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A Study of What an Elementary Principal Should Know about the First Grade Reading Program

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A STUDY OF WHAT AN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL
SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE FIRST GRADE
READING PROGRAM

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

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

by
James Edward Devine
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

One of the crucial functions of the school is instruction. It follows that administrative leadership should be concerned with this primary goal. Administrative leadership must possess a sound philosophy of education and an understanding of the teaching-learning process (12:55).

Estes and Dalton stated that:

The principal's major task becomes that of upgrading the factor which most markedly affects the learner; he must make it possible for the teacher to grow on the job and to want to continue to grow (22:172).

According to Estes and Dalton, the principal must be both a leader and a supervisor--a leader in professional growth and a supervisor of instruction (22:173-74).

Of all curriculum subjects that call for supervisory attention, reading holds the highest priority, since it influences both current and subsequent learning (50:375). No one would deny that, in our present culture, reading is a basic tool of communication, and that, in the field of education, it is the principle vehicle of learning. It is properly looked upon as an essential of the educative process; it is an indispensable factor in the teaching of nearly every part of the curriculum (62:95).

A primary concern of every elementary school is the quality of reading instruction. The most obvious goal of reading instruction is to teach children to read with comprehension at rates appropriate to the material (12:55).

A principal can and should be the key person in the improvement of reading instruction. However, Glen Burnette states that:

It is unfortunate but true that the weakest point in many splendid school reading programs is the untrained or disinterested administrator. Behind most successful programs in our public schools are administrators who have knowledge of the objectives of the program, teaching requirements, techniques, are interested in the results, and give impetus to the over-all program! In other words the administrator is an important element in any good reading program. Unless this element is a positive one, the children will not read as well as they otherwise might, although it is not true that the responsibility lies wholly with the administrator, nor that some quite acceptable reading programs do not exist in some less-than-ideal administrative situations (10:27).

In accordance with this idea, Gray points out other serious difficulties in obtaining improvement in reading results due to administrators:

1. Unwillingness to cooperate in constructive work
either because they are too busy with routine responsibilities or are self-satisfied and not interested.
2. Limited knowledge of current trends in teaching reading.

3. Inadequate or inefficient experience in supervision.

Without stimulating leadership, most teachers are unable to make satisfactory progress in reading instruction (25:19-20).

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Since most formal reading instruction begins in the first grade, it was the purpose of this study to provide elementary principals with information on certain phases of the first grade reading program. Those phases seen as important to this study include basic methods, skills, materials, and evaluation procedures used in teaching reading.

II. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

It is recognized that not all principals are reading specialists, but any principal does need to know enough about the development of reading proficiency to select competent consultants, resource personnel, and qualified teachers; to organize his school program; to provide effective reading instruction; and to help his staff grow continually in their ability to teach reading effectively through study groups, workshops, faculty meetings, and individual and group conferences (3:3).

A good principal is considered the key person to set the stage for improving instruction. Therefore, the principal is usually the first person contacted by the teacher who feels a need for help (57:187).

Richard M. Bossone states that "the principal has three major duties in his role in the reading program; he must be a coordinator, a supervisor, and a promoter of the program" (9:277).

As a coordinator, the principal must assume leadership in building a philosophy upon which the reading program will be based. In developing this philosophy he must coordinate the knowledge and efforts of his entire staff. This philosophy must define the skills needed in the reading act and the levels at which they are taught most successfully, the place of basic reading, extended reading, and the place and extent of developmental and remedial reading work.

The principal as a coordinator must show a continuing interest and enthusiasm toward the total reading program in order to gain staff enthusiasm and support. According to Bossone this can be accomplished by:

1. Making himself more knowledgeable about reading by studying recent research studies, etc.
2. Learning about reading instruction going on in the school via classroom visits and teacher conferences.
3. Expressing appreciation of effective teaching.
4. Interpreting data pertaining to reading.

5. Working cooperatively (rather than as a dominating force) with the staff at meetings.
6. Developing with staff an inservice program.
7. Creating an atmosphere in the school building that reflects the importance of reading via book displays, good reading specialists and a good library (9:277).

As a supervisor the principal must make clear to his teachers that his major purpose is to help them be more effective teachers. To do this he must have a thorough understanding of what constitutes a good reading lesson so he can intelligently make suggestions to teachers. Without such information he is unable to let teachers know what is expected of them (9:278).

In addition, the principal, as the promoter of the reading program, has the responsibility of keeping the public informed of the school's endeavors to teach reading effectively. When the public understands and appreciates the school's reading program, it is usually ready to support and praise the school as a whole (9:278).

III. LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the first grade because this is usually the level where initial formal reading instruction takes place.

Another limiting factor was the number of essential facets of the reading program included in this study.

Because the field of reading encompasses such a wide scope, it was deemed impossible to incorporate all aspects. Consequently, the facets of reading included in this study were basic methods, skills, materials, and evaluation procedures.

The writer's background and preparation in the reading field also must be considered as a limiting factor in this study.

CHAPTER II

READING AND READINESS DEVELOPMENT

I. READING AS A PROCESS

To say that reading is getting meaning from the printed page tends to be misleading. DeBoer and Dallmann, as well as other authorities in the field of reading, agree that there is no meaning on the printed page--only ink. Meaning is in the reader's mind. The marks or symbols arouse some image or concept that is already in the mind of the reader based on the background of experience he has had. According to Artley (3:3) and DeBoer and Dallmann (14:17), reading involves the comprehension and interpretation of meaning symbolized by written language and a reconstruction of the writer's feelings, mood, and sensory impressions.

Somewhat in agreement, Smith and Dechant point out:

Reading is a perceptual rather than merely a sensory process and, as such, it includes more than mere recognition of words. Neither printed pages nor orally spoken words transmit meaning. The essence of meaning comes from the reader's fund of experience. Reading includes thinking as well as understanding (51:20).

For the purpose of this study the definition of reading given by Paul McKee was accepted:

Reading is essentially the translating of printed symbols into the oral language for which they stand.

It is not the sounding out of an individual word but the recognizing of what is being said by a sequence of words (40:1).

McKee implies that true reading is not just a single word or a collection of words with no meaning, but rather words that are used together to communicate an idea--an idea that could be used in oral communication as well. In most cases a child comes to school familiar with spoken forms and meanings of words that he will encounter in beginning reading. Therefore, the child must use his background of experiences in oral communication to help him unlock the coded form that is represented by print.

For an individual to read, certain processes must be carried out. McKee notes three major acts:

1. Identifying and recognizing printed words quickly and accurately.
2. Arriving at an adequate understanding of the meaning intended by the writer.
3. Making use of the meaning arrived at (39:12).

In agreement with McKee's concepts, William K. Durr reports that:

Reading for the first grade child at its simplest level is a process which involves looking at a group of marks, thinking the word sound that those marks stand for and recognizing the meaning for that word sound. Therefore, the first grade child's initial job is to translate word and symbols into word and sentence sounds and meanings (18:1).

Success of the reading process not only depends on what the reader brings to the printed page and the questions he asks, but also his readiness to read.

II. READING READINESS

It is generally recognized that a large number of children experience bitter disappointment, frustration, or failure in the first grade because of the lack of sufficient reading readiness development. This is clearly pointed out by Hester's statement that "the degree of readiness a person has for tasks undertaken in life has a direct relationship to the amount of success with which he meets" (31:16).

What is reading readiness? Newton defines it as "a state of general maturity which, when reached allows a child to read without excess difficulty" (43:56).

According to Miles A. Tinker:

A child is ready to read when he has attained a certain stage of mental maturity and possesses a background of experience and the personal and social adjustment which makes it possible for him to progress at a normal rate in learning to read when exposed to good classroom teaching (58:24).

While in agreement with Newton and Tinker, Spache adds:

There is more to readiness than the vague term "maturity" or pre-reading training. Readiness also includes the planned experiences intended to prepare the child for various reading tasks as well as to help him to continue to grow to meet new demands. It is intended to ready the child to learn new words in a

certain selection, to absorb new ideas or attitudes, to enjoy the material, and to comprehend thoroughly Therefore, readiness, in the largest sense, is a continuous process during the entire reading program, although it receives its greatest emphasis during the beginning school years (54:33-34).

In addition, Spache strongly feels that much must be done in schools to improve reading readiness programs because children differ in their rate of development. Therefore, it is necessary to adjust the readiness program to fit these individual differences.

It is the school's job to attempt to identify these differences as early as possible and to do everything in its power to improve them in order that every child will begin reading with success. When schools accept the fact there are differences in readiness, they will have the following responsibilities: to measure these differences, to determine standards of development, and to provide training which will enhance development of those areas identified (54:34-35). However, schools must be aware that "readiness to read does not occur at a certain point in a child's development in the sense that a child is ready to read one day but not the day before" (54:46).

The reading readiness period at the first grade level gives children the background for beginning reading, which includes perceiving sounds in spoken words, learning letter names and forms, acquiring the beginnings

of a sight vocabulary, and further development of social, emotional, and psychological readiness. Some children will acquire these abilities adequately for first grade reading before coming to school. The kindergarten experience will help in readiness training, but much will rest upon the first grade teacher in the first several months of school (20:23-25).

Selma Herr recognized the readiness period as one which develops auditory and visual awareness so the child will be able to see the differences in letters and words and to notice the sounds of letters. She lists an orderly sequence of skills specifically for the readiness period:

A. Auditory

1. Listening to sounds, stories, records, poems, rhythms and music.
2. Listening to words that begin alike and identifying them.
3. Listening to words that have the same ending sounds and identifying them.
4. Listening to rhyming words and identifying them.

B. Visual

1. Looking at pictures and naming the objects according to the beginning sounds, such as naming all the objects in the picture that begin like the word "cat."
2. Matching pictures that have the same initial sound.
3. Matching pictures that have the same final sound.
4. Matching pictures that have the same rhyming endings.
5. Recognizing similarities in letters of the alphabet (30:12).

Durrell concurs with the first grade activities suggested by Herr; however, he emphasizes the importance of diagnosing the auditory and visual aspects of readiness to determine a child's strengths and weaknesses:

1. Fitting instruction to learning rate for words.

Testing will indicate that some pupils are ready to learn and to start reading; others will need to start more slowly.

2. Teaching the forms and names of letters. Testing will also indicate which pupils know letter names, which can only match letter forms, and which cannot.

3. Teaching the child to hear the sound structure of words. Tests of the need for ear training will enable the teacher to provide advance instruction for the faster learners, the essential background for the average learners, and the beginning skills for pupils who have no ear for sounds in words (20:23-25).

In choosing among the various published reading readiness tests, Robinson and Hall advise that teachers and administrators select the readiness tests which measure the traits and skills they consider important in reading or the process of learning to read. A test should not be too easy nor too difficult for the group. Readiness tests are given

to differentiate between the ready and unready pupils. This will not be accomplished if the test is too hard or too easy for the majority (32:265).

III. READINESS FACTORS

For a child to profit from instruction, he must possess certain factors essential to the learning process.

Perceptual Development

Perceptual development is an important factor in learning. As soon as the child can give meaning to his sense experiences (visual, auditory, tactile, and kinaesthetic), perception has begun. A good development of perceptual abilities will help him recognize likenesses and differences in pictures, form, colors, letters, numbers, words, phrases, sentences, and sounds (7:330-31).

Smith and Dechant state that:

In reading, an adequate response demands much more than the mere recognition of the meaning of the configuration of the written word. It requires interpretation through some mediating process that can utilize whatever we see, taste, hear, smell, touch--everything to which we react through our senses. In reading, the critical element is not what is seen on the page but, rather, what is signified by the written symbol (51:23).

Intellectual Development

Because reading is a thinking process, intelligence is a very important factor and determinant of reading

readiness and reading achievement. Reading skill and the background necessary for the reading process must be learned. There appears to be a great deal of controversy over the mental age at which a child is ready to read.

In some Scandinavian countries, such as Sweden, school law says a child must start school when he is seven. By using special school readiness tests, any child considered too immature for school can be kept home until he is eight. By the same token, any child who is well matured and functioning at a mental age of seven may start school before he is seven years old. Swedish psychologists and reading specialists feel they have enough evidence to back up their opinions that the late beginning age is one important contributing cause for the relative low number of reading disabilities at the elementary school level in Sweden (37:22-28).

On the other hand, children in Great Britain begin school at the age of five in the six-year primary school. (42:15-19).

Gates, as reported by Smith and Dechant, points out that:

Statements concerning the necessary mental age at which a pupil can be entrusted to learn to read are essentially meaningless. The age for learning to read under one program or with the method employed by one teacher may be entirely different from that required under other circumstances (51:90).

Some authorities suggest the mental age of six and one-half as optimal for reading readiness. Nevertheless, Smith and Dechant warn that:

The evidence concerning intellectual development and readiness to read cautions us that no single index can guarantee success in reading. The child's wants, interests, and attitudes, and his levels of physiological maturation may be at least as important as his level of mental development in determining whether or not he will learn to read (51:91).

Sex Differences and Maturational Factors

Studies conducted by reading authorities indicate that girls do better than boys in reading achievement. Girls appear to learn to read earlier and suffer fewer reading disabilities. Holding all other factors equal, a girl will usually have a one-half to one year maturity advantage over a boy the same age.

Background of Personal Experiences

Smith and Dechant state that "experience provides the basis for all educational development" (51:96).

It is generally recognized that the greater the child's experiences the greater are his chances to have success in reading.

When a child reads, he must be able to interpret the intended meaning from the printed page; he can do this only in terms of his own experience. An environment which fails to stimulate the perceptual growth of a child cannot always

be changed, and the task falls upon the school to give such a child many experiences through pictures, stories, group trips, and other activities.

Language Development

Language is the basis for hearing, seeing, taking meaning from words, and most important, it is the basis of the thinking process.

Harris believes that the major aspects of language that are significant for reading readiness are: the child's vocabulary, the child's mastery of sentence structure, and his clarity of pronunciation (51:102-03).

Harris implies that children tend to want to read words as they hear them and say them.

On the other hand, Artley feels that before the child begins to read, he should have special preparation in the following language areas:

1. Developing awareness of oral words as language units.
2. Enriching oral vocabulary.
3. Strengthening meaning associations.
4. Formulating sentences.
5. Organizing ideas into language units.
6. Using narrative expressions.
7. Improving articulation.
8. Developing sensitivity to inflectional variants.
9. Developing awareness of sentence structure.

Artley also believes that these can be carried on as an integral part of the reading readiness program. Not all children will have equal proficiency in the areas cited above due to environmental factors, intelligence, and background of experiences (51:321-28).

Auditory and Visual Discrimination

These two factors are often recognized as the most important in predicting reading success.

Auditory discrimination, as defined by Spache, . . . refers to the ability to hear likenesses and differences among letter sounds as they occur in words. Pupils with normal auditory discrimination are able to detect that words begin or end with the same sound, that they rhyme, that they contain a given sound, and that they are composed of a sequence of sounds in a certain order. These abilities enable the normal pupil to match his pronunciation of an unknown printed word with his auditory memory of the word (54:42).

Smith and Dechant feel that the auditory factors may bear as close a relationship as the visual factors. They have indicated that imperfect hearing causes confusion for the child in discriminating among words and their meanings.

Raymond Carr relates that:

Any substantial loss of hearing which exists at birth or occurs soon thereafter will hinder both language development and the establishment of adequate speech habits. Two factors are responsible. First, the hearing loss reduces sharply the number of listening experiences that the child has and thus slows up the process of learning to talk. Second, losses of certain types make it impossible for the child to distinguish some of the elements in speech. No child will learn to

pronounce distinctions he does not hear, unless, of course, he has special guidance (51:135).

Smith and Dechant state that "reading begins with a visual stimuli; the eyes bring the stimuli to the reader The reader must react visually to the graphic symbols" (51:120).

It is generally recognized that the child must attain a certain level of visual maturation before he is ready to read. Emmett Betts points out that visual efficiency means three things in the school:

First, the child must be able to see clearly at all working distances Second, the child must be able to see singly at all working distances Third, the child must be able to see singly and clearly for periods of sustained attention (7:131-32).

Spache, however, refers to visual discrimination as a skill derived from or based on the physical handling of objects. The child learns shapes and spatial relationships with his hands, his mouth, and eventually, with his eyes. In reading, a child depends on tactile clues and visual experience with objects, forms, and spatial relationships (51:40-41).

Spache continues, explaining that a child with visual discrimination problems has difficulties in various ways:

(1) He lacks visual discrimination or perception; (2) he lacks hand-eye coordination; (3) he lacks orientation to left and right (reversals, inversions, letter confusions); (4) he can't sit still long enough while

working at near-point tasks; (5) he can't concentrate or has a short attention span; (6) he can't read without pointing or using a marker (54:40).

Health and Freedom from Neurological Disturbances

Because a child's health affects his vitality and physical performance, it plays an important part in reading readiness.

Smith and Dechant point out that physical problems may result in mental or at least cultural retardation. Fatigue can make it difficult to enjoy and become interested in a reading task; attention suffers and comprehension is certain to be lowered. As nervous tension due to experiences of failure build up, disinterest, disgust, and even reading disability may result. In addition, illness may cause the child to miss school and thus miss important phases of instruction.

Neurological disturbances, possibly brain damage or some other form of neurological disfunction, may affect the child's success in reading. Speech, vision, and hearing are controlled by certain parts of the brain. If any one of these areas is damaged, success in reading would be hampered. Therefore, a healthy child, free from neurological disturbances, will have a better chance to achieve success in reading (51:Ch. III).

Attitudes and Motivation--Interests in and Desire for Reading

No matter what reading method is presented to the beginning reader, if he lacks motivation or the proper attitude for reading, success will be doubtful. Smith and Dechant point out that:

To become a "reader" the child must first find in reading a satisfaction for his needs for self-esteem, the esteem of others, security, and new experiences. We know that reading proficiency builds reading interest and, in turn, reading interest fosters reading proficiency. One must understand to be interested, and when one is interested he strives to understand (51:289).

Social and Emotional Development

Reading success can be hindered if a child has not attained sufficient social and emotional development. A child must be accepted by his peers as well as by himself. The latter is often called self-esteem. The child must have a sufficient amount of self-esteem and a satisfaction of the need of feeling adequate. This can be accomplished through finding success in some area, as success gives the child a feeling of self-worth.

Failure to have self-esteem, to be rejected by his peers, fear, or lack of security can foster abnormal emotional development which may block his success in learning to read (51:Ch. II).

IV. SUMMARY

Abundant evidence indicates that children differ in rate of learning and learning capacity. For example, Hildreth points out that children entering the first grade differ a year or more in mental age (32:18).

Although readiness is a continuing process throughout the grades, it is significantly important in first grade, because this is when formal reading usually begins. However, there has been criticism by some reading authorities because teachers have a tendency to hold all children in a readiness program in the first grade, when many of them are ready to start reading immediately (52:468). Principal and teacher should be concerned that all children receive the best possible start in reading.

The innumerable activities suitable for the reading readiness program and the many skills and techniques to be developed in preparation for reading provide the possibilities for a broad pre-reading program that will help the children sense the meaning of reading and create a desire on their part to read and work with books. The first-grade program must at all times be geared to continued development in training in listening, training eye and ear readiness, and using pictures and literature to develop continuity in thought and comprehension of context. By presenting a varied and well-integrated reading readiness program, the first-grade teacher is assured of a minimum of reading failures (32:291).

CHAPTER III

SKILLS TO BE DEVELOPED IN THE FIRST GRADE

Miles Tinker has stated:

The introduction to and the progress in reading during the first grade provides the foundation for later reading. To a large degree, satisfactory progress at the higher level depends upon the acquisition of an adequate foundation in the first grade (58:125-26).

The discussion in this chapter concerns the acquisition of those skills which will provide the foundation for later reading: word recognition skills, comprehension skills, oral and silent reading skills, and locational skills.

Word recognition skills generally receive prime concern at the beginning of formal instruction. Smith and Dechant point out that "although comprehension is the primary goal of reading instruction, word recognition is prerequisite" (51:191).

William Gray cites:

The ultimate goals in word perception are (1) to bring to the level of instantaneous perception a maximum number of highly useful words that are common to different types of materials that a child wants and needs to read and (2) to develop understandings, skills, and abilities that enable him to attack unfamiliar words independently and thus be on his own in reading (26:31).

Effective word recognition skill is not solely dependent on any one skill but employs any one or any

combination of the following techniques: context clues, sight words, picture clues, phonetic elements, and structural analysis (8:13). Tinker would agree with this statement:

No single technique should be overemphasized or sighted. The child should know how to use each clue or technique and how to choose an appropriate clue or combination of clues and techniques to unlock a word in a particular situation (58:132).

McKee (39:205-6) and Durr (18:1), as well as other reading authorities, agree that the child comes to school already possessing certain aspects he needs in learning to read.

Durr suggests that every word in our language possesses three aspects: (1) its pronunciation, (2) its meaning, and (3) its printed form. Two of these aspects, Durr suggests, are already possessed by the child--meaning and pronunciation. His analysis was based on the premise that pre-reading experiences have been mostly listening to others and through this process the child has accumulated hundreds of words which he recognizes when he hears them spoken and uses them himself when he talks with others. Furthermore, he has a fairly thorough understanding of the meanings of these words. These words constitute his listening vocabulary and he needs only to associate the printed form with the words he already knows (18:1).

I. RECOGNITION OF WORDS AS SIGHT WORDS

The first basic skill a child usually learns is based on his early pre-reading experiences of hearing and saying words. The sight word method teaches children to recognize words as whole in context, thus developing an initial sight vocabulary. Early success in reading depends on the child's mastery of an initial stock of sight words. Gray suggests that sight words help the child to read the pre-primer and primers more fluently. Knowledge of sight words also help him to gain a better understanding of the relationship between letters and sounds (phonetic analysis) and the function of root words, inflectional endings, prefixes, and suffixes.

Gray makes it clear that sight words should be presented to children in the primary and upper elementary grades. A child should not be expected to attack independently new words such as aisle, whose, and cough if he has not developed the prerequisite skills of phonetic and structural analysis and the new words do not lend themselves to word analysis. Teachers should also present words whose pronunciation and meaning are likely to be unfamiliar (26:18-22). Gray and Reese (24:316), Tinker (58:130), McKee (39:8), Dolch (17:250), and Durrell (20:70) generally agree that sight words have a place in initial reading instruction.

They do not agree, however, on the number of words that should be taught before beginning phonic instruction.

Generally recognized for his work with basic sight vocabulary, Dolch, in Teaching Primary Reading, presents "The Basic Sight-Vocabulary of 220 Words in a Single Alphabet" (17:267).

II. CONTEXT CLUES

According to Gray, "Context clues are perhaps the most important single aid to word perception" (26:25). Regardless of how long the child takes to unlock the pronunciation, a word must do one thing--make sense in the sentence.

Gray explains further that the reader who uses context clues demands meaning from the printed page.

The use of context clues is based on two understandings of language: (1) a word may have more than one meaning (and pronunciation); (2) meaning (and sometimes pronunciation) must be determined in light of context (26:23).

Gray also points out that many of our words depend on context for their meanings (26:23).

Basically, the use of context clues helps the child avoid the habit of word-by-word reading by seeing the word, not as a part, but as a member of a large unit. McKee points out that context clues are helpful only if:

1. the context contains definite clues to the identity of the words;
2. the child already knows the meaning and can go from the context to the pronunciation; or
3. the pupil already knows the pronunciation of the word and needs only to associate the familiar pronunciation with the strange form (39:238).

Tinker (58:136) and Gray (26:24) both would agree with McKee's statements. The successful use of context clues depends on the material selected. This material must contain words, sentence patterns, and modes of thinking present in the child's experience background (58:135-38).

Since context clues are based on getting meaning from what is read and using this meaning to unlock the identity and meaning of unfamiliar words, one should exercise care in not allowing the use of context clues to become mere random "word guessing" (60:10). Tinker suggests the following aids to help children use contextual clues:

- I. Developing background of meaning: Field trips and use of other visual aid materials.
- II. Specific training in the use of contextual clues.
 - A. Ability to anticipate meaning: Teacher pauses at appropriate place while children give the next word by anticipating meanings.

- B. Seat work with selected exercises:
Children select a word to complete the sentence.

III. Children should be encouraged to read the whole sentence before returning to the unknown word.

IV. Children should be encouraged to use context clues with other word recognition skills, such as picture clues (58:135-38).

Tinker holds that picture clues constitute a kind of context clue. Picture clues help children identify characters, objects, and general environment in the story. He also stresses that picture clues take a great deal of teacher guidance to make it a means of word recognition.

According to Tinker, the child interprets a picture in terms of his own experience. Many children begin to interpret pictures prior to school age, and though it is important throughout primary grades, Tinker strongly stresses that it has its greatest importance in grade one (58:133-35). Betts cites that:

Beginning reading materials have been designed in such a way that the illustrations carry the burden of the story action. The clues afforded the beginner by the illustrations are a matter of prime importance (7:608).

Betts implies that beginning readers gain comprehension as well as clues to word recognition from the illustrations in the reading materials.

The levels of concepts that can be gained from pictures will be discussed subsequently with comprehension.

III. PHONICS

There is probably more controversy concerning the teaching of phonics than any other word attack skill. In most cases, however, phonics is recognized as an essential component of the process of learning to read.

At present, phonic instruction is based on two major philosophies: the synthetic approach and the analytic approach. Basal textbooks dealing with phonics are based on one or the other of these two philosophies. Since these two methods are somewhat different in their approach, the writer deems it necessary to present a brief description of these two methods.

- A. Synthetic methods: These methods begin with word elements, letters, sounds, or syllables. The letters, sounds, and syllables must be combined (synthesized) to form words. Methods which follow this approach are:
 - 1. Alphabet method
 - 2. Phonic method
 - 3. Syllable method
- B. Analytical methods: The analytical approach begins with the word, phrase, or sentence; these larger units are then broken down into their basic elements. This approach is based on the idea

that there are few sounds that are used in isolation. Methods based on this concept are:

1. Word method
2. Sentence method
3. Phrase method (15:176-83).

In the eyes of some reading authorities, phonic instruction is recognized as being more beneficial than any other skill in helping pupils develop a sight vocabulary and become independent readers. The disagreement concerning phonics evolves around the question of when and how to introduce phonics most effectively (15:178).

Harris defines phonics as "the study of speech equivalents of printed symbols, and their use in pronouncing printed words" (28:324). He also states that phonics is "essentially learning to associate the appearance of a letter or letter combination with a particular sound" (28:330).

DeBoer and Dallmann raise the question "whether phonic instruction be incidental or systematic" (14:91). They conclude that most reading specialists and classroom teachers prefer the systematic approach (14:91). Herr would also agree to these statements as she has said, "If the phonetic program is to be effective, an orderly sequence in presenting the word must be followed" (30:11).

To avoid poor teaching and waste, it is imperative that only the most useful phonetic elements be taught (39:243). In answer to the question, "What elements should be taught?", McKee states:

The elements to be taught for phonetic analysis at the first grade level are those most needed in attacking the strange words included in the vocabulary of the reading matter that the child is most likely to meet in that grade (39:243).

Selma Herr's phonic program for the first grade would be in agreement with McKee's philosophy, as these skills are those she feels are most needed in attacking strange words found in first grade reading material:

A. Auditory

1. Recognizing words that have the same beginning consonant sounds.
2. Recognizing the final sounds of words.
3. Recognizing the rhyming words.
4. Recognizing short vowel sounds in words.

B. Visual

1. Matching the initial consonants: c, m, d, p, t, r, h, l, s, n, f, b, w, g, j, and v with pictures beginning with the sounds.
2. Matching the digraphs: ch, sh, th, and wh with pictures.
3. Matching the final consonants: d, m, p, t, r, n, l, and s with pictures of objects having similar endings.
4. Matching rhyming words and pictures.

5. Recognizing consonants and digraphs in the words used in the reading lesson.
6. Recognizing the short vowel sounds of a, e, i, o, and u.
7. Recognizing the consonant blends of bl, br, st, and tr.
8. Applying knowledge of word sounds with reading assignments (30:12-13).

A review of the literature seems to indicate that there is no general agreement concerning the grade level at which the long vowels are introduced. Most reading authorities agree that short vowels usually precede the teaching of long vowels:

The short vowels are usually introduced before the long vowels because they occur most frequently in monosyllabic words, are phonetically more consistent, and occur more frequently in words that the pupil meets in initial reading (14:243).

Smith and Dechant (51:208), Gray (26:95), and Herr (30:16) opine that auditory perception and pronunciation should come before presenting visual form because children have learned words by listening to others; therefore, their experience is usually more developed in listening skills than in visual perception.

Phonics is composed of many rules and generalizations. The question might be asked whether students at the first grade level, or any level for that matter, be held responsible for all of these.

Most authorities tend to agree that it is far more important to create a love for reading than to learn all the rules of phonics.

IV. STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

It is generally recognized by authorities in the field of reading that pupils should develop some skill in structural analysis which would give them another tool to use in examining the form of a strange printed word. Structural analysis is concerned with the identification of root words, prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings (26:27).

- A. Root words: A root word is an original word base to which prefixes, suffixes, and inflectional endings may be added. The word base provides the essential meaning in the development of words through the addition of affixes.
- B. Prefixes: A prefix is a meaningful unit attached to the beginning of a word to modify its meaning.
- C. Suffixes: A suffix is a meaningful unit attached to the end of a word to modify its meaning. By adding a suffix to a root word, the word takes on a slightly different meaning.
- D. Inflectional endings: An inflectional ending is a meaningful element that is affixed to the ends of

words to form plurals and the possessive form of nouns, the past tense, the third person singular, present indicative, and the present participle of verbs; and the comparison of adjectives or verbs (26:4-6).

Most authorities agree that a planned program in structural analysis should be taught. Walter Barbe suggested that the first grade program in structural analysis constitutes the following:

1. Knows endings
 - ed sound in "ed" in wanted
 - ed sound as "d" in laughed
 - ed sound as "t" in liked
 - ing
 - s
2. Recognizes compound words
(into, upon)
3. Knows common word families:

all	et	an	ay
at	en	ill	ake
it	in	ell	or

 (4:152-53)

McKee states that:

The chief advantage of structural analysis lies in the fact that the pupil can break the strange word into large rather than small phonetic elements, thereby permitting more rapid identification and learning to use larger and larger elements in his word analysis (39:239-40).

Structural analysis used alone is not nearly as effective as it is when it is used with other word recognition skills such as context clues and phonetic analysis.

Therefore, many reading authorities would warn teachers that overemphasis on structural analysis should be avoided.

DeBoer and Dallmann (14:99) have concluded that if too much attention has been paid to locating root words, prefixes, and suffixes, it is possible for reading to become ineffective because the reader approaches too many words by trying to locate word parts. Consequently, it is undesirable to have all new words analyzed either phonetically or structurally.

Since many reading textbook authors do not thoroughly agree about the phonics and structural analysis program as to what should be taught and when it should be introduced, it is the principal's and teacher's responsibility to become familiar with the different series of publishers' basal reading textbooks to become aware of the sequence of phonics and structural skill development and especially the one used as a basal.

V. COMPREHENSION

"The goal of all reading is the comprehension of meaning. The initial step in this process is the association of an experience with a given symbol" (15:353).

Elona Sochor has cited, "Reading is thinking with experiences and concepts in relation to printed matter" (53:47).

Tinker (58:133-35) and Sochor (53:47-51) would agree that children can gain meaning from pictures as well as the printed symbol. The amount of meaning gained from pictures and the printed symbol is largely dependent upon the child's background of experiences. Spache states that "The reader can no more read material foreign to his backgrounds of experience and knowledge than he can comprehend a page in an unknown, foreign language" (55:76).

Spache further infers that if the child's background of experience is weak, much can be done to strengthen his background through pictures, listening aids, field trips, pupil discussion, and preparatory reading (55:76-77).

Spache listed Mildred Letton's level of comprehension which can be derived from the printed symbol as well as from pictures:

1. Factual--recall or recognition of stated details, finding specific details.
2. Reorganization--recognizing or stating the main idea, summarizing the central thought, outlining the given facts, classifying ideas.
3. Inferential--anticipating outcomes, drawing conclusions or inferences, recognizing sequence of related ideas, recognizing implied details, perceiving relationships (cause-effect, time, size, part-whole, etc.).
4. Interpretive--recognizing and interpreting figurative language, recognizing connotation and denotation of words, forming sensory impressions, interpreting idiomatic language, reacting to tone and mood.

5. Evaluative--comparing and contrasting concepts with own experience and various sources, distinguishing between fact and opinion, eliciting generalization (55:76).

Reading materials for beginning readers are usually prepared in terms of the universal experience of children, which helps them in the process of obtaining mental constructs or concepts. Edwards points out that:

Continuous development toward greater reading proficiency is a process with many phases, the goal of which is the comprehension of ideas. Success in the process depends on adequate motivation, a substantial background of concepts, word perception skills, and the ability to reason one's way through smaller idea elements and to grasp, as a whole, the meaning of a larger unitary idea (21:36).

Instruction in beginning reading, according to McKee, should lead the child to think of reading as a process of obtaining meaning from the printed page.

The child must realize that he should be interested in what it says as well as what it means. McKee suggests that this is essential if the first grade child is to gain the attitude of demanding meaning from his reading. An attitude of demanding meaning and looking upon reading as a process requires at least three provisions:

1. Selection of beginning reading materials should contain no meaning difficulties. Concepts should not be unfamiliar to the child and words should only be those included in his listening vocabulary. Sentence structure should be such that the child

would understand the sentence readily if it were spoken to him. Figures of speech should be familiar and sentences and paragraphs should be arranged so logically that the pupil has no difficulty in obtaining the sequence of idea and events.

2. The selected material to be used must be of high interest so the child will insist upon understanding what they say. The material he reads should tell a story or give information that the child wants.
3. Pre-reading experiences of most first grade children have not been that of associating meaning with printed or written language, but rather with oral language. Many children in beginning reading have trouble transferring their speaking intonations to the words on the printed page, consequently, word by word reading impairs meaning. It is imperative that the child be directed and helped to read lines as he would speak them or as he thinks he would hear them if they were spoken to him (39:194-99).

There are several lists of comprehension skills available, but the writer felt that the list of skills suggested by Walter Barbe best fitted the purposes of this paper:

- A. Understands that printed symbols represent objects or actions
- B. Can follow printed directions
- C. Can verify a statement
- D. Can draw conclusions from given facts
- E. Can recall what has been read aloud
- F. Can recall what has been read silently
- G. Can place events in sequence
- H. Can remember where to find answers to questions (4:153)

VI. ORAL AND SILENT READING

DeBoer and Dallmann state that:

Almost all the skills that are important in silent reading are also needed in effective oral reading, because in a certain sense all oral reading is preceded by silent reading. Consequently skill in word recognition, possession of a suitable meaning vocabulary, and the ability to comprehend what is read are essentials of both oral and silent reading (14:230).

Silent reading is an individual activity. The activity involves communication between the author and the reader. Silent reading skills are more or less individual as no two children have exactly the same needs or progress at the same rate (14:297).

McKee points out that many surveys through the years have indicated that individuals use silent reading more than oral reading and investigations have discovered that silent

reading is more economical and effective than oral reading (39:596-99).

On the other hand, Bond and Tinker feel that when oral reading is taught correctly, the areas of interpretive reading and oral language patterns are improved and better silent reading results. The child's silent reading improves because he must prepare for proper oral reading to others. He must think in terms of meaning, characterizations, and the action he is to interpret to others. Also, his concern with thought units in oral reading will help him think in terms of thought units in silent reading (51:186). Contrary to this belief, McKee feels that if the child does not read silently with a degree of success, his problem is one of speech rather than a problem in reading (39:598).

Effective oral reading appears to be one of those areas that has been neglected over the years, and recently there has been a renewed emphasis on oral reading. Smith and Dechant would stress oral reading as an avenue to learning. They would also agree that oral reading has social, cultural, and educational value.

It is generally recognized that oral reading is much more difficult than silent reading because oral reading requires the correct pronunciation of words, the effective use of a pleasant voice, and the phrasing and intonation needed to convey the author's meaning (51:185).

The following list provided by Smith and Dechant emphasizes the differences between oral and silent reading:

1. Oral reading calls for interpreting to others; silent reading only to oneself.
2. Oral reading demands special skill in projecting the mood and feeling intended by the author.
3. Oral reading demands skill in delivery, voice, tempo, and gesture.
4. Oral reading requires special eye-movement skills--there are more fixations, more regressions, and longer pauses than in silent reading.
5. In oral reading, speed is limited by pronunciation; in silent reading, by one's ability to grasp the meaning.
6. Eye-voice span is important in oral reading. Good readers have a wider eye-voice span than do poor readers (51:190).

Activities involving oral reading will depend on the purpose for which the reading is done and the type of reading material used.

McKee adds that oral reading may be considered as two types: sight reading and prepared oral reading. Sight reading is reading the material orally the first time the reader sees the selection. Prepared oral reading is reading the selection silently and making whatever preparation is necessary to make the oral presentation more effective to the listeners (39:598-99).

However, Smith and Dechant view oral and silent reading not as a basic reading skill in the same way that

word recognition, comprehension, and rate are viewed. Instead, oral and silent reading are two approaches to reading, and children must become proficient in both. Both require skill in word recognition, comprehension, and rate.

There appears to be general agreement by the authorities in the field of reading that skills in oral and silent reading should be taught. Walter Barbe suggests that the first grader should achieve the following goals in the area of oral and silent reading:

A. Oral Reading

1. Uses correct pronunciation
2. Uses correct phrasing (not word-by-word)
3. Used proper voice intonation to give meaning
4. Has good posture and handles book appropriately
5. Understands simple punctuation:
 period (.)
 comma (,)
 question mark (?)
 exclamation mark (!)

B. Silent Reading

1. Reads without vocalization:
 lip movements
 whispering
2. Reads without head movements (4:153)

VII. LOCATIONAL SKILLS

There is general agreement among the authorities that locational skills should be taught in the intermediate grades, but work in the primary grades can make a significant contribution in this area. The writer felt that DeBoer and Dallmann's list of locational skills would fit into the first grade reading program:

- a. Looking at the pictures to get an idea as to content of a book.
- b. Noting the titles of stories as they appear in the main part of the book.
- c. Finding page numbers.
- d. Reading titles of stories as listed in the table of contents.
- e. Looking at the titles of stories in order to see which ones are likely to deal with a given topic.
- f. Knowing where, in the room or school or public library, books of interest can be found.
- g. Learning alphabetical order.
- h. Arranging letters and words in alphabetical order.
- i. Knowing how to use a picture dictionary.
- j. Using a glossary in a textbook.
- k. Learning a few facts related to using a dictionary for children.
- l. Finding material and looking at pictures in an encyclopedia for younger children (Childcraft). (14:208).

Two important factors are stressed in the teaching of locational skills: readiness for locational skills and opportunity to make use of skills learned.

DeBoer and Dallmann (14:207) and McKee (39:425) suggest that a well-planned sequence of activities, which relate to problems that call for functional use of printed sources, begin as the child begins to read.

The teacher is the key person and has the opportunity to create situations which will lead children into the

instruction of locational skills, and as skills are acquired, many opportunities must be given in making use of what is learned. In accordance with this concept, Hildreth suggests that schools should establish aims or goals for each grade level and then direct instruction at these levels toward fulfilling those aims (32:113).

VIII. OBJECTIVES TO BE DEVELOPED

Mary Pennell and Alice Cusack, in How To Teach Reading, state that:

Certain general objectives in reading should be kept in mind by all teachers. In addition, each grade should strive to have the children attain certain definite appreciations, habits and skills. These standards of attainment should constitute a guide for the teacher in her work and become the goal of achievement for the grade.

I. Objectives in the Formation of Appreciation, Habits, and Skills for the First Grade

A. Appreciations

1. To desire to read.
2. To love to read.

B. Habits and Skills

1. To read silently before attempting to read aloud.
2. To avoid pointing to word while reading.
3. To avoid head movements.
4. To read silently without any audible expression and to begin to eliminate lip movements.
5. To use correct eye movements.
6. To know how to attack new or difficult words by:
 - a. Skipping over words and getting them through context.
 - b. Recognizing phonetic elements.
 - c. Asking for the word.

7. To read to answer a definite question.
8. To avoid word calling in oral reading.
9. To be able to enunciate clearly and pronounce correctly.
10. To handle and care for a book properly.
11. To stand correctly.

II. Achievements at the End of First Grade

- A. To read silently and express the thought in the child's own words or by action such as dramatizing.
- B. To find the answers to questions that call for the organization of ideas.
- C. To answer questions that call for judgment.
- D. To read silently and find the answer to a question or questions.
- E. To read fluently and avoid word calling.
- F. To read with expression using a well-modulated voice.
- G. To enunciate clearly and pronounce correctly (44:159-60).

As previously mentioned in this chapter, effective word recognition is not dependent on any one skill but a combination of skills such as context clues, picture clues, phonetic elements, and structural analysis.

Since most formal reading instruction begins in the first grade, it is important that all children be given every opportunity for the best skill instruction available so that children will be somewhat assured of success in reading.

It is generally recognized that not all children will achieve these skills at the first grade because their

learning rates will differ. Therefore, the skills program will need to be organized to care for these differences.

CHAPTER IV

MAJOR APPROACHES CURRENTLY IN USE IN TEACHING READING

Research and experimentation have contributed many approaches to the reading program. Agreement among the reading authorities concerning an optimal method of teaching reading appears to be as varied as the number of reading approaches to instruction.

The six most prominent reading methods in today's reading program included for discussion in this chapter are (1) Basal Approach, (2) Individualized Approach, (3) Language Experience Approach, (4) Linguistic Approach, (5) Initial Teaching Alphabet (hereafter referred to as i/t/a), and (6) Words in Color.

I. BASAL APPROACH

Cutts cites that "Probably the most commonly accepted approach today is a program centered around basal readers" (13:73-74).

Basal reading materials are a set of graded textbooks which contain a group of stories and are designed to provide continuity in reading development and sequential training in all the basic reading skills (15:200).

William D. Sheldon states that:

The one word which seems most descriptive of basal reading approaches is eclectic. The procedures are

eclectic in terms of the development of readiness, vocabulary, word recognition and word perception, comprehension skills and a love of literature (34:29).

Arthur Gates, as reported by Betts, states that:

The purpose of the basal program is to pave the way and provide the foundation and incentive for much wider, more enjoyable, reading than would otherwise be possible. It is designed to free the teacher of much of the work that she would otherwise have to do, so that she can give more attention to the proper selection of the other reading materials and the proper guidance of children in their total reading program (7:488).

Basal reading materials aim at systematic and sequential instruction in word recognition skills, vocabulary development, and comprehension. However, Emmett Betts warns that basal reading materials do not necessarily produce systematic learning because much depends on how they are used (7:545).

Sheldon's description helps clarify the method used in teaching basal materials:

The method of teaching involves certain common procedures which accompany each lesson. These procedures involve motivating children to read by various introductory devices, developing concepts basic to each lesson, teaching of certain word analysis skills, reviewing known words . . . introducing new words and their meanings, emphasizing the comprehension of what is to be read, what is read and what has been read (34:29).

In the first grade, each book (pre-primer, primer, and first reader) is regarded as a separate reading level. Before moving on to the next book, a child must show mastery of the skills taught and an understanding of the material read.

McKee lists criteria which can be considered strengths of the basal approach if they are provided in a given basal series.

A. Content: This is the most important aspect of the book. The book should contain only meanings and experiences which are meaningful to the child. Not only should the experiences be meaningful, but also, interesting to first grade children. The stories should be fun for children to read--stories with suspense and surprise.

B. Vocabulary:

1. The vocabulary of the material must be carefully controlled if it is to be a useful piece of material for the first grade child to use. Vocabulary control is important because it helps to insure that certain words used are familiar to his understanding and to his listening vocabulary.
2. The words introduced in the pre-primer should be words that will have wide use in a variety of other areas with which the child will be associated.
3. Words introduced in the first pre-primer should be words that are included and frequently used in the pre-primers and other books of the basal series.

4. In order for the child to do some reading, the number of new words should not be large. There has been no agreement as to how many words this should be.
 5. Sufficient practice in recognizing the different words should be provided by repeating these words many times throughout the pre-primers.
 6. Within the different words being introduced in the pre-primers and primers, there should be a sufficient number of words which will aid in introducing phonetic elements which should be taught early in beginning reading.
- C. Sentence structure: Sentence structure in beginning reading materials should be within the limits of those understood by young children in their listening.
- D. Teacher's Manual: It is essential that the basal series be accompanied by a manual which gives the teacher definite direction and guidance in classroom procedures.
1. Specific directions in teaching any selection or unit in the book.
 2. Guidance and direction in checking for specific skills, comprehension, following directions.

3. Exercises and practice skills.
4. Directions for teaching phonetic and structural elements.
5. Specific guidance as to the scope and character of an effective reading program during the pre-primer and primer period (39:207-16).

Limitations of Basal Reader Approach

Dr. Spache, as well as other reading authorities, readily agrees that the greatest weakness in basal materials does not wholly lie with the approach, but rather with the misuse of the basal reader by teachers. Spache states that "Teachers employing the basal approach develop two undesirable practices--rigid structuring of three reading groups and excessive use of oral reading" (54:82-3).

Spache lists the following as other criticisms of the basal reading approach:

- A. Content: Those who criticize this area feel that the lack of style in writing is quite evident. Therefore, interest and motivation are immediately lost. Others feel that more upgrading needs to be done in the content area so that materials coincide with a child's speaking and listening vocabulary.

- B. Vocabulary control: Spache feels that there is a marked trend toward simplification of vocabulary in basal readers. As noted by Spache, studies have been made which indicate average pupils who have advanced as far as the primer level learn many words other than the basal vocabulary.
- C. Word attack skills: Practically all basal series recommend that the vocabulary be presented before the story is read, which tends to leave little opportunity for children to use word attack skills. Spache and his followers feel that there may be too much dependence of teacher and pupil upon the sight-word method rather than using word attack skills (54:73-87).

II. INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH

Essentially, individualized reading is a method in which pupils read independently rather than in organized groups with books chosen by the students instead of by the teacher; each pupil reads a different book at his own pace.

"Seeking, self-selecting and pacing" are the words used by Willard C. Olson to describe individualized reading (34:10). Olson's philosophy was built on the idea that each child carries within him the seeds of drive for maturation and a pattern of development skills, habits, and

attitudes; consequently, they are not imposed from without, but are acquired at the child's natural pace and in accordance with his readiness. Motivated by internal needs, the child will attempt to read those materials suited to his needs and interests, and will progress in level and skill as his needs and readiness for new learning permits (54:94).

Dr. Spache would agree with Olson, as he has stated that "Individualized reading is concerned with the overall development of the child's reading skill and interests" (54:92).

The individualized approach has some definite distinguishing characteristics by which it can be identified:

- A. The amount of flexibility in the program.
- B. A one-to-one working relationship between teacher and pupil. (This one characteristic is probably the most outstanding feature of the program.)
- C. The self-selection of material by the student with some guidance from the teacher.
- D. Progress made at the child's own rate.
- E. If the program is organized correctly, skill help is given when the child needs the particular skill and at his own rate and level of interest (4:19).

Walter Barbe, a strong advocate of the individualized approach, suggests that certain procedures must be followed to insure a certain amount of success in the program.

1. Organizing the classroom.
2. Collecting reading materials.
3. Keeping records.
4. Planning independent activities, group activities, and follow-up activities.
5. The individual interview or conference (4:24).

According to Dolch, the individualized approach at the first grade may not be so easy to do as it is at the upper elementary when most children have had reading experience; but most reading authorities who advocate individualized reading say that it can be accomplished with success.

- A. There are many reading experiences at the first grade level, such as teaching sight words by labels, announcements on the board, and experience charts. Combining these facts, it is found from the beginning of book word, there are some first graders who can read some very easy books either to the teacher or to himself, asking help from the teacher when needed.
- B. Many of the beginning reading experiences in the first grade come from picture reading material with only a few words in print. Students can go through the book getting most of the story from pictures. Word knowledge can be accomplished in group situations.

C. It is generally recognized that more teacher control is needed in first grade because of greater pupil immaturity, but we must not underestimate the ability of many first graders to work on their own. In essence, we have group work for all, but individualized reading for some (16:17-18).

As in all reading approaches, the key to success is the teacher. His ability to plan, organize, generate interest, and create enthusiasm is tremendously important.

Limitations of the Individualized Approach

Eleanor M. Johnson stated that "Individualized reading has a great deal to offer in meeting individual reading needs, but it has some important unresolved problems as of now" (33:3). Those areas Johnson refers to are: teachers who try the individualized approach without adequate preparation, lack of trade books, lack of interest by pupils, parents, and school personnel (33:4).

Spache indicates that the individualized approach has limitations in the following areas:

- A. Organization: Teachers are unable to schedule enough time for conferencing with pupils--times which are free from interruptions--time to organize and prepare materials, complete records, and plan for individual pupil needs.

B. Individual conference: McKillop's survey, as reported by Spache, indicated that teachers do not find enough time available to confer with each pupil. Spache also refers to the inability of a teacher to know every story the child reads, vocabulary and concepts of the particular book. Therefore, Spache questions the ability of a teacher to ask intelligent questions about the book during the conference time. Spache stated that she was:

. . . still unable to comprehend just how individualized teachers accomplish both the repeated diagnostic prescriptions for small group work on skills, and the repeated evaluation of progress in skill development that most reading teachers seem to feel are necessary (54:107).

C. Skill training: May Lazar, an advocate of the individualized approach, outlined a number of principles: (1) the teachers must know what the reading skills are; (2) they must know what the children need; (3) they must know how to teach the skills; (4) they must provide the time and opportunity for skill development; and (5) they must utilize the most appropriate material for developing the skills.

However, Spache contends that from the surveys made by various people, many teachers do not

possess the principles mentioned by Lazar. Therefore, pupils involved in the individualized approach do not receive proper instruction in word attack skills. Until better teacher training and practices come about in diagnosis of pupil needs, in preparation and evaluation of teaching materials, and detailed planning, the individualized approach will suffer as will the other reading approaches (54:107-11).

III. LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH

The language experience method does not base reading instruction on a series of books, but rather on the oral and written expression of children. Spache states that:

. . . reading is a by-product of the child's thinking and oral expression. Progress in reading is therefore directly dependent upon the child's growth in experiences which are translated into oral language and his own written expression (54:134).

One of the main objectives of the language experience approach, according to Dr. Spache, is to bring together reading and other communication skills into the instructional program.

What I can think about, I can talk about.
What I can say, I can write.
What I can write, I can read.
I can read what I write and
What other people can write for me to read (54:134).

These words expressed by Dr. Van Allen were the foundation upon which the language experience approach was fostered.

The basic framework of Van Allen and Allen's language experience approach can best be summarized by the following outline.

Group One: Extending Experienced With Words

1. Sharing experiences--the ability to tell, write, or illustrate something on a purely personal basis.
2. Discussing experiences--the ability to interact with what other people say and write.
3. Listening to stories--the ability to hear what others have to say through books and to relate ideas to one's own experiences.
4. Telling stories--the ability to organize one's thinking so that it can be shared orally or in writing in a clear and interesting manner.
5. Dictating words, sentences, and stories--the ability to choose from all that might be said orally the most important part for someone else to write and read.
6. Writing independently--the ability to record one's own ideas and present them in a form for others to read.
7. Authoring individual books--the ability to organize one's ideas into a sequence, illustrate them, and make them into books.

Group Two: Studying the English Language

1. Conceptualizing the relationship of speaking, writing, and reading--the ability to conceptualize, through extensive practice, that reading is the interpretation of speech that has been written and then must be reconstructed, orally or silently.

2. Expanding vocabulary--the ability to expand one's listening, speaking, reading, and writing (including spelling) vocabulary.
3. Reading a variety of symbols--the ability to read in one's total environment such things as the clock, calendar, dials, thermometer.
4. Developing awareness of common vocabulary--the ability to recognize that our language contains many common words and patterns of expression that must be mastered for sight reading and correct spelling when expressing one's ideas in writing.
5. Improving style and form--the ability to profit from listening to, reading, and studying the style of well-written material.
6. Studying words--the ability to pronounce and understand words and spell them correctly in written activities.

Group Three: Relating Authors' Ideas to Personal Experiences

1. Reading whole stories and books--the ability to read books for information, pleasure, and improvement of reading skills on an individual basis.
2. Using a variety of resources--the ability to find and use many resources in expanding vocabulary, improving oral and written expression, and sharing ideas.
3. Comprehending what is read--the ability, through oral and written activities, to gain skill in following directions, understanding words in the context of sentences and paragraphs, reproducing the thought in a passage, reading for detail, and reading for general significance.
4. Summarizing--the ability to get main impressions, outstanding ideas, or some details of what has been read or heard.
5. Organizing ideas and information--the ability to use various methods of briefly restating ideas in the order in which they were written or spoken.

6. Integrating and assimilating ideas--the ability to use reading and listening for personal interpretation and elaboration of concepts.
7. Reading critically--the ability to determine the validity and reliability of statements (1:5).

Unlike the basal reader approach, the language experience method places no control on vocabulary, and any word can be used which is needed by the child to express himself. Spache states that:

There are no predetermined sequences of training in word recognition skills or any other major reading skill. Phonics, structural analysis, contextual analysis, and vocabulary are introduced as children appear to need them in writing and reading their own and other materials. (54:139)

Evaluative procedures may be a bit more difficult than in other reading approaches because pupil progress is not based largely on standardized or informal reading tests although these devices may be used to a small degree. Rather, pupil progress is measured in terms of his ability to express himself orally and in written form and to comprehend and interpret what others have written.

Limitations of the Language Experience Approach

The proponents of the language experience approach make many assumptions which Dr. Spache feels cannot be assumed, apparently leaving this approach with many limitations. One of the major limitations appears that the language experience approach fails to recognize the significance of reading skills:

If the language-experience approach is continued much beyond early primary levels, there is the possibility that it may retard this full development of reading. If the child's own written expression is the major source of reading materials in grades above the primary level, his reading experiences and development will be extremely limited (54:140).

The assumption that children make the transition from reading their own language into reading the language of others is questioned by Spache and his colleagues because they do not feel that children gain an adequate foundation for handling the written thoughts of others.

An organizational problem exists in the language experience approach because there appears to be a lack of techniques to evaluate a child or to keep record of his use of materials or reading skill development he has achieved.

According to Spache, the language experience approach is defensible only at the early primary level in beginning reading (54:140-43).

IV. LINGUISTIC APPROACH

The linguistic approach to teaching reading is based largely on the child's ability to relate written language signals for specific meanings to oral language signals he already knows.

Dr. Spache suggests that there are at least three distinct types of linguists because of their particular interest in a special phase of language research:

- A. The phonologist is interested in analysis of the sounds of spoken and written language. This school of thought deals with the phonemes which are the basic sounds of our language.
- B. The grammarian, or structural linguist, concerns himself with the structure of language--those areas which are essential in the communication of ideas, such as word order; word position; word function; word groups that modify, expand, or change simple expressions; and the signals of intonation, as pitch, stress, and pause. This group of linguists is also interested in the types of sentences, such as simple statements, demands, requests, and questions.
- C. The third school of thought deals with psycholinguistics. In psycholinguistics, the elements of prose style, such as personalization, ornamentation, and abstractness are vital areas of interest (54:Ch. V).

Leonard Bloomfield, a phonologist, designed a linguistic approach to reading based on the facts that English writing is phonetic and that reading is merely the act of responding vocally to the printed letter. Each letter of the alphabet represents speech sounds to be spoken, and the child reads by making the appropriate sound for each pattern of letters. Since English writing is not perfectly

phonetic, Bloomfield divides words into what he refers to as "regular and irregular," according to whether each letter takes its regular value. Beginning readers should only learn vocabulary words that follow the alphabetic principal--words of regular value. There should be few deviations from this principle until the child has learned all of the regular words. As a preliminary step to reading, children should know the alphabet and master left to right progression thoroughly.

Beginning reading involves the learning of the vowels a, i, u, e, and o, in three-letter words. Each word follows the pattern of consonant-vowel-consonant.

Bloomfield's approach pays little attention to meaning; emphasis is placed on gaining power in reading. As the child grows in reading smoothly, he automatically converts sounds to meaningful words. According to Bloomfield, only the process of converting letters to sounds can be considered reading, and those who think otherwise are confusing the mechanics of learning to read with its goal (comprehension) (5:98-105).

Bloomfield has many followers, one of whom is C. C. Fries. Both are strong advocates of excluding pictures from the basic reading series. They feel that pictures constitute a distracting element in the process of learning to read and pictures furnish clues to meaning and thus lead

the pupil to guess at words rather than read them.

Although Fries shares many of Bloomfield's ideas, he believes in a spelling approach at the level of one-syllable words rather than Bloomfield's spelling approach at the level of single letters and phonemes (19:293-95).

Lefevre's linguistic approach stems from the structuralists' school of thought (noun groups, verb groups, phrases, clauses), or function words (articles, auxiliary verbs, prepositions) and grammatical inflections. He emphasizes that the child's major task in beginning reading is producing mentally, as he reads each line, the sounds he would hear if someone had spoken the lines to him, or more simply, the child must recognize reading as talking that is written down (54:118-19).

Limitations of the Linguistic Approach

The phonologist school of thought led by Bloomfield and Fries believe that the child reads by letters or even by spelling words mentally rather than by recognition of whole words by their context, configuration, and other word recognition clues. Many reading authorities who strongly believe in the word recognition skills as a means to decoding the written language are strongly opposed to this linguistic idea.

Still another linguistic school of thought believes that children should begin reading by groups of words--by structural components such as phrases, clauses, noun groups, and verb groups. The correct interpretation of sentence thought is the first concern of this linguistic school of thought.

Spache took exception to this idea because the linguist has not explained how this is to be implemented. Spache also questions the ability of a child to read large sentence elements or complete sentences without a sight vocabulary.

Another linguistic idea is to eliminate pictures from reading materials because of the possibility that children would use picture clues to gain word recognition. This idea causes some concern on the part of some reading authorities because they feel that reading materials without pictures are uninteresting and children are reluctant to read them. In addition, concern may come from those authorities who cite picture clues as an important word attack skill.

Spache feels that the linguistic advocates are still too interested in the science of language rather than the possibilities that this approach has for reading (54:125-29).

V. INITIAL TEACHING ALPHABET (i/t/a) APPROACH

Sir James Pitman, the creator of the initial teaching alphabet, was concerned with the tremendous inconsistencies in the English language that beginning readers have to face in learning to read. Frank Zeitz states that:

Pitman's initial teaching alphabet is the nearly absolute phonetic spelling of the words of the English language. I.T.A. is the simplification of the encoding of words which is spelling, and of the decoding of words, which is reading. I.T.A. renders the child's reading world less complex (65:515).

i/t/a appears to be a simple and systematic code for several reasons:

- A. i/t/a only uses a single visual pattern for each word. Single visual pattern refers to one symbol in i/t/a representing a single phonic sound. In traditional orthography the single phonic sound can have many different spellings. For example: sew, sow, dough, and go have the same long vowel sound, and yet are inconsistent in their spelling form. In i/t/a this is taken care of by the single visual pattern of œ. Therefore, each of the above mentioned words would have the same spelling: soœ, soœ, doœ, and goœ.

Capitalization does not destroy the concept of the single visual pattern because in i/t/a, only a larger version of the same letter is used: dog, dog.

B. Each symbol in i/t/a has only one phonic sound.

This phonic sound, or phoneme, will be consistent in each word in i/t/a writing or reading materials.

C. The third important feature of this approach is that there are fewer symbols to learn; therefore, the child has the opportunity to learn a greater number of words. The i/t/a consists of forty-four phonemes or phonic facts (6:1-14).

According to Arthur Heilman, children write with the i/t/a system from the very beginning because fewer symbols must be learned, and each symbol has the consistency of a single visual pattern (34:66-71).

Limitations of the i/t/a Approach

First, the i/t/a approach has been given so much publicity that many authorities do not feel that it has been given a fair test of its effectiveness (11:48, 53). However, there appear to be several limitations to the i/t/a approach.

Some reading authorities, such as Gates (64:19), feel that it is unwise to use a crutch or require a person to learn a procedure that must later be unlearned or discarded and replaced by another.

Another factor, that of transfer from i/t/a to traditional orthography, represents a key question in the use of this new approach (64:208).

Still other limiting factors presented by traditional orthography proponents, such as Thomas C. Barrett (54:84) and William B. Gilloak (54:85-93), must be considered-- factors such as the poor spelling habits that are created by the i/t/a approach. It does not appear to be necessary for all children to go through i/t/a and the transition before going into traditional orthography.

Good teaching under traditional orthography appears to be more the answer to the problem of first grade instruction than a change of the alphabet. Our problem is stimulating good teaching (38:16).

McCracken implies that no matter what reading approach is used, if teachers are stimulated and enthused about the program, good results will be attained.

VI. WORDS IN COLOR

Dr. Gattegno developed the words in color approach which is a linguistic-phonics system. The traditional alphabet is used and each of the forty-seven sounds of English is represented by a different color or shade. Pupils learn to associate each sound with a color. For example, the color of the "a's" varies in pat, was, village, and fatal; but the color is the same in late, way, they, veil, straight, and great, even though the spellings differ, as they have the same phonetic sound.

On the other hand, Edward Fry states that:

Since it is difficult for children, or even adults, to distinguish 47 different colors some of Gattegno's symbols are split in half so that they are really two-colored rather than a unique color (34:79).

Students are drilled in making the sounds in isolation, then blending together. Vowels are introduced first and followed by consonants. Upon completion of this, students begin blending vowels and consonants together to form short meaningful and meaningless words. After the pupils become quite familiar with the color-sound pattern, they are able to become proficient in writing. Writing is done with black pencil on white paper, but students seem to have no trouble keeping the mental image of the color-sound patterns. Reading materials in the words in color approach are in black and white print (36:18-20,66).

It appears that one strength of this approach is the consistency of sound patterns by making the same phonetic sounds the same color. A second strength appears to be the enthusiasm of teachers in working with this new approach. As in the use of i/t/a, words in color has stimulated a new interest in teaching reading.

Limitations of the Words in Color Approach

Perhaps one of the greatest weaknesses of the words in color approach is the newness of the program. As yet, words in color programs have not been tried to any great

extent. It is generally recognized that the effectiveness of a new approach to reading cannot be shown until it has been tried and evaluated on a large scale.

A second weakness of the program would be the difficulty a color blind child might have in distinguishing colors.

VII. GROUPING TO CARE FOR INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

No matter what reading method or approach is used, effective instruction is partially dependent upon the classroom organization. Dechant states that:

. . . reading method always functions in the context of a specific type of classroom organization. Either the classroom is organized on a group basis with some attempt at individualization, or individualized instruction is emphasized and groups are formed as needed (15:208).

Harris concludes that:

Because classes differ so widely, there is no one plan for grouping that fits every need. A method of grouping that may be appropriate for one class may not adequately meet the needs of another class. The range of ability within the class, the age of the pupils, the previous experience of the pupils in working in groups, the materials available, and the teacher's competence, all have to be considered (28:122).

It is generally recognized by reading authorities that grouping for reading is a convenience for both teachers and children, especially for the child if he has been properly grouped.

Grouping is considered an organizational plan and not a teaching method; once the group has served its purpose, it should be dissolved. Fred Wilhelms states that:

Grouping isn't a way of teaching. It is simply a technique of classroom management that helps create an environment in which the teacher can teach better (63:21).

Wilhelms further states that "Grouping should be dedicated to the well-being of the individual" (63:19-20). Wilhelms implies that if grouping is to be effective, the teacher cannot look for similarities in the group, but rather, help each child where he is and fit instruction to him. Each member of the group must be thought of as an individual.

Smith and Dechant suggest that grouping in reading be directed toward certain objectives:

1. It should foster desirable social relationships and attitudes.
2. It should help us to provide for the individual reading needs of each child.
3. It should promote facility and independence in reading and study.
4. It should help us to provide each child with satisfactory reading material.
5. It should reduce the need for remedial instruction (51:384).

McKee states that:

. . . variations among entering first grade pupils imply that the time for starting instruction in beginning reading varies for different groups of pupils within a

given first grade class, and that different levels of instruction should be maintained through the year according to the needs and abilities of those pupils. For example, in a large elementary school which houses several first grade classes, the following groups of pupils may be organized.

1. Pupils who by means of previous training in the home or the kindergarten have encountered satisfactory experiences in reading should be grouped together and provided with suitable reading instruction immediately
2. Pupils who have done no reading but who are adequately prepared for learning to read should be grouped together and let attack first reading lessons immediately
3. Children who speak English rather than a foreign tongue and who are not adequately prepared to learn to read should be grouped together and be given adequate instruction in reading readiness
4. The non-English-speaking pupils should be grouped together and given needed instruction in language. . . . Each pupil in this group should develop adequate readiness before he is given definite instruction in reading (39:191-92).

Most reading authorities would agree that pupils should have the flexibility of movement from one group to another providing they have adequately acquired the skills and needs of their present group. No group should be completely static.

Many times instructional groups are formed on the basis of the child's reading ability. Ability grouping is often used to the extent that other types of grouping are overlooked. Ability grouping can be beneficial if not over used.

Other types of instructional grouping to be considered are interest groups, research groups, pair groups, and need groups.

Interest Groups

Interest groups are organized on the basis of pupil interests. This type of grouping allows the child to pursue his particular interests through reading and gathering information.

Research Groups

Research groups are quite similar to interest groups except in most cases, the research group will produce some end result from their endeavors, such as a report, a play or dramatization, pictures, or some other means of showing their findings.

Pair Groups

Pair groups could be either two friends or just two students working together to arrive at a common goal. This type of grouping can be formed for whatever purpose the teacher deems necessary. Students can read to one another, discuss material that was read, or participate in a question and answer session in which the two work cooperatively.

Need Groups

This organizational plan may be one of the most effective grouping procedures because it provides for a need

common to the whole group. The need does not necessarily have anything to do with the group's general ability, but rather, emphasizes a specific skill weakness that all members of the group have. For instance, the members of the need group have a weakness in recognizing consonant blends. The teacher can work specifically in this area until he feels the members of the group are familiar with consonant blends and then he dissolves the group because the group purpose no longer exists.

To conclude, DeBoer and Dallmann state that:

Some kind of grouping or system of individualization is necessary in view of the large number of children with whom the average teacher must deal. But whatever the system, priority should be given to the general developmental and social needs of individual children (14:297).

Although the approach used in reading instruction is important, effective reading instruction is still dependent upon classroom organization. A classroom of children with varied degrees of reading ability should be given reading instruction to fit their reading needs, and it appears this can only be accomplished effectively through some type of grouping or individualization.

CHAPTER V

EVALUATION METHODS IN READING

Emmett Betts states that:

Effective instruction is based on two fundamental principles: first, attainment of a thorough understanding of learner strength and weaknesses; second, provision for guidance in terms of individual needs. In short, the basic notion is that the teacher should learn, or know, the child before attempting to teach him (7:227).

Most reading authorities would agree that Betts' philosophy can best be achieved through effective methods of evaluation, such as standardized tests, informal tests, and teacher observations.

McKee states that:

In order to locate some pupil deficiencies and thereby determine some of the teaching or reteaching that needs to be done, in order to avoid poor instruction which results from having only a vague notion of the child's status in the specific understandings, skills, and attitudes which constitute reading power, and in order to estimate the child's progress in learning to read in the first grade, it is essential that the teacher make systematic and frequent appraisals of the child's learning from time to time during the year. Such appraisal may be accomplished through the use of standardized tests, home-made informal tests, and teacher observation of the pupil's work, day by day (39:273-74).

Determining whether a child is ready to read is one of the most important periods of a child's life because making a good start in reading at the first grade will help determine the success he has in the upper grades.

Appraisal of reading readiness can be accomplished, in large part, by teacher observation and standardized tests. From these processes, the teacher can determine groupings, adjust instruction, and enhance the development of readiness as the program progresses. Appraisals should be primarily diagnostic, rather than predictive, thus providing the teacher with the insight into instructional adjustments to be made and the readiness to be developed (8:37-8).

Bruechner, as reported by Smith and Dechant, states that educational diagnosis

. . . relates to the techniques by which one discovers and evaluates both strength and weaknesses of the individual as a basis for more effective guidance. Diagnosis is a logical process based on a consideration of all the available data concerning a particular individual or group of individuals. The analysis of these data and their interpretation in the light of knowledge gained from past experience enables the diagnostician to suggest necessary developmental or remedial measures (51:408).

Dechant feels that no reading program can be used effectively without continuous diagnosis. It is imperative that teachers know what the child's present level of achievement is and to what level he may progress (15:223-24).

For the purposes of this study, the evaluative methods to be considered are intelligence tests, reading readiness tests, teacher observation, standardized reading tests, and informal tests.

I. INTELLIGENCE TESTS

Intelligence tests furnish the teacher and principal with data with which a comparison can be made with regards to a child's mental age (I.Q.) and the mental maturity of all children in a group.

Intelligence tests can either be individual or group tests. Of the two, the individual test is more accurate due to the testor's ability to control more factors. The disadvantage of the individual test is the large amount of time which it takes to administer. Hildreth suggested that all doubtful cases should be given the individual test, however, as it will give a more comprehensive picture of the student (32:68-9).

Group testing tends to underestimate the general level of a child, especially if he has been handicapped by poor or inadequate instruction, emotional problems, or other reasons.

An important clue which can be furnished by the intelligence tests is the verbal and non-verbal abilities of a child. A low verbal score may indicate that a child has had a poor cultural, linguistic, and/or reading background.

II. READING READINESS TESTS

Reading readiness tests are related to intelligence tests but are specifically designed to measure directly the child's background of experience and general preparation for reading (51:408-14).

According to Hildreth, both readiness tests which measure various aspects of general readiness and those tests which measure readiness for a specific subject, such as arithmetic and reading, are useful. The use of either test will depend upon the local school situation, purposes of testing, emphasis in curricular areas, and other tests being used. The use of readiness tests will help point out children of high or low general maturity and strengths and weaknesses in areas of vocabulary comprehension, perceptual discrimination, motor control such as learning to write requires, as well as providing other information (32:69-70).

The value of reading readiness tests was emphasized by Gates, Bond, and Russell in their statement:

The best reading-readiness testing consists essentially in making an "inventory" of various interests and of the techniques used in reading itself. In principle, testing the reading readiness of a child on entering school is the same as testing reading attainments at any later time from the second grade to college. In all cases, the desirable outcome is not merely the general or total score but an expression of the child's status in each of the important abilities entering into reading at the time

and shortly thereafter. It is, in brief, a "diagnostic inventory" of actual reading abilities, techniques, skills, and interests similar in general to those used later in the program (7:239).

When selecting tests, according to Witty and Kopel, both principal and teacher must be aware that a test is a useful tool only when it measures abilities which are employed in a particular reading program (7:227).

Both intelligence and reading-readiness tests for first grade are usually given near the end of kindergarten or at the beginning of the first grade.

Hildreth points out that teachers and principals should be careful about giving tests too early in the school year because of the lack of experience by some children in working with pencil and paper, especially if the test is a pencil and paper type test. Hildreth, as well as other reading authorities, feels that there should be a short period of adjustment so that teacher and student can become acquainted. She also implies that the time of year will be somewhat dependent upon the purpose and the type of test to be given.

Reading readiness tests should ordinarily be deferred until shortly before the teacher expects to undertake systematic work in reading. Some reading readiness tests would be discouraging to beginners, because they require considerable discrimination between words, and the skills measured are rather tedious to test (32:76).

Administering the readiness test is also an important item for the principal and teacher to consider. Every effort should be made to see that each child taking the test has equal opportunity to achieve as much success as he is capable of achieving.

Hildreth has made the following suggestions for administering readiness tests:

Have a quiet room for testing and do not permit interruptions.

Keep the groups for testing small, not more than fifteen children at a time, preferably not more than ten or twelve.

The testing should be done by the children's own teacher.

Keep the testing periods short, not more than twenty or thirty minutes.

Fill in the children's names and other data on test booklets before testing periods begin.

Follow the directions for administering given in the manual.

If time limits are required, do the timing accurately.

Use a natural tone of voice in speaking to the group.

Do not give the children assistance beyond that indicated in the manual of directions (32:78-79).

Hildreth claims that a good readiness test should contain the following characteristics:

- A. Screening function: A good test will distribute the children from high to low within the class. This distribution aids the teacher in identifying those children of various abilities.

- B. Objective character: The teacher is able to use objective evaluation rather than his own personal judgment.
- C. Predictive value: Although the predictive value of any test is far from perfect, readiness tests do aid to some degree in predicting. The data gained from readiness tests help predict those children who have the greatest promise for achieving success and those who will have the greatest difficulty in reading and other related skill areas during the first year.
- D. Diagnostic features: An important diagnostic feature of readiness tests is the data which discloses pupils' limitations that are likely to interfere with learning specific skills. Total score from the readiness test can aid teachers in placing children in groups and subtest scores are useful as a guide to strengths and to specific training needed to overcome weaknesses (32:70-74).

Betts cites that:

In the final analysis, there is no substitute for well-founded teacher judgment in determining readiness for initial reading instruction. No test or other device, including the use of teacher judgment, produced to date is entirely adequate for this purpose (7:229).

III. TEACHER OBSERVATION

Teacher observation of a child on a day by day basis is one evaluative tool that many reading authorities recognize as a most effective way of evaluating the effectiveness of a reading program. Dechant (15:224-25) has indicated that teachers' observations of the children's attitude toward books and of the children's reading habits are many times better indicators of the effectiveness of a reading program than are more formal measurement devices.

McKee also stresses the importance of teacher observation as an important and effective means of evaluation. Teacher observation of all reading activities can aid the teacher in estimating a child's growth in sight vocabulary, independent recognition of unfamiliar words, comprehension, demanding meaning, and other reading activities he has been teaching. McKee also stresses that the first grade teacher must be aware of the unreliability of his judgment and memory; therefore, it is important for observations to be recorded and kept and to supplement his own observations with the use of informal and standardized tests.

A day-by-day observation can give a teacher a personal understanding of a child's abilities and needs which no test can give (39:278-80).

IV. STANDARDIZED READING TESTS

McKee states that:

Standardized tests are commercially published tests which have norms that are the average scores made on those tests by children at given age and grade levels (39:274).

McKee further infers that a teacher can compare the status of his pupils with the ability of any other group of children at the same age or grade. A child's achievement in one aspect in reading can also be noted to determine weaknesses and strengths (39:274-75).

Robinson and Rauch state that "Three kinds of standardized reading tests essentially make up the group of formal evaluation tools" (46:66).

Survey tests which measure vocabulary knowledge, comprehension of sentences or paragraphs, and sometimes rate of comprehension, give the testor a general picture of the child's strengths and weaknesses. Because this particular test does not yield more than a few scores on the subtests, it should not be used as a diagnostic device. Caution should also be used in using this device as a sole instrument for predictions. The survey test will indicate the grade level on which the pupil is reading and the level of difficulty of the reading material that the child should be able to read. However, it usually places the child on or close to his frustrational level.

The frustration level is one of several levels that can be determined through careful analysis of a test. Betts presents these various levels as the following:

I. The Basal Reading Level

A. The individual can read with full understanding and freedom from mechanical difficulties.

1. This is the level of supplementary and independent reading.

a. Children will have

- (1) 90% comprehension
- (2) 99% pronunciation
- (3) No head movements
- (4) No finger pointing
- (5) No vocalization
- (6) Good phrasing

II. The Instructional Level

A. This is the highest reading level at which systematic instruction can be initiated.

1. This is the reading level.

2. The materials must be challenging but not too difficult.

3. Children will have

- a. 75% comprehension
- b. 95% pronunciation
- c. No head movement
- d. No finger pointing
- e. Good phrasing
- f. Conversational tone
- g. No vocalization

III. The Frustration Level

A. The reader is thwarted or baffled by the language of the reading material.

B. This level is to be avoided.

1. The material is too difficult and thus frustrates the student.

C. Children will have

1. Less than 50% comprehension
2. Less than 90% pronunciation
3. Head movements
4. Finger pointing
5. Tension
6. Symptoms of withdrawal
7. Slow word for word reading
8. Vocalization
9. Substitutions
10. Repetitions
11. Insertions
12. Omissions

IV. Capacity Level

A. This is the hearing level.

1. This is the highest reading level at which the individual can comprehend the material read to him.
 - a. The student must understand the selection and be able to express himself accurately.
 - b. The student should have an adequate background of experience.
 - c. There should be no verbalism.
2. The student will have
 - a. 75% comprehension
 - b. Accurate pronunciation
 - c. An understanding of what is read or said.
 - d. Precise use of words to describe facts or experiences.
 - e. Use of language similar to that used in the selection and will answer using this language.
 - f. The ability to supply additional information due to background of experience (7:448).

These levels can also be determined through an informal testing procedure known as the Informal Reading Inventory. For more information regarding the Informal Reading Inventory, the writer refers the reader to Chapter XXI of Foundations of Reading Instruction by Emmett Betts.

Diagnostic tests measure specific areas of strengths and weaknesses. This particular type of test will probe in depth, specific skill areas and will yield four or five sub-scores that are especially useful in identifying specific needs.

Tests which evaluate specific skills are much like those tests mentioned by McKee. These evaluate a child in a specific skill or skills such as word recognition, comprehension, or rate of comprehension. This type of test is extremely useful after the teacher has diagnosed a weakness; he can administer a specific skill test to determine the extent of deficiency (46:68-69).

According to Dechant, reading tests, whether they be standardized or teacher made, have certain interpretations that should be observed:

1. Tests are designed solely for the purpose of understanding children better.
2. Teachers cannot simply believe or not believe in tests. Tests are not articles of faith. Tests should provide an objective situation for studying a sample of the child's behavior. They are useful only if they are interpreted correctly.

3. Tests do not measure something fixed and immutable that characterizes the pupil for all time. They measure how well the pupil performs certain tasks at a given point in time. No test score can determine with complete accuracy what the pupil can or cannot learn in the future.
4. When achievement scores do not measure up to ability or aptitude scores, it is not always correct to assume that the pupil is lazy or uninterested.
5. Differences depicted on profiles do not necessarily identify genuine areas of strengths and weaknesses. The tests may not be comparable or the subscores on a single test may not be equally reliable.
6. Tests do not give answers to problems. They are designed to give additional information on the basis of which the teacher can come to wiser decisions.
7. Test scores frequently have a direct bearing on the self-concept of the pupil. The teacher must understand how the child evaluates himself as a reader and what reading success means to him.
8. Test interpretations to the pupil should not be accompanied by expressions of pleasure or displeasure over the test score.
9. Tests should be given at the beginning of the semester rather than at the end of the school year. The test then is more likely to be interpreted as revealing something about the child rather than about the school (15:225-26).

V. INFORMAL TESTS

The major distinction between standardized tests and informal tests is that standardized tests are commercially prepared and informal tests are usually evaluative tools designed and made by the teacher. Standardized instruments usually have norms and achievement can be compared

nationally while informal tests are confined to a particular room or group of children. Robinson and Raugh state that:

Informal measures may be used (1) to diagnose aspects of reading achievement not measured by standardized tests, such as the ability to organize and retain ideas after reading an extended passage; (2) to learn about aspects of reading ability inadequately measured by standardized tests, such as the ability to draw conclusions or the ability to react to what is read; (3) to serve as a check on the results of a standardized test given to a particular individual; or (4) to measure the less tangible aspects of reading, such as the approach to a textbook assignment, the techniques of notetaking, or interests and attitudes (46:71).

Teacher made tests or informal tests can also be constructed to:

- A. check specific reading abilities;
- B. discover points at which the pupil's general ability breaks down;
- C. measure pupil progress and teaching efficiency in reading ability; and
- D. serve as comprehensive exercises suited to individual needs and abilities (39:276-77).

Informal checks can be used throughout the year to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of the students in a particular group or classroom.

McKee lists specific types of informal tests for first grade which are useful as diagnostic aids for the teacher:

- I. Tests of word recognition
- II. Tests of phrase meaning
- III. Tests on keeping the place
- IV. Tests on ability to select related meanings
- V. Tests on the comprehension of sentences, simple paragraphs, and longer selections
- VI. Tests on rate of comprehension
- VII. Tests on demanding meaning (39:277-78).

To summarize, Smith and Dechant state that:

In learning to read, all children do not progress at the same rate. Even among those of adequate ability, some meet problems that delay or block their learning. We must strive constantly to discover these deterrents to learning and plan individualized work to further each child's development. An effective developmental reading program is built on a foundation of early diagnosis of inadequacies, careful evaluation of needs and abilities, and the utilization of professionally designed materials and methods (51:407).

Warren G. Cutts poses the question of "whether a testing program leads to better standards and more well-defined objectives" (13:91). He goes on to imply that effective testing should lead to better standards and more well-defined objectives providing the principal and teachers understand the strengths and limitations of a test (13:91).

A listing of some of the standardized readiness, intelligence, and achievement tests for the first grade are found in Appendix A.

CHAPTER VI

RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is usually regarded as the most important subject in the school curriculum because it is basic to success in the other subject areas in school as well as being an essential skill for use in every day living.

This idea was reflected in Harris' statement that:

Reading is both the most important and most troublesome subject in the elementary-school curriculum. It is most important since it is a tool the mastery of which is essential to the learning of nearly every other school subject. It is most troublesome since pupils fail in reading far more frequently than in any other elementary skill (28:1).

Further evidence of the tremendous importance of reading is indicated by the large blocks of time allotted to the teaching of reading by administrators and teachers. The bulk of new reading materials, teaching devices, and research in the field of reading is still further indication of the importance reading holds (28:1).

To see that a good instructional reading program takes priority in the school curriculum, the principal can and should be the key supervisory person in this area.

Leven B. Hanigan states that:

The problem of the principal, accordingly, is one of producing dynamic, enthusiastic, competent leadership for his staff and of co-ordinating the services of the

personnel provided to help him in his endeavors. All phases of the educational program provide opportunities for doing this, but probably none is more important to him and the school as a whole than the reading program. More questions are raised by parents and teachers in this instructional area than any other. The importance of this instructional area is unquestioned and the responsibilities of the principal are many and varied (27:1).

With Hanigan's statement in mind, the writer proposes recommendations for the principal to follow in the areas of development of philosophy, inservice meetings, selection of materials, building rapport, reading readiness, word recognition skills, comprehension, oral and silent reading, locational skills, reading approaches, evaluation, and principal preparation.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

Development of Philosophy

The writer had two objectives in mind in conducting this study. The first objective was to gain insight and knowledge about the primary reading program with emphasis at the first grade level. The second objective was closely tied to the first in that gaining knowledge of the reading program at the primary level would aid the writer in guiding the development of an overall philosophy of reading at the elementary level.

This philosophy should be set within the framework of the school policy concerning reading. Teachers and

principal should build the philosophy together, not as separate agents. Teachers tend to be more effective if they have the opportunity to help in formulating basic philosophy.

After the philosophy has been developed, it is important that all teaching personnel thoroughly understand the basic philosophy underlying the reading program so that confusion and misunderstanding do not take place. This philosophy should encompass the place of basal readers, grouping for instruction, library materials, supplementary reading materials, the place and extent of remedial instruction, reporting procedures, as well as other phases of the program.

Inservice Meetings

As indicated in Chapter I, not all principals are recognized as reading specialists for various reasons. Therefore, it is recommended that principals should schedule staff meetings to thoroughly discuss factors of the reading program and bring in special service personnel to offer new ideas, suggestions, and personal help where needed.

Selection of Materials

There are so many materials available today, as indicated in this study, that the task of selection becomes of tremendous importance. Therefore, it is recommended that

the principal provide the leadership in selecting instructional materials by making adequate provision for his staff to evaluate them. Care should be taken to select materials that will be in keeping with the basic needs of the children within the community.

Principal leadership and guidance in the selection of materials can conserve on money and teachers' time.

Building Rapport

Building rapport is one of the most important responsibilities the principal has. It is recommended that the principal convey to his staff that his major purpose in the school is to help them become more effective as educators.

Every opportunity to help teachers and children must be seized by the principal to accomplish this purpose. It is also recommended that the principal work with his teachers in securing needed materials, take over a class to give a teacher an opportunity to visit another teacher while the latter is teaching reading, assist in administering informal tests, and work closely with children.

Reading Readiness

It is recommended that the elementary principal assume the responsibility to see that his teachers fully understand the goals and objectives of the readiness program. No student should start reading until he is ready to

begin. This means that the pre-reading aspects of the readiness program be continuous until the child is ready to read, even if this involves an entire year of readiness development.

Principals and teachers must recognize that if a student lacks a factor such as mental maturity or a sensory defect, instruction must be planned and differentiated in terms of the student's capabilities, interests, and needs. During the readiness period, emphasis should be on auditory and visual discrimination and oral communication, as well as continuation of the development of background experience.

Word Recognition Skills

In order for the principal to be a more effective supervisor of the reading program, he should be aware of the specific reading skills to be taught in the instructional program. Teachers call upon the principal to give suggestions and advice about teaching reading skills. Therefore, it is recommended that the principal be knowledgeable about the skills to be taught at the various grade levels.

The principal should be aware that only the word recognition skills which are most needed (phonetic elements, context clues, picture clues, and structural analysis) in attacking strange words included in the vocabulary for the particular grade should be taught.

A good systematic guide for skill development that administrators and teachers can follow would be the program incorporated in the basal series. And, since many of these programs incorporate the teaching of phonics, principals and teachers should realize that this is beneficial so long as teachers do not burden children with the many rules and generalizations.

It is also recommended that elementary principals help their teachers to be aware that word recognition skills are more effective when they are used together rather than in isolation.

After the child has learned to read, it should be recognized that he may have mastered some skills and will not need to have the same skills presented to him time after time. The child should be taught only those reading skills he needs to overcome a weakness.

Comprehension

To paraphrase, "comprehension of meaning should be the goal of all reading." Reading words without understanding is not reading. Therefore, it is recommended that the principal assume the responsibility to see that his teachers fully prepare children for the reading experience. A definite purpose must be established as well as a well-developed background of experience for the reading task.

Reading materials should be interesting and the vocabulary within the realm of the child's background of experience.

The child's level of comprehension should be constantly appraised so that reading with understanding is continuous.

Oral and Silent Reading

Effective oral reading is not reading in a circle where every child watches and waits for his turn. A good reader can be hindered by a poor reader who is slow and regresses back to the line which has already been read.

The writer's interpretation of effective oral reading is having the child read to find the answer to a question posed by the teacher or member of the reading group. For example, "How does Larry feel about the loss of his horse?" Through this method a teacher can gain a good deal of knowledge about a child as to his understanding and feeling of the story. If longer sections are to be read, one child can read while others close their books and become good listeners. Skills such as delivery, voice, tempo, and gesture are important for effective oral reading. It is recommended that the principal spend a great deal of time with his staff in explanation and demonstration of effective oral reading.

Time definitely should be set aside for silent reading whether it be from the basal reader or from library materials. Comprehension checks can and should be conducted by asking questions about the material the child has read. A child should read silently before he reads orally to gain full comprehension of the reading material.

Locational Skills

Recommendations for the principal regarding locational skills should be to see that his staff are prepared to begin as soon as the child receives a need for them. Locating the title of a story, use of table of contents, and finding the page number are all locational skills that a first grade child should be taught as soon as he begins his first book. At some point in the first grade picture dictionaries should be introduced, as they give children the introduction they need for use in later years with the more difficult dictionaries.

Reading Approaches

The first criteria that principals and teachers must be aware of in selecting a reading method is the objectives and needs of the children that the program has to meet. The second criteria should be the content and interest that the materials possess.

An important recommendation for elementary administrators is to point out to teachers that the greatest drawback of any reading program is not the material itself, but the misuse the program receives. For example, the teacher's manual for the basal series presents many suggestions for activities and ways of presenting word recognition skills. Teachers misuse the material by presenting all the suggested methods and activities which in turn become a disinteresting task to the child. Teachers must be constantly aware of the child's needs and present only those items which will increase his ability in a reading skill for which he is weak. Students who are proficient in a reading skill should not have to repeat the same skill training over and over. Their time could be spent more wisely in more advanced activities.

Before any principal or teacher attempts a new program in the school, it is recommended that they become as knowledgeable as possible about the program. Knowing what the advantages and limitations are will aid in assuring a successful program. Another important aspect in introducing a new program is the availability of materials. This is especially true of the individualized approach. Without the proper amount of materials, the program is inadequate before it begins.

If a teacher has had experience or has gained knowledge in teaching a different reading approach and it appears to meet the needs of a group of children, it is highly recommended that the principal be willing to let his teacher experiment with the program.

There is no better way to build rapport with a staff than to let teachers try new ways and methods they have learned.

Evaluation

It is recommended that standardized test selection be done by principal and teacher on the basis of purpose or purposes of the testing program within the local school district. Purpose(s) of teaching should be incorporated within the philosophy of the reading program.

It is also recommended that the elementary principal review early in the year the purpose(s) of the testing program with his staff. Principal and teacher should be aware that the diagnosis of children's weaknesses and strengths should hold priority in reading evaluation. Diagnostic evaluation should be a continuous process throughout the year through standardized tests, informal tests, and teacher observation and judgment.

A definite recommendation for the elementary principal is to continually remind all teachers that progress and

achievement in reading is never measured by the number of books the child has read or that it is not mandatory for a child to read or finish every page of every reader in the series.

The writer feels that it is important to remember that no single evaluation can determine a child's weakness or strength but only through continuous testing and observing can an administrator or teacher gain a true picture of the child.

Principalship Preparation

The importance of the reading program cannot be denied. If the elementary principal carries the responsibility for the supervision of this important area of the curriculum, the preparation should be directed in such a way that he receives the training he badly needs.

It is highly recommended that those members of the teaching profession who have aspirations of becoming principals should adequately train themselves in the area of reading, especially at the primary level since this is usually where initial formal instruction in reading begins. The writer also recommends that college personnel who are involved in the training of administrators should direct and guide future principals to adequately prepare themselves for this important aspect of his role as an administrator.

The writer would go so far as to recommend that classes in the teaching of reading be required rather than be elective.

III. CONCLUSION

To conclude, principals and teachers should be willing to depart from old approaches when other methods prove more effective in the teaching of reading. As emphasized in this thesis, effective total supervision of the reading program can only take place when the elementary principal has a thorough awareness of the essentials of reading.

This thesis has attempted to provide the elementary principal with an awareness of the readiness program, basic skills, current approaches to reading, and methods of evaluation for the first grade. It should be kept in mind that not all facets of reading are included in this paper because of the many factors involved in teaching reading. Because there is so much involved in teaching reading, the principal's task becomes even more difficult. Therefore, the following concept by Warren Cutts best expressed the convictions of the writer as to how the principal and teacher must view the reading program:

The question for reading teachers and curriculum planners to answer is not, "Which method or instructional plan is best?" Rather, the concern should be to determine how various curricular patterns can best be combined to accomplish the major objectives in modern reading instruction in keeping with local conditions. No single reading program is ideal for every school system (13:73).

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A
STANDARDIZED TESTS FOR FIRST GRADE

The following is a list of various standardized tests available for the first grade. The list is by no means all inclusive, but does include some of the tests which are most commonly used.

I. Intelligence Tests

A. Group Tests

1. California Test of Mental Maturity, Pre-Primary Series, by E. T. Sullivan, W. W. Clark, and E. W. Tiegs. Hollywood: California Test Bureau.
2. Detroit Beginning First-Grade Intelligence Test, by A. M. Engel and H. J. Baker. Yonkers, New York: World Book Company.
3. Kuhlmann-Anderson Intelligence Tests, by F. Kuhlmann and R. G. Anderson. Minneapolis: Educational Test Bureau.
4. Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Tests, Alpha Test, by Authur S. Otis. Yonkers, New York: World Book Company.
5. Pintner-Cunningham Primary Test, by R. Pintner, B. V. Cunningham, and W. N. Durost. Yonkers, New York: World Book Company.
6. Pintner Non-Language Primary Mental Test, by Rudolf Pintner. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.
7. Science Research Associates Primary Mental Abilities, for ages 5-7, by L. L. Thurstone and Thelma Gwinn Thurstone. Chicago: Science Research Associates.

B. Individual Tests

1. Arthur Point Scale of Performance Tests, Revised Form II, by Grace Arthur. New York: Commonwealth Fund.
2. Kuhlmann Tests of Mental Development, by Fred Kuhlmann. Minneapolis: Educational Test Bureau.
3. Pintner-Paterson Performance Scale, by G. H. Hildreth and R. Pintner. New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.
4. Revised Stanford-Binet Scales, by L. M. Terman and M. A. Merrill. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.
5. Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children, by David A. Wechsler. New York: Psychological Corporation.

II. Reading Readiness Tests

1. American School Reading Readiness Tests, by Robert B. Young, Willis E. Pratt, and Carroll A. Whitmer, Public School Publishing Co., 1941.
2. Binion-Beck Reading Readiness Test for Kindergarten and First Grade, by Harriet S. Binion and Roland L. Beck, Acorn Publishing Co., 1945.
3. Classification Test for Beginners in Reading, by Clarence R. Stone and Clifford C. Grover, Webster Publishing Co., 1933.
4. Gates Reading Readiness Tests, by Arthur I. Gates, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1939.
5. Harrison-Stroud Reading-Readiness Test, by Lucile Harrison and James B. Stroud, Houghton-Mifflin Company, 1949-50.
6. Lee-Clark Reading Readiness Test, 1951 Revision, by J. Murray Lee and Willis W. Clark, California Test Bureau.

7. Metropolitan Readiness Test, by Gertrude H. Hildreth and Nellie L. Griffiths, World Book Co., 1933-1950.
8. Murphy-Durrell Diagnostic Reading Readiness Test, by Helen A. Murphy and Donald D. Durrell, World Book Company, 1949.
9. Reading Aptitude Tests, by Marion Monroe, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1935.
10. Reading Readiness Test, by M. J. Van Wagenen, Educational Test Bureau, 1932-1938.
11. School Readiness Inventory, by K. M. Banham, Educational Test Bureau, 1950.
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III. Survey Tests

1. Developmental Reading Tests: Primary Level. Lyons and Carnahan, Chicago 16, Illinois.
2. Gates Primary Reading Tests, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.
3. Metropolitan Achievement Tests: Reading. Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., New York.
4. Stroud-Hieronymus Primary Reading Profiles. Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, Massachusetts.

IV. Diagnostic Tests

1. California Reading Test, California Test Bureau, Los Angeles, California.
2. Diagnostic Reading Tests. Committee on Diagnostic Reading Tests, Inc., Mountain Home, North Carolina; distributed also by Science Research Associates, Chicago, Illinois.
3. Diagnostic Reading Tests. Scholastic Testing Service, Inc., Chicago 45, Illinois.
4. Doren Diagnostic Reading Test. American Guidance Service, Inc., Minneapolis 14, Minnesota.

5. Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty. New Edition. Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., New York, 1955.
6. Gates Reading Diagnostic Test, Revised Edition. Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University.

V. Achievement Tests

1. American School Achievement Tests, Revised, Form D.
2. Durrell-Sullivan Reading Capacity and Achievement Tests.
3. Metropolitan Achievement Tests.
4. Stanford Achievement Tests.
5. Wide Range Achievement Tests.
6. Williams Primary Reading Tests, Revised (1955).