality and emotional problems result.

III. WHAT CAN BE DONE

Before a school incorporates any reading program a thorough study of the problem should be made. This is best begun by a careful testing program. "Before launching any diagnostic program in reading, the teacher should make a study of available testing instruments."¹⁶ Standardized tests that measure the reading level, mental maturity, vocational interests, and some factors of the personalities of students should be administered.¹⁷ Special attention should be given to the selection and results of tests measuring reading level. Bond suggests using Gates Reading

¹⁶Denver Public Schools, op. cit., p. 82.

¹⁷W.G. Cults, "Dealing With Reading Problems at the Pre-College Level," Educational Administration and Supervision, 39:129, March, 1953.

Survey, Iowa Silent Reading Test, or Traxler Silent Reading Test.¹⁸ Other authors in the field agree that these tests are reliable and easy to administer. Simpson says the S.R.A. Reading Record, the Iowa Tests of Educational Development, and the Iowa Every Pupil Tests of Basic Skills can also be used effectively.¹⁹

To quote from a Denver Public Schools publication:

Academic aptitude and reading tests are not sufficient to give a total reading profile. Teacher judgment based on previous achievement as recorded on cumulative records, coupled with observation of the pupil, is an important first step.... age-growth charts, interest inventories, and tests designed to diagnose study skills combine with a knowledge of physical fitness, home and experience background, and personality traits to form a total picture.²⁰

The main diagnostic procedures should include an intelligence test, a silent reading test yielding several scores, an oral reading test, a chart for testing vision, an informal hearing test, a form for recording and analyzing study habits, and careful study of each pupil's cumulative personnel record.²¹ When results of the tests have been

¹⁸Bond, op. cit., pp. 247-249.

¹⁹Elizabeth A. Simpson, Helping High School Students Read Better (Chicago: Science Research Association, Inc., 1954), p. 73.

²⁰Denver Public Schools, op. cit., p. 25.

²¹William S. Gray, The Appraisal of Current Practices in Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 143.

analyzed it is advisable to offer special help for those students who rank one or two years below their reading grade placement and intensive work for those who rank more than two years below the standard.²²

A careful diagnosis of each case normally follows testing. "Diagnosis," says Bond, "consists of measuring and studying the symptoms and determining the causes in order to understand the nature of the disability."²³ Only after diagnosis is made can effective reading improvement begin. Gates states, "Remedial instruction...is designed to improve abilities in which diagnosis has revealed deficiencies."²⁴

When the reading difficulties have been analyzed by observation, tests, and diagnosis, the next step is to determine the most effective techniques and procedures to be used for improvement.²⁵ The reading environment, the student's readiness for reading, individual differences, reading case studies, the value of reading for the individual,

²²Nolan, op. cit., pp. 501-502.

²³Bond, op. cit., p. 277.

²⁴Arthur I. Gates, The Improvement of Reading (New York: Macmillan Company, 1935), p. 25.

²⁵Los Angeles City School Districts, op. cit., pp. 20-21.

test results, and progress charts must all be considered.²⁶

In choosing material for a remedial reading class, Gates says it is advisable to know that material should be highly interesting to the pupils, it should be of proper difficulty, it should be of various types, and lots of easy reading should be provided as a substitute for review.²⁷ Mechanical devices such as the reading accelerator, the metronoscope, and the tachistoscope are available if desired but are not considered necessary in the usual remedial program.²⁸ Films and other visual aids should be carefully considered, and teachers should not hesitate to use them.

Once the reading program is under way it is important to motivate the students and create an active interest in reading improvement. A California State Department of Education publication states:

The most effective motivation the teacher can secure will be the pupil's recognition of that [his] problem, its importance as a factor in present and future educational progress, and the pupil's eager

²⁶California State Department of Education, Improving Reading Instruction in the Secondary School (California State Printing Office, 1947), pp. 9-15.

²⁷Gates, op. cit., pp. 26-29.

²⁸Cults, op. cit., p. 135.

desire to share in its solution.²⁹

There are several ways to incorporate a reading program in the high school. Care must be taken to select the right program to suit the apparent needs. Strang, McCullough, and Traxler suggest teaching reading incidentally or systematically in all class periods, as a regular subject in the freshman program, in a second period of English, in a communication arts or an orientation-to-learning class, or in a special reading class.³⁰

Two types of reading programs are generally employed.

To quote Witty:

There is a tendency to offer two types of reading opportunities in superior high schools. The first is remedial....But there is need also for junior and senior high schools to continue instruction and offer developmental programs in reading.³¹

There are advantages to both programs. In the special remedial reading classes more children in the school system actually improve, individual help and instruction is made

²⁹California State Department of Education, op. cit., p. 15.

³⁰Ruth Strang, Constance McCullough, and Arthur Traxler, Problems in the Improvement of Reading (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1955), pp. 17-18.

³¹Paul Witty, "An Articulated Program for Teaching Reading Skills from Kindergarten to College," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 39:15, September, 1955.

possible, a special teacher with the necessary training is employed, co-operation between the special teacher and the classroom teacher helps the students, and an individual diagnostic testing program is made possible.³² The developmental reading program in the classroom provides for continual reading instruction, more time is spent on reading, reading is put to actual use, border-line cases as well as remedial readers are helped, children help themselves and each other, and the teacher has an opportunity to know the child and his needs.³³

Gray believes that "greater provision must be made for those children who do not profit from group instruction in reading."³⁴ This seems to point to the fact that special classes and clinics for remedial readers are needed. Gray also says:

...we do not believe that their [handicapped readers] problems are rooted solely in the classroom situation or that the regular teacher should be expected to cope with them alone. It is the function of the clinic to

³²J.D. Harris, "Specialized Remedial Reading Program versus the Remedial Reading Program in the Classroom," Elementary School Journal, 45:408, March, 1945.

³³Ibid., pp. 409-410.

³⁴William S. Gray, Keeping Reading Programs Abreast of the Times (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 116-117.

try to secure an understanding of their deficiencies and ways of overcoming them.³⁵

It should be noted that "the main purpose of remedial instruction is to correct specific weaknesses revealed by an individual diagnosis of reading achievement."³⁶ Schubert gives twelve steps to follow in remedial reading instruction. These have been somewhat briefed with minor changes by the writer:

1. Concentrate on retarded readers with M.A.'s high enough to succeed.
2. Uncover and remove the cause of the deficiency.
3. Catalogue weaknesses through tests, observation, and conferences.
4. Recognize that extreme cases exist beyond your ken.
5. Establish rapport immediately.
6. Let the retarded experience initial success in order to restore confidence.
7. Provide several kinds of activities to eliminate boredom.
8. Secure the cooperation of parents.
9. Use progress charts.
10. Meet at least twice a week, being careful to avoid conflict with liked activities.
11. Keep the group free from stigma.
12. Develop a genuine interest in reading. This is the basic objective.³⁷

³⁵Ibid., p. 147.

³⁶William S. Gray, The Appraisal of Current Practices in Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1945), p. 144.

³⁷D.G. Schubert, "Twelve Sensible Steps in Remedial Reading," Clearing House, 28:81-91, October, 1953.

In all reading instruction it is wise to remember to differentiate assignments, vary the methods of instruction, and secure material to cover the range of reading abilities.³⁸ A Los Angeles City School Districts publication indicates certain goals a remedial reading program should strive to meet. These include reading for purpose, building reading interest, improving mechanics of reading, building vocabulary, developing the ability to assimilate and remember what is read, teaching students to locate information, teaching comprehension, increasing reading speed, and encouraging reading for enjoyment.³⁹ If these goals are reached the remedial reading program will succeed.

The teacher plays the outstanding role in all reading programs. In a sense all teachers should teach reading in their particular subjects.⁴⁰ Simpson adds that this is especially true of English teachers. Those giving instruction in the ninth grade should stress reading skills at all times.⁴¹

Harris says that both the special and the developmental reading programs require teachers with special

³⁸Fay, op. cit., p. 11.

³⁹Los Angeles City School Districts, op. cit., pp. 25-27.

⁴⁰Strang, op. cit., pp. 23-26.

⁴¹Simpson, op. cit., p. 59.

training.⁴² Where the developmental program is employed there should be a reading coordinator to supervise the reading instruction. Simpson mentions that this coordinator should be well trained, able to test and diagnose, and able to work well with people.⁴³ The remedial or special reading teacher requires even more training. Fay states that "...the teacher's readiness is as significant as that of the students." He must know the capabilities and achievements of his students, what is demanded in reading a particular content, and what specific selections will involve in the way of background information and reading skills.⁴⁴ The teacher must possess enthusiasm, understanding, resourcefulness, ingenuity, and the ability to work with people and to develop the system.⁴⁵ Robinson reports on a recent survey made by the National Association for Remedial Teaching. A questionnaire was sent to six hundred eighty-three members, and from the one hundred nine returned, the following qualifications for teachers of remedial reading were listed: stable, mature, and flexible person-

⁴²Harris, op. cit., p. 408.

⁴³Simpson, op. cit., pp. 59-60.

⁴⁴Fay, op. cit., p. 13.

⁴⁵Los Angeles City School Districts, op. cit., p. 18.

alities, a sense of humor, good health, patience, enthusiasm, experience in classroom teaching, good educational backgrounds including psychology and testing, understanding of both the developmental and the remedial programs, experience in working with case histories, familiarity with available material, preparation for appraising the programs and preparing reports, and familiarity with research in the field.⁴⁶

There are certain things that affect the success of any reading program. Gray reports on a few of these. The size of the class can help or hinder reading progress. If the class is too large individual instruction becomes difficult and progress is slow. The caste system must be overcome for improvement to become successful. This system is prevalent where high school teachers feel that elementary school teachers should give all the necessary reading instruction. The high school teachers then resent the fact that they must share in the task of teaching reading. Subject matter specialists retard reading instruction. These teachers know what but not how to teach. Lack of proper techniques and materials to fit student needs lead

⁴⁶H.M. Robinson, "Qualifications for Teachers of Remedial Reading," School Review, 63:334-337, September, 1955.

to little or no reading improvement.⁴⁷ All of these things must be considered and any deficiencies corrected before a reading program can prove beneficial.

IV. WHAT IS BEING DONE

Many high schools now recognize the problem of remedial readers and are trying to correct the difficulties presented. These schools realize that special instruction in reading must be given. Gray says current practices include incidental training by members of the staff, systematic training concentrated in a department or course, and concentrated basic training with guidance by all staff members.⁴⁸ Incidental training by members of the staff takes place in all classes. Each teacher helps his students improve the reading skills necessary for understanding in his particular class. When systematic training is concentrated in a department or course it is normally the English department that has this responsibility. Concentrated basic training with guidance by all staff members is considered the most successful reading program. Special

⁴⁷William S. Gray, Basic Instruction in Reading in Elementary and High Schools (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), pp. 11-14.

⁴⁸Ibid., pp. 32-34.

classes are provided for remedial readers and those who wish to improve reading skills. All teachers continue this reading instruction in the regular classroom.

Strang says that many schools modify the curriculum to suit the needs of remedial readers. Other current practices include teaching reading as an intrinsic part of the school program, offering courses in reading improvement to those who desire such help, and holding special classes or clinics for the retarded.⁴⁹

In a 1940 survey of one thousand ninety high schools, the response of three hundred seventy-nine indicated some of the reading programs incorporated at that time. Seventy-five schools that responded made no provisions for retarded readers. The responsibility for teaching reading was placed on all teachers in twenty-six schools. Thirty-four high schools gave this responsibility to English teachers who were to teach reading in their regular classes. Special sections of English and classes in remedial reading were held in one hundred ninety-eight high schools. Twenty-eight schools employed a specialist who worked with individuals and small groups.⁵⁰

⁴⁹Strang, op. cit., p. 32.

⁵⁰Glenn M. Blair, "Remedial Reading Program in Senior High School," School Review, 49:32-41, January, 1941.

This chapter has dealt with recognition of the reading problem, causes of this problem, what schools can do, and what schools are doing to solve the problem. Current practices dealing with the remedial reading problem are of the most concern in this study. Blair found in his survey of schools in various states that "by far the most widely used method of providing specific remedial instruction in reading is the provision of special sections in English and classes in remedial reading."⁵¹ The following chapter reveals current practices in the State of Washington.

⁵¹Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

The data obtained from this survey concerning provisions for remedial readers in first class district high schools in the State of Washington was organized with responses to the questions summarized and interpreted in the order in which they were asked.

What criteria is used to determine which students are remedial readers? Thirty, or nearly 91 per cent of the thirty-three high schools indicating that they make special provisions for remedial readers stated that standardized tests were used. The three most frequently used tests were the California Reading Test, the California Test of Mental Maturity, and the Gates Reading Survey. Other tests mentioned were used by no more than three schools. The use of mental maturity or intelligence tests to determine remedial readers is a practice which differs from that suggested by reading authorities. Their use of such tests is for diagnosis of the cause of the reading problem. Scores used to determine reading difficulties varied according to the test used, and the author believes that no conclusions can be drawn. Many schools used more

than one standardized test. The number of tests used by high schools is shown in Table I.

TABLE I
THE NUMBER OF STANDARDIZED TESTS USED BY
HIGH SCHOOLS TO DETERMINE WHICH
STUDENTS ARE REMEDIAL READERS

Number of high schools	Number of tests used
3	0
16	1
9	2
3	3
1	4
1	5
Total	33

Nearly 88 per cent, or twenty-nine of the schools making special provisions for remedial readers indicated that teacher observation was a criteria for determining which students were remedial readers. Fourteen, or slightly over 42 per cent, of the schools used performance tests. Past records acquired in grade school were stated as being used by two high schools. It was found that most high schools use more than one criteria for determining which students need help. Table II shows the number of factors used as criteria by the high schools.

TABLE II

NUMBER OF FACTORS USED AS CRITERIA BY
HIGH SCHOOLS TO DETERMINE WHICH
STUDENTS ARE REMEDIAL READERS

Number of high schools	Number of factors used
2	1
18	2
13	3
Total	33

It is evident from the above data that most high schools use standardized tests and teacher observation to determine which students are remedial readers. Performance tests are used by some schools. It is also apparent that few schools rely on only one criteria when determining which students need special help.

When remedial readers are discovered, what provisions are made for them in your school? Over 74 per cent, twenty-six high schools, of the thirty-five respondents indicated that special classes are provided for remedial readers in their regular school. Eighteen, or over 69 per cent, of those schools who offered special classes also stated that remedial readers are helped within the regular classroom as well. Only eight schools, or almost 31 per cent, of

these confine remedial reading help to special classes. Two of these schools offer the special reading classes in place of regular sophomore English. Slightly over 14 per cent, or five schools, confine remedial reading help to the regular classroom. Two, or nearly 6 per cent of the responding high schools indicated that special classes are provided for remedial readers from several schools. Two schools also indicated that remedial readers are helped individually by a special teacher. Only two of the respondents, or nearly 6 per cent, indicated that they make no provisions for remedial readers.

The most frequently used method for providing for remedial readers appears to be the provision of special classes in the regular school, a practice consistent with that found in the literature. This special help is then continued within the regular classroom. Very few districts provide special classes for remedial readers from several schools.

If special classes are provided, how are they organized? Twenty-two, or nearly 84 per cent, of the twenty-six schools providing special classes for remedial readers indicated that each child receives individual instruction and is provided materials according to his

interests and abilities. Five schools giving individual instruction also stated that one curriculum is used for all members of the class. How this is done is not clear to the researcher. Two high schools, almost 8 per cent of those providing special classes, indicated only one curriculum for all class members was used. Classes remaining intact for all studies were reported by two high schools. Twenty-three, or better than 88 per cent, of the schools providing special classes indicated that the class meets one class period each day. One high school stated that a special remedial reading class meets three times a week.

When remedial reading classes are a part of the school program it is generally the practice in the state to give each child individual instruction and to provide him with materials suited to his interests and abilities. A few high schools offer only one curriculum for all members of the class. The remedial reading classes meet daily in most schools.

If remedial readers are helped within the regular classroom, how is this done? Of the twenty-three high schools that help remedial readers in the regular classroom, fifteen, or over 65 per cent, provide study materials on various reading levels to fit the needs of remedial students. Over 78 per cent, or eighteen, of the twenty-

three schools give remedial readers assignments they are capable of completing. Special help with reading difficulties is given in nine, or over 39 per cent, of the twenty-three high schools. Slightly over 39 per cent also indicated that all teachers of all subjects are responsible for helping remedial readers. Five schools, or nearly 22 per cent, of the schools helping remedial readers give this responsibility to teachers of English. It was indicated that eleven, or nearly 48 per cent, of the schools provide special textbooks for remedial readers.

The most common practices, it appears, for helping remedial readers within the regular classroom are providing materials on various levels to fit the needs of remedial students and giving these students assignments they are capable of completing. Some schools give special help with reading difficulties and all teachers of all subjects are responsible for helping remedial readers. Only a small percentage of the high schools give the responsibility of helping remedial students to English teachers alone. It is interesting to note that nearly half of the schools provide special textbooks for remedial readers.

If special provisions are provided for remedial readers in your school, what are the effects on students?

Twenty-seven, or nearly 82 per cent, of the thirty-three schools making some provision for remedial readers indicated that these readers welcome the help. Over 88 per cent, or twenty-three, of the twenty-six high schools offering special classes indicated this. Only one school stated that feelings of inferiority develop. This was said to be true of only a few students. Nearly 73 per cent, or twenty-four, of the schools providing for remedial readers indicated that with special help the students improve their school work. Twenty-one, or nearly 81 per cent, of the high schools offering special classes said this was true. Four schools stated that occasionally students resent being assigned to remedial reading classes.

It is apparent from the results that in the majority of schools where special help is given students welcome the help and improve their school work. Very few students develop feelings of inferiority and resent being assigned to the remedial reading classes.

If special provisions are provided for remedial readers in your school, what are the effects on teachers?

Of the thirty-three schools making some provisions for remedial readers, twenty-four, or nearly 73 per cent, indicated that the remedial reading teacher enjoys the work. Five schools, or slightly over 19 per cent, that offer

special classes did not state that this was true. Three high schools said that teachers in regular classes sometimes dislike the task of teaching remedial reading. Over 45 per cent, or fifteen, of the thirty-three high schools making some remedial reading provisions indicated that teachers of all subjects realize the advantages of special provisions for remedial readers. Two schools added that when the teachers were trained in the remedial reading field they enjoyed the work. Only those who had received no special training disliked teaching remedial reading.

It would appear from the above data that the majority of teachers giving remedial reading instruction in Washington enjoy the work. Almost half of the schools indicated that all their teachers realize the advantages of special provisions for remedial readers.

If special provisions are provided for remedial readers in your school, what are the effects on parents?

Nearly 76 per cent, or twenty-five, of the schools making provisions for remedial readers indicated that parents want their children to have help with their reading. Only three, or nearly 12 per cent, of the twenty-six schools offering special classes failed to indicate this was true. Two high schools, or 6 per cent, stated that occasionally parents

dislike having their children in special classes. Slightly over 48 per cent, or 16, of the schools making special provisions indicated that parents cooperate thoroughly with the remedial reading program. Ten, or over 38 per cent, of the high schools offering special classes did not answer this question in the affirmative.

A large majority of the high schools seem to feel that parents want their children to have reading help. A smaller number of schools, however, have found that parents cooperate thoroughly with the remedial reading program. A very small percentage of parents apparently dislike having their children in special classes.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The need for continued reading instruction is a problem facing high schools today. The elementary school is unable to teach all students to read as well as they are able. Because an increasing number of boys and girls are attending high school today, the problems presented in the classroom by remedial readers is becoming greater. Writers in the field contend that special provisions should be made in the high school to give remedial readers the help they need.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current practices of high schools in the State of Washington for providing for remedial readers. It was the hope of the investigator that other schools in the state would profit from the experiences of Washington high schools sampled.

Because a study including all high schools in the State of Washington would present many difficulties, only the forty-eight first class district high schools were surveyed. The questionnaire was deemed the most practical method of securing the needed information from the widely distributed high schools. The questionnaire used consisted of five basic questions including a list of possible

responses for each. This was sent to the principal of each high school involved. The questions asked were:

1. What criteria is used to determine which students are remedial readers?

2. When remedial readers are discovered, what provisions are made for them in your school?

3. If special classes are provided, how are they organized?

4. If remedial readers are helped within the regular classroom, how is this done?

5. If special provisions are provided for remedial readers in your school, what are the effects?

- a. On students
- b. On teachers
- c. On parents

The limitations of this study must be considered when the conclusions are reviewed. These limitations are as follows: (1) Only the forty-eight first class district high schools were surveyed. (2) The questionnaire method was employed rather than the personal interview. (3) Only thirty-five of the forty-eight high schools interviewed replied. (4) Some items were answered in such a way that they had to be interpreted by the author. (5) Interpretation of the data by another investigator might differ slightly

from that of the author. (6) Variances in interpretation of the questionnaire may have occurred.

Results obtained from the study revealed that the most commonly used criteria for determining which students were remedial readers were standardized test scores and teacher observation. Performance test scores were used by some schools. Most schools used more than one factor as criteria for discovering remedial readers.

Over 74 per cent of the respondents provided special classes for remedial readers in their regular school. Over 69 per cent of these schools also helped remedial readers in the regular classroom. Slightly over 14 per cent of the responding high schools confined remedial reading help to the regular classroom.

Schools providing special classes for remedial readers indicated that the classes met one period each day, as over 88 per cent reported this to be true. It was also the practice of these schools to provide students with individual instruction and materials suited to their individual needs and abilities.

The most common practices for helping remedial readers within the regular classroom were providing materials on various levels to fit the needs of remedial students and giving these students assignments they were

capable of completing. Nearly half of the schools provided special textbooks for remedial readers.

Students in high schools making special provisions for remedial readers usually welcomed the help and improved their school work. Survey results indicated that very few students developed feelings of inferiority or resented being assigned to remedial reading classes.

A majority of the high schools reported that teachers enjoyed giving remedial reading instruction. Not quite half of the schools indicated that all teachers realized the advantages of remedial reading provisions. Why these advantages were not recognized could not be determined by the author.

While 76 per cent of the schools making special provisions for remedial readers indicated that parents wanted their children to have reading help, only 48 per cent reported that parents cooperated thoroughly with the remedial reading program. An interpretation of this difference in percentages may be made that parents failed to understand the program or that a lack of communication existed between parents and the school.

The results of this study as compared with suggestions found in the literature on remedial reading reveal that the high schools surveyed frequently follow practices

deemed desirable. The problem presented by remedial readers still exists and not all schools offer adequate solutions.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to Principals

708 East Fifth Avenue
Ellensburg, Washington
Date

Dear _____:

A study is being made in co-operation with Central Washington College of Education to compile information concerning remedial reading practices in first-class district high schools in the State of Washington.

Because only first class district high schools are being sampled, if the results are to be valid the report of each school is very important. Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated. If you desire, this questionnaire may be completed by a remedial reading teacher.

If possible, we would like to have this questionnaire returned by June 7, 1957.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely yours,

Mary E. Little

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire Used

Please check all items which apply to your high school, and feel free to comment wherever you desire.

1. What criteria is used to determine which students are remedial readers?

a. Standardized test scores _____

(1). Test or tests used

(2). Score used to determine reading difficulties

b. Teacher observation _____

c. Performance tests _____

d. Other _____

2. When remedial readers are discovered, what provisions are made for them in your school?

a. Special classes are provided for remedial readers in their regular school. _____

b. Remedial readers are helped within the regular classroom. _____

c. Special classes are provided for remedial readers from several schools. _____

d. Other _____

3. If special classes are provided, how are they organized?

- a. Each child receives individual instruction and is provided materials according to his interests and abilities. _____
- b. One curriculum is used for all members of the class. _____
- c. The class remains intact for all studies. _____
- d. The class meets only one class period each day. _____
- e. Other organizational practices _____

4. If remedial readers are helped within the regular classroom, how is this done?
- a. Study materials on various reading levels to fit the needs of remedial students are provided. _____
- b. Remedial readers are given assignments they are capable of completing. _____
- c. Special help with reading difficulties is given. _____
- d. All teachers of all subjects are responsible for helping remedial readers. _____
- e. Teachers of one specific subject are responsible for helping remedial readers. _____
- Name of subject _____
- f. Special textbooks are used for remedial readers. _____
- g. Other _____
5. If special provisions are provided for remedial readers in your school, what are the effects?
- a. On students
- (1). They welcome the help. _____

- (2). Feelings of inferiority develop. _____
- (3). Remedial readers improve their school work. _____
- (4). Students resent being assigned to remedial reading classes. _____
- (5). Other _____
- b. On Teachers
- (1). The remedial reading teacher enjoys the work. _____
- (2). Teachers dislike the task of teaching remedial reading. _____
- (3). Teachers of all subjects realize the advantages of special provisions for remedial readers. _____
- (4). Other _____
- c. On parents
- (1). They want their children to have help with their reading. _____
- (2). They dislike having their children in special classes. _____
- (3). They co-operate thoroughly with the remedial reading program. _____
- (4). Other _____