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A Practical Guide for the Classroom Teacher to Help Students Read More Efficiently with Emphasis on Speed

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EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY CENTER
CENTRAL WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE CLASSROOM TEACHER
TO HELP STUDENTS READ MORE EFFICIENTLY
WITH EMPHASIS ON SPEED

A Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

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

by
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Chapter 1

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

"We are living in a reading environment...yet no one has time to read as much as he wants to" (Smith, 1963:353). According to Karlin (1964) and Bond and Tinker (1957), the average reader reads everything at the same speed, making him an inefficient reader. To overcome these problems, Smith (1963) stated that we must devote more attention to "reading improvement in general, including a special consideration of rate in reading as a very important skill area to be cultivated" (p. 353-354).

One of the goals of education is to help students develop proficiency in the basic skill of reading. According to Jones (1971), a proficient reader is able to vary his rate of speed to suit his purpose and the content of the material. Samuels and Dahl (1975) agreed that the proficient reader has a high degree of flexibility. Tinker and McCullough (1968) stated that most students do not develop flexible speeds unless they are taught to do so. Samuels and Dahl (1975) found four studies which concluded that most students are not flexible readers. In addition, Tinker and McCullough (1968) stated that "the average reader wastes a great deal of time in unnecessarily slow reading" (p. 237), thus, the average reader is not a proficient reader.

Smith (1963) stated that there is a need to develop a program for increasing rate and flexibility. Harris (1970)

agreed, adding that "not much effective teaching to develop flexibility has taken place" (p. 483). According to Bond and Tinker (1957), if flexibility is not taught "most pupils will never acquire it" (p. 253). They also noted that a program for developing rate and flexibility needs to be carefully organized if it is to be effective. Since Spache (1962) said that basal readers do not include these skills, a program for developing rate and flexibility must be supplemental. Dechant and Smith (1977) recommended that these skills be taught in conjunction with basal readers.

Need for the Project

Since the fall of 1980, the Rainier School District has been using the Holt Basic Reading series as a basal. Teachers follow the progression of skills as presented in the teachers' manuals. In the manuals for grades four through six there are eight lessons for developing rate and flexibility. These are randomly placed in the basal with no sequential order. Tinker and McCullough (1968) stated that "all teachers should understand that training to develop flexibility must be a continuing part of the reading instruction throughout the school years" (p. 253). Since there were so few lessons, and they were lacking in sequence, there was a need to develop further lessons in helping students achieve flexible rates and increase their speed to read more efficiently.

Statement of the Project

This project was developed to supplement the Holt Basic Reading Series. One hundred seventy lessons were designed and sequenced to be used to increase reading speed and flexibility in order to develop more efficient reading.

Limitations

This project was designed 1.) to supplement the Holt Basic Reading series, 2.) for use with students in grades four, five and six, and 3.) to be used with students who have a basic knowledge of word attack and can comprehend adequately at their designated grade level.

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this paper the following terms are defined:

1. Rate of reading is the speed at which a person reads (Harris and Hodges, 1981).
2. Speed of comprehension is the rapidity with which one understands what is read, usually in silent reading (Harris and Hodges, 1981).
3. Speed reading is instruction that is focused on increasing the rate of comprehension (Harris and Hodges, 1981).
4. Flexibility is the adjustment of one's reading speed to one's purpose and the nature of the material being read. Flexibility is also affected by background and knowledge of the subject matter (Harris and Hodges, 1981).

5. Reading efficiency is the ability to achieve one's reading purpose without a waste of time or effort (Harris and Hodges, 1981).

6. The impress method is a unison reading procedure in which the teacher and student read simultaneously while following the words being read with a smooth continuous motion of the index finger (Zintz, 1966).

7. Phrase reading is reading that consists of recognizing and pronouncing word groups rather than complete sentences. It is a type of drill exercise (Good, 1959).

8. Skimming is selective reading in which the reader chooses those sentences, clauses and phrases that best serve his purposes. It is reading quickly to get a general impression, without paying attention to details. When skimming, the reader may take a quick glance at the table of contents, the index, the chapter titles, the paragraph headings, the topic sentences and the summary (Dechant and Smith, 1977).

9. Scanning is quickly locating specific information without reading the entire page (Spache and Spache, 1969).

10. Previewing is surveying the material to get an overview of something that will be read or viewed later in a different way (Harris and Hodges, 1981).

11. SQ3R is a series of steps to be used in reading a textbook for study purposes. These steps are 1.) Survey the assignment to note the points that are emphasized, 2.) pose a Question initially on the first section, later on successive sections, 3.) Read to answer the question, 4.) Recite the

answer to the question, and 5.) Review the material read (Harris and Hodges, 1981).

Summary of the Study

Chapter two will present a review of the related literature. Chapter three will give the procedures followed in completing the study. Chapter four will present the project. Chapter five will present a summary, conclusions and recommendations.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The related research will be presented under three headings: 1.) rate and speed, 2.) reading flexibility, and 3.) strategies for teaching rate and flexibility.

Rate and Speed

Harris (1970) and Bond and Tinker (1957) indicated that the comprehending reader is capable of increasing his speed. Different methods can be used to increase a reader's speed, but authorities do not agree which of the methods should be used, nor do they agree on when the training should begin. Smith (1963), Bond and Tinker (1957) and Dechant and Smith (1977) agreed that rate should be taught in conjunction with comprehension, and that the goal should be to develop flexible speeds which suit the reader's purpose and the content of the material.

Rate and Comprehension

According to Harris (1970), much has been written on the correlation between rate and comprehension. Depending on the study, the correlation has varied from high to low. Despite the conflicting results, Harris stated that any program to develop speed and flexibility must also stress comprehension. Tinker and McCullough (1968) agreed, adding that an over-emphasis on speed leads to little understanding of what is read. Robeck and Wilson (1974) also stressed that comprehension

be taught with speed, stating that "emphasis on both the understanding and the speed can increase the rate of reading by about fifty percent and maintain or increase comprehension at the same time" (p. 522). Tinker and McCullough (1968) noted that "reading without comprehension is not reading" (p. 238).

When to Begin Rate Training

Kimberley (1973), in her review of the literature, found three investigators, Huey, Buswell and Huus, who recommended that rate training be taught at the elementary level because it is at that level that slow reading habits develop. Miller (1973) agreed, stating that students of all ages have the potential to increase their reading efficiency.

Nine authorities were in agreement that training in rate and flexibility should begin in the intermediate grades (Harris, 1970; Miller, 1973; Bond and Tinker, 1957; Tinker and McCullough, 1968; Smith, 1963; Dechant and Smith, 1977). Bond and Tinker also noted that flexibility is a problem from the third grade on.

According to Tinker and McCullough (1968), rate training should not be presented in the primary grades. Harris (1970) and Dechant and Smith (1977) stated that training in rate should not be introduced until students have developed the basic skills of word recognition, vocabulary and comprehension. Spache (1964) agreed that speed should not be taught in the primary grades because of the type of eye movements that these children exhibit.

There is disagreement, and some authorities state that rate training should not be taught in the elementary grades. Carillo (1965) said that the elementary grades should be concerned with general comprehension, and rate training should be taught only after a student is reading at the sixth grade level. Kimberley (1973) found five other investigators (Koziey, Witty, Carver, Wilson, and Hall) who agreed that rate training should not be taught at the elementary level.

Harris (1970) and Tinker and McCullough (1968) stated that before a program of rate and flexibility training is begun, the student must not have problems in reading which might interfere with his progress. Purcell (1963) listed the major reading problems of college-age students as 1.) word-by-word reading, 2.) vocalizing, 3.) daydreaming, 4.) lack of flexibility, 5.) rereading, 6.) too difficult a vocabulary, 7.) clue blindness, and 8.) finger pointing. Harris (1970) added head movements and poor word recognition skills to this list. Tinker and McCullough (1968) agreed, adding poor sight vocabulary, over-emphasis on phonics, and poor phrasing to the problems which can retard speed.

These problems will be discussed in greater detail in the section on strategies at the end of this chapter.

Reading Flexibility

Carillo (1965), Smith (1963) and Kimberley (1973) stated that flexible speeds, not just an increased speed, should be the goal of any rate training program. According to Bond and

Tinker (1957), the proficient reader uses flexible speeds which are "appropriate to the kind and difficulty of the material" (p. 239). Harris (1970) noted that there is not one rate which is suitable for all types of reading.

Samuels and Dahl (1975) found that the majority of students are not flexible readers. Harris (1970) stated that the lack of flexibility may be due to a lack of training in flexibility, since "not much effective teaching to develop flexibility has taken place" (p. 483). Samuels and Dahl (1975) added that readers may also be unclear of the purpose of their reading; therefore, they do not use flexible speeds.

Robeck and Wilson (1974) stated that "most people can improve their rate effectiveness, including comprehension, by adopting a flexible attitude to reading rate" (p. 522). Lopez, Clark and Winer (1979) agreed that speed, comprehension and flexibility are related and should be taught in conjunction with each other.

Strategies for Teaching Rate and Flexibility

The Use of Tests

Harris (1970) and Tinker and McCullough (1968) stated that problems in rate are difficult to diagnose through formal testing. Harris added that "the results of rate tests are somewhat hard to interpret because they are strongly influenced by the mind-set of the reader and the nature and difficulty of the material employed" (p. 163). Tinker and McCullough (1968) noted that formal tests do not contain enough samples of the

different types of reading that students must do; therefore, the results of rate tests do not give an accurate account of a student's ability. Bond and Tinker (1957) supported the statement that formal tests have limitations and recommended that they should only be used to gain preliminary information.

According to Bond and Tinker (1957), informal tests are more useful for diagnosing problems of rate. Harris (1970) agreed, adding that they are "easy to give and should be administered from time to time as a routine procedure in reading instruction above the primary grades" (p. 150).

Informal tests can be constructed from classroom materials. Bond and Tinker (1957) stated that the selections used for informal tests should be from four hundred to eight hundred words in length, depending on the age of the students. Comprehension questions should accompany each selection, and the student should know the purpose of the reading before he begins to read it. The amount of time needed to complete the reading should be computed after the student completes the reading. Harris (1970) added that selections used should be easy for the group, uniform in difficulty and should take the average reader five to seven minutes to read. He also stated that tests should contain different types of material and different purposes, in order to give the teacher a more accurate picture of the students' abilities and areas of need.

The results of informal tests can be used to determine whether a student is ready to work on rate. Bond and Tinker (1957) stated that if comprehension is below seventy percent.

the student should not begin rate training. They added that if the student reads all types of materials at the same speed, a program in rate training is needed.

Related Problems

Harris (1970) said that problems which are related to speed need to be dealt with before a student begins rate training. These problems can be detected through direct observation of the student's reading.

According to Harris (1970) the habit of word-by-word reading develops early, perhaps as a result of too much emphasis on word recognition instead of word meaning. Bond and Tinker (1957) stated that it may be due to a vocabulary that is either too difficult or too mechanical and senseless. Carillo (1965) and Purcell (1963) noted that word-by-word reading can make it difficult for a student to understand what he reads. Thus, it is necessary to deal with this problem early.

Harris (1970) stated that before we can help the word-by-word reader it is necessary to notice whether the problem is caused by a lack of word recognition skills or if it is just a habit. If it is due to poor word recognition skills, that should be dealt with first. Ekwall (1977) noted that word-by-word reading can be detected by giving a student easier material to see if the condition persists.

Appropriate materials can help the word-by-word reader. Bond and Tinker (1957) suggested using easy, but not repetitive, materials which contain conversation. Ekwall (1977) suggested using dramatic readings, choral readings, the use of tape

recorders, and the language experience approach. Harris (1970) stated that the modeling technique, phrase reading and color-coding the punctuation can help the word-by-word reader.

Durrell (1956) stated that poor phrasing can be a result of word-by-word reading or poor word recognition skills, the latter of which should be dealt with first. He also noted that poor phrasing is indicated by "many eye movements per line, an expressionless voice and a slow rate" (p. 159). Bond and Tinker (1957) agreed, adding that "until the knack of phrasing is acquired, the child will be severely handicapped in any attempt to increase his speed of reading" (p. 382). Harris (1970) stated that there is justification for a "moderate amount of specific practice in phrase reading" (p. 415).

To deal with the problem of poor phrasing, Durrell (1956) suggested the use of phrase flash cards, material that has been divided into phrases, and reading in unison. Bond and Tinker (1957) stated that the use of easy material that contains conversation, dramatic readings, and tape recordings are effective. Amble and Kelly (1967) used the Phrase Reading Film Series successfully with fifth and sixth grade students. Harris (1970) suggested using phrase matching and bingo games, and he also discussed rewriting material into spaced phrases as an effective way to help the student who has difficulty with phrasing.

Bond and Tinker (1957) stated that the problem of vocalizing can be detected by comparing oral and silent reading times. If times are similar, the student vocalizes when he

reads. Whispering, lip movements, and vibrations which can be felt on the throat are also signs of vocalizing. They suggested three methods for alleviating the problem: 1.) bite on something while reading, 2.) inform the child of the problem, and 3.) practice reading very easy, highly interesting material. Ekwall (1977) noted that having the student hold his mouth shut with teeth firmly together and tongue against the roof of the mouth is effective for the vocalizing reader. Smith (1963) suggested placing the finger or a pencil over the lips, or holding a piece of paper between the lips.

For students who regress when reading, Harris (1970) stated that cross line exercises can be helpful if the regressions are not due to poor word recognition or poor vocabulary. He also suggested using a cover card. Durrell (1956) agreed.

Spache (1964) noted that regressions may be due to poor eye movements. Tinker and McCullough (1968) do not recommend using eye movement exercises in the classroom. They stated that good eye movements are not "fundamental contributors" to reading efficiency. Smith (1963) agreed, adding that teachers should work with the "mental processes" of reading, not eye span. Harris (1970) stated that Tinker found "no evidence to support the view that eye movements determine reading proficiency" (p. 492), and concentrating on eye movements may adversely affect rate and comprehension. Tinker and McCullough (1968) concluded that teachers should not be concerned with eye movements when teaching reading. Durrell (1956) agreed that eye movement exercises have doubtful value.

Finger pointing is another problem which can affect speed. Smith (1963) said that it can be helped by holding the book with both hands or by using a marker instead.

Head movements can also affect speed. Smith (1963) noted that they can be stopped by having the student place his chin in his hands while reading.

Strategies for Developing Rate

Smith (1963) and Harris (1970) stated that speed of reading can be increased. Tinker and McCullough (1968) agreed, adding that rate depends on "the capacity of the reader, the nature of the material, and the purpose of the reading" (p. 242-243). Smith (1963) added that the student's health and intelligence can also affect rate.

Tinker and McCullough (1968) stated that a precise standard for speed should not be set because not everyone can reach it. Bond and Tinker (1957) cautioned that "the reading should be at as fast a rate as the material can be comprehended properly" (p. 374).

According to Bond and Tinker (1957) a program to develop speed should be carefully organized. They also noted that the first step should be to overcome any interfering habits. Harris (1970) agreed. He also stated that the next step should be to motivate students to read a large amount of easy material. Carillo (1965), Karlin (1964), Labmeir and Vockell (1971), Bond and Tinker (1957), and Smith (1963), supported the statement. In motivating students, Bond and Tinker (1957) stated that there should be no fatigue or boredom, and there should be

teacher enthusiasm and high interest materials. Tinker and McCullough (1968) agreed. Harris (1970) noted that the third part of the program should be a series of timed readings which include comprehension questions and individual progress charts. The following investigators were in agreement: Carillo (1965), Jones (1971), Karlin (1964), Kimberley (1973), Thomas (1972), Dechant and Smith (1977), Ekwall (1977), Tinker and McCullough (1968), Bond and Tinker (1957), Swalm and Kling (1973), Shelton and Warner (1974), and Smith (1963). Carillo (1965) also noted the importance of having one progress chart for each type of reading that the student is timed on. He also stated that comprehension should not fall below seventy-five percent when working on timed readings. Smith (1963) stated that the student should know the purpose of the reading when he is being timed. Carillo (1965) and Bond and Tinker (1957) agreed.

Kimberley (1973) found that motivational lectures which point out the advantages of faster reading are also effective. Smith (1963), Maxwell and Mueller (1967), and Thomas (1972) were in agreement. Tinker and McCullough (1968) suggested using rewards as motivation. Raygor, Wark and Warren (1966) were successful in using a secondary reinforcer to reward faster rates.

Smith (1963) and Dechant and Smith (1977) said that learning to read in thought units can also help increase speed. Thomas (1972) used unison reading of phrases that were visually projected to increase rate.

The modeling technique was used by Hayden (1978) to improve

intonation and language patterns. Students listened to tape recorded readings as they followed along with their own copies.

Pacing is another method that can help increase speed. Ekwall (1977) suggested hand pacing. Dechant and Smith (1977) noted the use of a slotted paper to force the eyes to move ahead at a faster rate. Tinker (1967) said that pacers may be helpful to some, but not all, students because they may decrease flexibility by focusing on speed.

Tinker also stated that tachistoscopes are of questionable value in improving rate. Dechant and Smith (1977) noted that tachistoscopes may improve seeing, but not reading.

Braam and Berger (1968) found that the paperback scanning method was effective in making gains in rate and flexibility. Students were given a rate check, and then for several minutes they spent a few seconds per page of a paperback novel. At the end of this scanning period, they were again given a rate check.

A variation of the impress method was used effectively by Shennum (1975). Students listened to a speeded up version of a selection while they followed along with a printed copy. The amount of the selection that they were permitted to hear was gradually decreased, allowing them to finish the selection on their own.

Mechanical Devices

Dechant and Smith (1977) stated that the use of machines for increasing speed is of questionable value. Smith (1963) said that speed can be increased without the use of instruments. Dechant and Smith (1977) noted that while machines are motivating

to students, there is little transfer of skills to regular classroom materials. Karlin (1964) found research which stated that gains made with machines may not be as great as gains made through programs without machines.

Speed Reading Courses

Spache (1962) stated that it is impossible to read at speeds above eight or nine hundred words per minute because of the time that is needed for the eye to fixate on words. Tinker (Spache, 1964) concluded that any rate above eight hundred words per minute is skimming. Harris (1970) stated that the commercial programs which "guarantee to produce tremendous gains in rate without harm to comprehension do not publish research results, and as yet there is little evidence of a research nature concerning the real outcomes of such programs" (p. 208).

A study by Cranney (1982) supported the Reading Dynamics speed reading course; however, the experimental group was recommended by Reading Dynamics instructors instead of being randomly selected.

The research by Rauch (1971) showed that if students are familiar with the topic of a selection, it is possible to answer questions about it without actually doing the reading; thus, a high rate of speed with adequate comprehension can be recorded. Rauch said that this practice occurs in speed reading courses in order to show a gain in rate.

In summary, five investigators were found who were not in favor of speed reading courses (Harris, 1970; Smith, 1975;

Tinker and McCullough, 1968; Rauch, 1971 and Spache, 1962). One study was found to be in favor of them (Cranney, 1982).

Strategies for Developing Flexibility

Bond and Tinker (1957) stated that "the pupil who achieves good flexibility possesses a fine asset" (p. 389), but that the development of flexibility tends to be slow and difficult.

Tinker and McCullough (1968) listed three different speeds and their uses. Rapid reading is a fast clip used for easy pleasure reading. A moderate speed is used on materials of average difficulty to appreciate style and characterizations and to remember material for the purpose of retelling it. A slow speed is used when reading content material and when the purpose is to read for details, directions, or to evaluate and summarize. Harris (1970) agreed, adding skimming as a fourth type of reading, which is used for locating information quickly, answering specific questions, getting the general idea of the material or for reviewing material that has already been read. He also added that the moderate rate is used to find answers, note details and to read current events, and the slow rate is used for reading poetry and unusual vocabulary.

Bond and Tinker (1957) stated that the first step for training in flexibility should be to make students aware of the different purposes for reading. Glock (1958) and Samuels and Dahl (1975) agreed, adding that this can be accomplished by reading the same material several times, but for different purposes. Smith (1963) also agreed, noting that the readings should be timed. She stated that speeds and comprehension

scores from the readings should be compared, and the need for flexibility should be discussed. Ekwall (1977) agreed, adding that timings of this sort can be used by teachers to identify the students who are not flexible readers. Ekwall also suggested the use of a wall chart which lists the four types of reading and their uses to remind students to use flexible speeds.

Developing A Slow Speed

Harris (1970) stated that reading poetry helps students develop a slow rate of speed. He also suggested reading material with the intention of memorizing it as a method for slowing down rate. Sequence activities and outlining were also listed as effective techniques for developing a slow rate.

Dechant and Smith (1977) suggested lessons in following directions, reading to locate irrelevant details and outlining.

Ekwall (1977) stated that practice in reading science experiments and math thought problems is helpful in developing a slow rate.

Normal Rate

For practice in using a normal rate of speed, Dechant and Smith (1977) stated that reading for the main idea is helpful. They also listed selecting titles from a given list, formulating original titles, and making up headlines for news articles as effective methods.

Previewing, Skimming and Scanning

Dechant and Smith (1977) stated that "skimming and scanning are not accelerated reading" (p. 284), but instead, they are a

combination of reading and looking. They also noted that the student who is ready to learn these skills must be a flexible reader, have visual coordination, have adequate comprehension and word recognition skills, and be willing to settle for less than complete comprehension.

Spache and Spache (1964) said that it is important to teach previewing before teaching how to skim and scan because skimming is a broadened form of previewing. They noted that the first step in teaching students how to preview is to demonstrate the importance by comparing their comprehension scores on materials that were and were not previewed. After the importance has been established, they suggested that the teacher model the technique to the students. Next, the students should have practice in deciding which resources to use in order to obtain certain information. Content area materials and a time limit should be used in previewing activities. Spache and Spache also said that previewing can be used to get the main idea, make comparisons, evaluate the relevance, review material and make rapid summaries. They also stated that frequent checks and comparisons of retention with and without previewing is helpful in reminding students of the importance of this skill.

According to Spache and Spache (1969), the technique of skimming is the adding of details to the skill of previewing. Rauch and Weinstein (1968) stated that the materials which are used for skimming should be easy and familiar to the students.

Smith (1963) suggested that students practice skimming by holding their eyes in one place horizontally, while only

allowing them to move vertically. She said that practice of this sort can be done with columns of figures with an increasing number of digits. She also suggested using television schedules and materials which are written in double columns when practicing how to skim.

Ekwall (1977) suggested using phone books, dictionaries, newspapers, and encyclopedias for skimming activities. He also stated that cutting up three stories into paragraphs, mixing them up and having students sort them quickly is an effective method for practicing how to skim.

Tinker and McCullough (1968) suggested the use of the preface, table of contents, headings, and graphic representations for skimming activities. Smith (1963) agreed. Schachter (1978) also suggested the use of menus for locating information quickly.

Spache and Spache (1969) stated that timed exercises in finding details and comparisons is effective. Durrell (1956) agreed, adding that practice in locating names and dates is also helpful. He also noted that classification and sorting exercises which are timed are also effective.

Sherer (1975) suggested telegram writing as an effective way for helping students see that key words can be used to get the meaning of what is read, and it is possible to comprehend a given selection without reading every word.

The SQ3R technique uses skimming as the first of a series of steps which are used to improve comprehension.

Scanning

When learning how to scan, Spache and Spache (1969) said that students must know what they are looking for, and they must look quickly, expecting it to stand out. Then they must read carefully to verify their findings.

Smith (1963) stated that finding words, names, phrases, page numbers, and items to list under a heading are useful activities. Karlin (1964) noted that the sequence for teaching scanning should be 1.) practice in locating names and dates, 2.) practice in location phrases, and 3.) practice in locating answers to questions. Spache and Spache (1969) agreed, adding that students should also know the form in which the information will appear (italicized words, capital letters, numbers, etc.). They also stated that multiple choice or true/false questions are easier to find the answers to, and these should be used first. The skill of previewing is helpful in locating the exact part of a chapter to scan in order to find answers.

Spache and Spache (1969) concluded by stating that "all three of these techniques--previewing, skimming, and scanning--help pupils develop flexibility in rate and skill in adapting the form of reading to the reader's purpose. Flexibility results in greater comprehension, economy of study time and greater enjoyment of work-type reading" (p. 282).

Summary

Little research has been conducted in the area of rate at the elementary level. The studies that have been reported have

concluded that timed readings, phrase reading, motivational lectures, paperback scanning, and the impress method are effective techniques for increasing reading speed. The paperback scanning method was also found to be effective in developing flexibility.

The other methods and activities that have been presented in this chapter were suggested by authorities in the field of reading; however, no research was found which supported these techniques.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

Chapter three describes and outlines the project. This section includes the format of the project, which was based on research and recommendations made by authorities in the field of reading.

Focus of the Project

Flexibility and comprehension were chosen as the major areas of concentration for this project. Authorities indicated that any program for rate training should focus on these two areas. The project was developed for use in the intermediate grades because nine authorities recommended that rate training should begin at this level.

Development of the Project

Since the Holt Basic Reading Series was lacking in lessons for developing rate and flexibility, it was necessary to seek other sources. The first step in developing the project was to review the related literature to study the research that has been conducted in the area of rate and to examine the strategies for rate improvement that have been suggested by the authorities. Textbooks, journals, magazines, and materials from college courses were then reviewed to compile lesson plans using the suggested methods and activities for rate training. The format of each lesson plan contained an objective, a list of the materials needed, and the procedures for teaching the lesson.

The plans were arranged into a developmental sequence, and then they were numbered. The completed plans were placed in a three-ring notebook.

Next, the materials to be used with the lessons were compiled. Some of the materials were constructed from classroom materials. For other lessons, commercial materials were used. These materials were placed in file folders, and each was coded with the corresponding lesson plan number. The file folders were then placed in a file box for storage. Some of the commercial materials, such as the Dolch Sight Phrases and We Read Sentences (Dexter and Westbrook), were stored on classroom shelves next to the file box.

Chapter 4

THE PROJECT

Samples of the lessons prepared for the three sections in this program are included in this chapter.

WORD-BY-WORD READING
LESSON 1, DIAGNOSIS

OBJECTIVE: The student will read orally to demonstrate if he is a word-by-word reader.

MATERIALS: Informal Reading Inventories for Holt Basic Reading Series

- PROCEDURES:
1. Explain to the student that this exercise will help the teacher determine if the student has any undesirable reading habits that could interfere with his becoming a better reader.
 2. Have the student read the appropriate I.R.I. silently and then orally while teacher listens.
 3. If the student reads in a word-by-word style, not paying attention to punctuation and words that should be grouped together in phrases, have him read the I.R.I. for a lower level.
 4. If the word-by-word reading persists at the lower levels, the student should proceed with the lessons for the word-by-word reader.
 5. If the problem does not persist at the lower levels, it may be due to poor vocabulary or poor word recognition skills. The word-by-word lessons should not be used in this case.

WORD-BY-WORD READING
LESSON 2

OBJECTIVE: The student will listen to a recording of his reading for the purpose of self-evaluation.

MATERIALS: Tape recorder, easy reading material

- PROCEDURES:
1. Explain to the student that the purpose of this exercise is to evaluate his reading to determine how it can be improved.
 2. Using easy reading material, have the student read it silently.
 3. Next, have the student read it orally into the tape recorder.
 4. Listen to the recording with the student.
 5. Discuss with the student his feelings about the way his reading sounds. Try to get him to notice the word-by-word manner in which he reads.
 6. Point out how reading in this manner slows him down and can have a negative effect on comprehension. Tell him that the following lessons will help him overcome the problem.
 7. Proceed with lesson 3.

WORD-BY-WORD READING
LESSON 3

OBJECTIVE: The student will listen to recorded samples of himself reading and talking and compare the difference between them.

MATERIALS: Tape recorder, easy reading material

- PROCEDURES:
1. Explain to the student that the purpose of this exercise is to compare the way he reads with the way he talks. Point out that reading material is talk that has been written down, and when we read we should try to make our reading sound like talk.
 2. Record a short conversation between the teacher and the student.
 3. Direct the student to read a page of his book silently.
 4. Have the student read the same page orally into the tape recorder.
 5. Listen to both of the recordings with the student.
 6. Discuss which one sounds more like actual talking. Remind the student that reading is talk that has been written down, and he should try to make his reading sound like actual talk.

WORD-BY-WORD READING
LESSON 4

- OBJECTIVE: The student will turn a spoken conversation into written form and read it orally.
- MATERIALS: Paper, pencils
- PROCEDURES:
1. Discuss with the student that reading is really talk that has been written down. This exercise will help him see the relationship between reading and actual talk.
 2. Demonstrate to the student how to write down a short conversation and turn it into reading material. Read the conversation to the student after it has been written down.
 3. Direct the student and a partner to compose a short conversation. Have them write it down.
 4. Instruct the student to practice reading the conversation silently.
 5. After adequate practice time, have the student read the conversation orally to the teacher.
 6. Remind the student that reading is actually talk that has been written down, and because of this, we should try to make our reading sound like talk. Discuss how we group words into phrases when we talk. We do not talk in a word-by-word manner, and we should not read in that manner either.

INCREASING SPEED
EASY READING

OBJECTIVE: The student will increase his reading speed by spending fifteen minutes per day reading easy fiction.

MATERIALS: Easy library books, Sprint Series, Monster Books, Daily progress record, questions based on Bloom's Taxonomy

- PROCEDURES:
1. Explain to the students that the purpose of this lesson is to increase reading speeds by practicing fifteen minutes per day using easy books. Point out that everyone can increase their reading speeds. Discuss some of the advantages of faster reading.
 2. Set aside a time each day to practice reading easy fiction. The amount of practice time should be fifteen minutes.
 3. Have the students keep a daily record of the number of pages read each day.
 4. Work to increase the number of pages read during the practice time.
 5. Set aside a time on a weekly basis for the students to share books that they have enjoyed reading with the class.
 6. When students complete a book, have them answer the first question and two others from the appropriate folder, depending on the type of book he read.

VARIATIONS:

1. Book "Sale"---"Sell" books to classmates. Give an oral book report, and try to get someone else to read the book. Receive bonus points for each person who reads the book after listening to the "sales pitch."

2. List books read by each student on pieces of paper that have been cut into the shape of a body segment for a "reading dragon." Build the dragon on a classroom wall.

from Smith (1963)

INCREASING SPEED
TIMED READINGS

- OBJECTIVE: The student will increase his reading speed using timed readings with comprehension questions.
- MATERIALS: Stories and questions from Controlled Reader Study Guide, levels A-F
- PROCEDURES:
1. Explain to the student that the purpose of this lesson is to help him increase his reading speed while maintaining or increasing his comprehension.
 2. Determine the appropriate study guide level for each student. Use the level which is one or two grades below his reading level.
 3. Teach the student how to figure the number of words in the story by using the steps listed on the formula page at the beginning of this section.
 4. Show the student how to copy down the time needed to read the story. Tell him that the teacher will record the time on the chalkboard, and he is to copy down the time shown on the board when he completes his reading.
 5. Direct the student to read the story, copy down the time, and complete the comprehension questions.
 6. Have all students begin at the same time.
 7. Record the time that has elapsed every fifteen seconds.
 8. When all students have completed the reading and the questions, correct the answers to the questions.
 9. Show the student how to figure his rate using the formula for words per minute that is given on the formula page at the beginning of this section.

10. Have the student record his rate and comprehension percentage on a progress chart.
11. Repeat this lesson once or twice weekly, using a different story each time. Try to improve rate while maintaining or increasing comprehension.

INCREASING SPEED
PHRASE READING

OBJECTIVE: The student will increase his reading speed with daily practice of phrase reading in unison.

MATERIALS: Two-and-three-word sight phrases (Dolch), phrases taken from basals that are one or two levels below the reading level of the student

- PROCEDURES:
1. Explain to the student that the purpose of this lesson is to increase his reading speed by reading phrases in unison. Remind him that correct phrasing improves fluency, speed and comprehension.
 2. Demonstrate for the student how to read some of the phrases.
 3. Direct the students to read some of the phrases in unison with the teacher.
 4. Show the phrase cards to the students, and instruct them to read them in unison, with emphasis on grouping the words together correctly.
 5. Gradually, show the cards at a faster pace to encourage faster reading.
 6. Practice reading twelve different cards per day for five or ten minutes.

DEVELOPING FLEXIBLE SPEEDS
LESSON 1, DIAGNOSIS

OBJECTIVE: The student will demonstrate his ability to read with flexible speeds by reading three types of reading material using different speeds for each one.

MATERIALS: Three selections with comprehension questions (The selections should be from three different types of reading material, such as a novel, a social studies book and a basal reader.)

- PROCEDURES:
1. Explain to the student that the purpose of this lesson is to determine if he varies his reading speed when he reads different types of material.
 2. Direct the student to read the first selection. Tell him that he will be timed, and he is to write down the time that appears on the chalkboard when he finishes. Then he is to answer the comprehension questions over that selection.
 3. As the student reads, write down the time that has elapsed every fifteen seconds on the chalkboard.
 4. Repeat steps 2 and 3, using the other two selections.
 5. Compare the times and the comprehension scores for each type of reading. Discuss the differences, if any, with the student.
 6. If the comprehension scores are below 75%, do not proceed with the lessons for developing flexible speeds. Instead, work to improve comprehension.
 7. If the comprehension scores are 75% or better and the times for reading each selection are similar, go on to lesson #2.

8. If comprehension scores are 75% or better and the times for reading the different selections are varied, then no further instruction on flexibility is needed.

from Smith (1963)

DEVELOPING FLEXIBLE SPEEDS
LESSON 2

- OBJECTIVE: The student will read two types of passages and determine the appropriate speed to use for reading each one.
- MATERIALS: Easy novels, science books
- PROCEDURES:
1. Explain to the student that the purpose of this lesson is to understand the need for using different speeds when reading different types of materials.
 2. Direct the class to read a three-hundred word passage from their easy novels. Use the formula given at the beginning of the section on increasing speed to figure the number of words.
 3. Tell the class that they are to copy down their times from the chalkboard as they finish.
 4. As the class is reading, write down the times on the chalkboard every fifteen seconds.
 5. Repeat steps 2, 3, and 4 using a science book.
 6. Find the average times for the class, using each type of reading.
 7. Compare the difference. Discuss why it took longer to read one of the books. Point out the need for using different speeds when reading different types of materials. Discuss why a fast speed would not be appropriate for reading the science book. (It would lower comprehension.) Discuss why a slow speed would not be appropriate for reading an easy novel. (It would not be an efficient use of time.)

from Smith (1963)

DEVELOPING FLEXIBLE SPEEDS
LESSON 3

OBJECTIVE: The student will establish his purpose for reading in order to determine the appropriate speed to use.

MATERIALS: New Practice Readers (Grover and Anderson)

- PROCEDURES:
1. Explain to the student that the purpose of this lesson is to learn how to establish a purpose for reading in order to choose a speed that is appropriate for that particular type of reading. Point out that efficient readers use flexible speeds for reading. They do not read everything at the same speed.
 2. Using the New Practice Readers, determine the appropriate level for each student. Have them use a level that is one or two grades below their reading level.
 3. Direct the students to read the first story with the purpose of looking for details. Discuss the speed that would be appropriate for this type of reading (slow). Tell the students that they will be timed, and they will be required to answer some comprehension questions when they complete the reading. Remind them to copy down the time from the chalkboard when they complete the reading.
 4. As the students read, write down the time on the chalkboard every fifteen seconds.
 5. Direct the students to read the second story in the New Practice Readers to get a general overview. Discuss the speed that would be appropriate for this type of reading (fast). Discuss the use of key words in reading to get a general overview. Time the reading.
 6. Again, as the students read, write down the times.

7. After the students have completed both stories and the comprehension questions for each one, discuss the differences in times (if any). Also discuss the fact that using different speeds for different types of reading is more efficient than using only one speed for all types of reading. Remind the students that efficient readers vary their speeds according to their purpose and the type of materials they are reading.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to the related literature that was reviewed for this project, the research that has been conducted in the area of rate at the elementary level is limited; however, authorities agreed that rate is an important skill that needs to be taught. The literature revealed that of the research that has been completed, timed readings, motivational lectures and phrase reading were found to be effective methods for increasing reading speed. Authorities agreed that all rate training programs should emphasize comprehension, not just speed. The ultimate goal of the rate training program should be the development of flexible speeds which suit the purpose and the content of the material. The authorities suggested different methods for increasing speed and developing flexible speeds; however, no research was found which substantiated those techniques.

The purpose of this project was to develop a sequenced program of lessons for increasing reading efficiency at the elementary level. It was designed to be used with the Holt Basic Reading Series, since this series was lacking in lessons on rate.

One hundred seventy lessons were developed and categorized into three major groups: 1.) Problems to Overcome Before Beginning a Rate Training Program, 2.) Methods for Increasing Reading Speed, and 3.) Methods for Developing

Flexible Reading Speeds. The lesson plans were placed in a three-ring notebook for storage.

A file of materials was also developed. This file contained worksheets and dittoed stories to be used with certain lessons.

Three conclusions were formulated as a result of this project. First, the lessons in the project need to be evaluated to test their effectiveness in improving reading speed, since most of them are based on suggested methods, not actual research. Next, the materials file needs to be expanded to include lessons that are appropriate for a wider ability range. Third, this project needs to be revised and expanded as more research in the area of rate at the elementary level becomes available.

It is recommended that this project be used with students in the intermediate grades, although some of the lessons in overcoming problems could be used at the primary level to eliminate certain bad habits before they become well established. It is also recommended that the lessons in the project be evaluated in terms of their effectiveness, and those lessons which are found to be ineffective should be eliminated or revised. The project should be expanded to include new methods as research to substantiate them becomes available. Variations of the methods contained in the project could also be developed to provide more variety in the lessons. Finally, it is recommended that the project be shared with intermediate grade teachers for use in their classrooms. These lessons.

could be used once or twice weekly in place of, or in conjunction with, the regular basal program in order to help each student become a more efficient reader.

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