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Techniques to Help Disadvantaged Intermediate Elementary Children Learn to Read

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TECHNIQUES TO HELP DISADVANTAGED INTERMEDIATE
ELEMENTARY CHILDREN LEARN TO READ



A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Education
Central Washington State College



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



by
Myrtle J. Stoutenburg
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

The foundations of our democratic society have guaranteed inalienable rights and the dignity of man to every individual, yet considerable cultural and social deprivation still exists among the so-called socially disadvantaged lower-class citizenry of the United States. This condition has resulted from economic poverty and membership in a sub-culture which have not been attuned to opportunities and demands of American society.

If socially disadvantaged children are to share equally in the rewards of our society, the schools of America must seek to enable such children to live successfully with others, to provide opportunities for satisfactory development of their potentials, and better prepare them to take their place in the American society.

The Education Policies Commission dealt with this problem by stating:

The basic American value, respect for the individual, has led to one of the major changes which the American people have placed on their schedule: to foster the development of individual capacities which will enable each human being to become the best person he is capable of being (17:2-7).

The sudden focusing of public interest in educational programs for young disadvantaged children has focused

attention on the curriculum and the school environment that will meet the specific needs of these children. Until recently little was known about the specific needs of disadvantaged young children and the education that would best serve their needs. At the present time there is an especially urgent need to identify the particular areas of deprivation of disadvantaged children and to specify the educational content and environment that will adequately serve them.

Educators from schools in depressed areas have recognized the hypothetical nature of some of the current information about disadvantaged groups. They believe enough is known to indicate specific areas of content and practices that may counteract the high rates of academic retardation, failure, truancy, staff turnover, pupil mobility, and disciplinary problems. The traditional educational programs have not served the disadvantaged children in meeting new tasks and responsibilities demanded of individuals in our changing society.

"Because educational programs have not centered on instructional approaches and techniques appropriate to the disadvantaged child, this child still exists," says Cohen (5:433-35).

A Research Conference on Education and Cultural Deprivation in 1964 (4:20) dealt with compensatory education by stating:

Methods and materials which have served the average child well do not seem to help the disadvantaged child acquire the vital communications and computation skills which are necessary to achievement of educational goals. Conventional approaches to the acquiring of these skills make learning demands on the disadvantaged children which they simply are not able to meet. Present school practices do not succeed in overcoming the initial differences between advantaged and disadvantaged.

Unless the school reshapes its curriculum and methods to begin with the child where he is, learning cannot proceed in a fruitful and meaningful way for the disadvantaged child. Present practices do not succeed in overcoming the initial difference between advantaged and disadvantaged; new programs utilizing new methods and materials geared to changing quality rather than quantity are needed, according to Cohen (5:435).

Bloom (4:22-23) states it is the clear responsibility of the schools to devise a more effective school program for these children. It is in the interest of the school to halt the cumulative deficits of these children as early as possible in order to make later instruction and learning increasingly effective.

Educational leadership has been remiss in the process of giving professional guidance in an awareness

of the behavioral patterns of the disadvantaged child. The special problems of these children have been given scant attention. It has been assumed the same curriculum and teaching strategies will work with both the advantaged and disadvantaged child. This study concerns itself with the reading deficiencies and problems operant in the performance of these children in the classroom.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study is two-fold. The first objective is to review research done in the area of helping disadvantaged elementary children learn to read, the importance of this research to scholastic growth and whether or not it merits the time required for development of techniques and activities.

The second objective is to formulate a collection of techniques and activities for helping disadvantaged elementary children learn to read.

Importance of the study. Studies of children from economically disadvantaged families have shown that reading difficulties are more prevalent among this segment of society than among children from more affluent homes.

The Sexton study shows evidence that low income groups are usually weak in reading while upper income groups are usually strong in this ability (25:31).

Further support is offered by Riessman when he states, "The general estimate of reading inability is 15 to 20 per cent among school children while among educationally deprived the disability estimate is as high as 50 per cent" (22:115).

If this condition is to change, it will be necessary to find techniques, methods, and materials that can be employed effectively to help disadvantaged elementary children learn to read.

Pollack (21:78) stated:

Although many children experience difficulty in learning to read, most of them can and do learn when they are provided with adequate remedial instruction Appropriate instruction is based on these needs identified through accurate diagnosis When a thorough diagnosis has been completed, a program of instruction can be developed which will enable the child to overcome his reading deficiencies and permit him to read at a level commensurate with his mental capacities.

Harris (13:25) stated: "Very little has been done to study the reading needs of the culturally deprived in the middle elementary grades and much more needs to be done."

This study is an attempt to identify techniques that might be of help in meeting classroom needs for the

disadvantaged intermediate elementary child learn to read.

Limitations of the study. A review of previous research of the literature in the field of reading is not intended to be complete but confined to the areas of (1) compensatory education for the socially disadvantaged intermediate elementary child in reading, (2) diagnostic measurements and procedures used, and (3) suggestive techniques and materials.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purposes of this study the terms below have been defined in the following manner.

Disadvantaged child. The term disadvantaged child in this study is to be interpreted as meaning those children in elementary school which differ from each other in a number of ways, but have in common such characteristics as low economic status, low social status, low educational achievements, limited participation in community activities and limited potential for upward mobility in the present complex system of social arrangements.

Compensatory education. Compensatory education is any teaching strategy to direct both the enrichment and

instructional innovation to enable socially disadvantaged children to overcome deficiencies. This may also be seen as a means of preventing limitations in the fullest development of the children's innate abilities and potentialities. Compensatory education is not used, in this study, to infer any form of simplified or "watered-down" version of the traditional classroom curriculum.

Techniques. Techniques are interpreted to mean practices that have not been customarily a part of the traditional school program. This would include those educational programs, practices, techniques, and projects designed to overcome the deficiencies of reading in disadvantaged children.

III. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THE THESIS

Organization of the remainder of the thesis includes a review of the literature related to research in the areas of the disadvantaged child learning to read in the intermediate elementary school and criteria for choosing suggestive techniques and materials to help them learn to read in Chapter II. Chapter III is the summary and recommendations for a suggestive program of reading to meet individual needs.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED RESEARCH

This chapter relates research in two areas: characteristics of the disadvantaged child and approaches and activities for helping the disadvantaged intermediate elementary child learn to read. First, consideration was given to the characteristics of the disadvantaged child and factors operative in his life. Research reviewed in this area also related to compensatory education for the disadvantaged intermediate elementary child in reading, diagnostic measurements and procedures used. Second, this chapter dealt with considerations for criteria for choosing suggestive techniques and materials that would attempt to fill the needs of disadvantaged children based on research evidence.

It was necessary to characterize the disadvantaged child before reviewing research related to compensatory education in reading designed for the disadvantaged. A characterization of the disadvantaged child was considered advantageous in order to better understand what type of approaches in reading might be designed to suit the needs of this child.

I. CHARACTERISTICS OF DISADVANTAGED

Characteristics of disadvantaged were cited by Riessman (22:26-30) to be:

1. Relatively slow in cognitive tasks but not stupid.
2. Appears to learn most readily through a physical concrete approach (often is slow but may be more persistent where the content is meaningful and valued).
3. Appears to be anti-intellectual, pragmatic rather than theoretical.
4. Traditional, superstitious, and somewhat religious in a traditional sense.
5. Is essentially from a male-centered culture, with the exception of a major Negro sub-culture which is matriarchal.
6. Inflexible and not open to reason about many of his beliefs.
7. Feels alienated from the larger social structure, with resultant frustration.
8. Holds others to blame for his misfortune.
9. Values masculinity and attendant action, viewing intellectual activities as unmasculine.
10. Appreciates knowledge for its practical vocational ends but rarely for its own sake.
11. Desires a better standard of living with personal comforts but does not wish to adopt a middle class way of life.
12. Deficient in auditory attention and interpretation skills.
13. Reads ineffectively and is deficient in communication skills.

14. Views talk, reading, and intellectualism in general as unmasculine--the opposite of action.

Dale (6:778-86) has listed from the findings of his study the following characteristics:

1. Models of excellence in use of vocabulary or sentence structure are not easily available to these disadvantaged children.
2. They come from broken homes rather than intact ones. Often there is non-existent or weak father image.
3. Underprivileged children stay closer to home, in their own neighborhood. Their physical ranging is limited.
4. They have a negative self-image.
5. Their auditory span, their capacity for sustained attention is less than middle or upper-class children.
6. They use a smaller number of less varied words to express themselves.
7. Their sentences are shorter and more categorical. There are more incomplete sentences.
8. These children meet limited variability in the kinds of problems they face, have no opportunity to be challenged by the complexities faced by middle-class children.
9. Home tasks tend to be motoric, not motivated by distant goals. There is emphasis on the immediate.
10. There is probably less listening to TV or radio, but here the data is limited.
11. There is a lack of manipulable objects in the home.

Factors operative in his life. Findings on the family characteristics as compared with other children are believed to be operative in the lives of children whose families are disadvantaged. Havighurst (14:18-21) compiled and concluded that disadvantaged children lack several of the following:

1. A family conversation which answers his questions and encourages him to ask questions; extends his vocabulary with words and with adjectives and adverbs; gives him a right and a need to stand up for and to explain his point of view on the world.
2. A family environment which sets an example of reading; provides a variety of toys and play materials with color, sizes and objects that challenge his ingenuity with his hands and his mind.
3. Two parents who read a good deal; read to him; show him that they believe in the value of education; reward him for good school achievement.

Other findings by Havighurst (14:19) state the child has learned a restricted language which give the child a language environment characterized by:

1. Short, grammatically simple, often unfinished sentences with a poor syntactical form stressing the active voice.
2. Simple and repetitive use of conjunctions (so, then, because).
3. Little use of subordinate clauses to break down the initial categories of the dominant subject.
4. Inability to hold a formal subject through a speech sequence; thus dislocated informational content is facilitated.

5. Rigid and limited use of adjectives and adverbs.
6. Constraint on the self-reference pronoun; frequent use of personal pronoun.
7. Frequent use of statements where the reason and conclusions are confounded to produce a categorical statement.
8. A large number of statements / phrases which signal a requirement for the previous speech sequence to be reinforced: "Wouldn't it?" "You see?" "You know?" This process is termed sympathetic circularity.
9. Individual selection from a group of idiomatic phrases or sequence will frequently occur.
10. The individual qualifications is implicit in the sentence organization; it is a language of implicit meaning.

A child who has learned a restricted language at home is likely to have difficulty in school, where an elaborate language is used and taught by the teacher; and the difficulty of the child is likely to increase as he goes further in school, unless he learns an elaborate language that is expected in the school.

Disadvantaged children are not ready for instruction and as a result their school behavior frequently reflect factors believed to be operative in their lives. They are not as adept in socializing or being one of the group in the middle-class world of work and its rewards, they feel no incentive to learn the repertoire of behaviors needed by those who enjoy membership in the

dominant culture. Young disadvantaged children learn to be themselves as they consciously and unconsciously follow the ways of those around them. They develop the kinds of attitudes, skills, and values that will be necessary for them to parallel the lives of their parents and other members of their intimate circle and class. The customary feeling of being competent to cope with their own environment before school becomes threatened with adults and other children who talk and act differently in the school setting. This confrontation creates perplexing and bewildering demands upon them. These factors have been summarized by Metfessel (16:466-69):

1. Disadvantaged children are often characterized by gaps in knowledge and learning.
2. Disadvantaged children are generally unaware of the ground rules for success in school.
3. Disadvantaged children need assistance in perceiving an adult as a person of whom you ask a question and receive answers.
4. Disadvantaged children frequently end the reading habit before it is begun.
5. Disadvantaged children have very little concept of relative size.
6. Disadvantaged children generally have had little experience of receiving approval for success in a task.
7. Disadvantaged children are placed in a marked disadvantage in a timed test situation.
8. Disadvantaged children understand more language than they use.

9. Disadvantaged children frequently use a great many words with fair precision, but not those words representative of school culture.
10. Disadvantaged children do not perceive the concept that objects have names, and that the same object may have different names.
11. Disadvantaged children learn less from what they hear than do middle-class children.
12. Disadvantaged children tend to learn more readily by inductive than by deductive approaches.
13. Disadvantaged children are frequently symbolically deprived.
14. Disadvantaged children need to see concrete application of what is learned to immediate sensory and topical satisfaction.
15. Disadvantaged tend to have poor attention span and consequently experience difficulty in following the directions of a teacher.

A study by Sexton (25:29) shows evidence that low income groups are usually weak, and upper income groups are usually strong in reading as is shown in Table I in these results:

TABLE I

FOURTH GRADE IOWA ACHIEVEMENT SCORES

Major Income Group	Reading*
I. (\$3,000.00)	-.14
II. (\$5,000.00)	-.06
III. (\$7,000.00)	+0.07
IV. (\$8,000.00)	+0.20

*Relative to total composite score.

A minus sign before the number indicates that the score was below the composite score, a plus sign, that it was above.

Sexton (25:29) further reported, as more proof of low income as an operative factor in the life of the disadvantaged child, "Poor readers as a group, come with surprising consistency from children of low socio-economic status."

II. CRITERIA FOR CHOOSING SUGGESTIVE TECHNIQUES

This study involved the examination of descriptive literature in the areas of compensatory education for the disadvantaged intermediate elementary child in reading, the diagnostic measurements and procedures used, and suggestive techniques and materials that may be used to

better enable them to fulfill the fundamental purposes of reading in their education.

Criteria

The literature was examined for the purposes of selecting appropriate specific approaches and procedures for an intermediate elementary classroom in reading. The basis for selection of techniques would be identified by three criteria. These were:

Frequency of use. Frequency of use criterion has been chosen because of the freedom from constraint with which the regular curriculum can be supplemented by compensatory procedures or techniques without interrupting positive benefits which may be accruing to other children in the established classroom program.

Flexibility in techniques. Flexibility in techniques will make a course of action more adaptable to class scheduling, to multi-purpose materials, to capabilities of teacher personnel and other potentials of a school. Vicarious methods by which the same course of action may be employed has innate value and merits consideration as a potentially effective practice to pursue.

Corroboration of authorities in the field. Corroboration of authorities in the field as eminent educators and social psychologists who have been included in the bibliography and quoted in the literature should show substantial evidence that establishment and application of this criterion will help meet the special needs of the disadvantaged in the field of reading.

Considerations for Techniques Applications

Significant application possibilities for many considerations must be recognized in understanding a reading program for disadvantaged intermediate elementary school children. The significant possibilities were then summarized into categories. These were:

Applications pertaining to effective teachers and other personnel. Only teachers that possess a high degree of empathy, sensitivity, and perceptiveness should be working with disadvantaged children. Teachers who are perceptive can tell something of how children feel about themselves from their actions and can help the disadvantaged children know themselves as expanding, self-fulfilling, and worthy. Teachers that can provide a learning environment that builds self-concepts and generates a warm sense

of belonging compensates to children for some of the disadvantages of their lives.

These teachers must be willing to replace the present, highly competitive, system of marks, test and comparisons of all sorts with other types of incentives to learning. These teachers must be willing to remove the traditional curriculum and replace with carefully designed packets of learning activities and knowledge that will be purposeful, meaningful, and intellectually stimulating to the disadvantaged learner now.

Personnel for workshops, in-service programs and institutes should have necessary qualifications in training and experience required for specific areas, as well as, initiative and staying power, sensitivity and energy, a sense of fun and deep respect for children.

Resource personnel, supervisors, and consultants should be able to gather resource data and materials relevant to programs, evaluate and establish standards for disadvantaged elementary children.

Selection of specialized professional personnel, such as psychologists, social service workers, speech therapists, audiologists, special reading teachers, and nurses should be virtually the same requirements as those for teachers in the degree of empathy, sensitivity, and perceptiveness.

Non-professional personnel, as aides in classroom, coordinators, tutors and student tutors should be trained in supplementary duties that reinforce the teaching purposes and improves the achievement of the disadvantaged learner.

Applications pertaining to suggestive guidelines for selecting instructional materials for the disadvantaged. Materials should be chosen to meet individual and specific needs. All disadvantaged children are not alike and they do not all have similar instructional needs. The range of individual differences is just as great as it is in the rest of the population. To assume that one program or one teaching approach will meet the needs of a varied group would certainly be an understatement of meeting the goals of American education in the education of the whole child.

The fundamental needs of all children are the same, regardless of their national origin, creed, color, or language. An even greater challenge is offered to educators in meeting the needs of the disadvantaged child, as supplying these needs is complicated by experience, language, and culture barriers which impedes the progress of education. There are three formidable barriers which disadvantaged children must breach before he can hope to

achieve academically to the degree that his intellectual ability warrants. These are: (1) Experience background, (2) cultural differences, and (3) language deficiencies.

Experience background. The child from a severely restricted experiential background will not have the conceptual foundation of his advantaged counterpart. This should be a first consideration in undertaking a reading program for disadvantaged children. Reading ability is affected by a meager background of experience and concepts. A very fundamental aspect of the reading process is translating printed words into their spoken counterparts and understanding what they mean; or in other words, what concepts they represent.

A review of research and opinions of authorities revealed acceptance of the idea that reading programs for disadvantaged children must provide experiences. Edwards (8:257) stated,

It is absolutely imperative that anyone responsible for a good reading program for disadvantaged learners first understand that these learners have severely debilitating experiential-conceptual informational deficits, that they know that these deficits are not a reflection of innate mental deficiency, and that they take measures constantly throughout the learning program to literally pump into meaningful experiences and mediate effectively to help permanent, well understood concepts evolved from these experiences.

Serra (24:283) claimed that concepts for all learners are better developed when provision is made for a wide range of experiences, vicarious as well as direct. Smith (26:401) also advocated the use of vicarious and direct experiences to build concepts and vocabulary for the disadvantaged learner.

An evaluation of research concerning the weak experiential conceptual foundation of the disadvantaged learner leads to the following conclusions: (1) The reading program for the disadvantaged learner should include experiences that help build experiential-conceptual background, and (2) extensive vocabulary and concept development is essential in the reading program for the disadvantaged intermediate elementary child.

Cultural differences. Although any culture is continuously undergoing change, it meets with more resistance in minority cultures which are desperately trying to preserve these cultures against acculturation. Thus, the child is under constant pressure from the home and from the school. The cultural background of the child is often steeped in tradition that is not flexible or amendable to change. An insight into the ramifications of a culture is essential in order to more fully meet the educational needs of disadvantaged children.

Riessman (22:6-8) defines these cultural differences as consisting of the following:

(1) it appears to be a contra-culture of the main stream culture, (2) it is rebellious and oppositional to the dominant way of life, and (3) is made up of a structure similar to the store front church, the protest movement, the trade union, the fraternal lodge, the large extended family, and the neighborhood club or gang. Thus, culture is the effort to cope with the surrounding environment.

Through an empathic understanding of the culture, educators and teachers will come to learn why he needs a structured classroom, how to utilize his in-group loyalty, informality, equalitarianism, humor and the like. They will come to understand why he does not need "love" but respect. Effective education requires a basic, positive understanding of traditions and attitudes. To disregard or discard his traditions and attitudes may cause learning to cease. The "education-cultural shock" the disadvantaged child experiences upon entering school leads to a sense of inferiority, frustration and inadequacy. His culture is depreciated, his language is ridiculed, and his thinking is in disarray as a result of the reaction.

The language of a people reflects its culture, like a mirror. An understanding of others has frequently been hampered by prejudices about his language. Many Americans are unaware that they speak a variety of English that can be called a dialect. Since language is a form

of social behavior, there is reaction to a person's speech patterns. If the dialect differs from others they may be considered quaint, naive, stupid, suave, cultivated, conceited, alien or any number of other things. Hence, attitudes toward the outsider tend to be negative. Educators need to move toward actively appreciating the unique dialect of the disadvantaged child and begin teaching English as a second language.

Sylvia Aston-Warner (1:29-30) provided the creative approach to the teaching of reading by stating: "First words must mean something to a child. First words must have intense meaning to a child. They must be part of his being." Mearns (15:75) advanced that "Childhood will have no difficulty with literature if it has a chance to develop its own native gifts in language. This, of course, is not the whole story, but it is one of its most important chapters."

Examination of current research leads to suggestion that: (1) General cultural interaction between equal cultures can become the hallmark of the elementary school and should be developed as part of the reading school program, and (2) the development of many techniques appropriate for the cognitive style of disadvantaged children should be relevant to the strengths and weaknesses of the individual needs of the child in the reading program.

Language deficiencies. Another consideration for programing techniques for a reading program is the relation of the extremely impoverished, restricted vocabulary of disadvantaged children. Vocabulary development is essential to success in reading. Figure 1 (10:164) pointed out the seriousness of limited vocabulary development by stating: "A meager vocabulary places quite a limitation on reading, for, on the basis of comparison made through investigation, culturally deprived children know, on the average, only every second or third word found in their textbooks. Not knowing every second or third word is a serious handicap and one which precludes very much learning from reading." Smith (26:36) stated, "Disadvantaged children require special help with vocabulary. This includes both word recognition and word meaning which is a deficiency of environmental origin."

An exploration of current research revealed that scholars in all disciplines have become concerned with the precious commodity known as "creative communication" and how it may be developed in elementary children. Creative communication affects the teaching of language in terms of (1) objectives, (2) methodology and (3) outcomes.

Basic objectives of teaching language, in the past, has been centered largely around the teaching of the correct use of language. The teaching of the effective use of language . . . language which is dynamic, forceful, clear, imaginative and creative must be added to these objectives.

Children are creative persons, not scholiasts: they use language as the artist the world over and in all ages has used his medium, not as an end in itself but as a means for the expression of thought and feeling. Language in itself, they sense, is comparatively unimportant; if the vision is steady and the feeling true these will find their proper vehicle. The attention is never on the word but upon the force that creates the word

says Mearns (15:9).

Smith (26:22) states,

The tendency to minimize the effect of method of teaching among today's critics of educational procedures must be neutralized by showing that, while the content of teaching gives children the knowledge necessary for living, it is the method of teaching that gives them the basic values, appreciations, and skills which develop their creativeness.

Then, creative teaching is a method of teaching which must differ from many current pedagogical techniques, if the objectives for developing creativity and the objectives for developing language skills are to be accomplished.

The act of creating has been described as the ability to tape one's past experiences and arrange them into new patterns . . . not necessarily new to the world, but new to the individual. Every human being experiences

and perceives differently, creates his own reservoir of unique experiences, thereby he produces a unique product. The aim of the school in a democratic society is to develop each individual to his fullest potential and if the disadvantaged child is to share in the rewards of a democratic society he needs: (1) Vocabulary development designed as an essential part of his reading program, (2) vocabulary development that includes specific work in auditory discrimination, word attack skills with word meaning, (3) language training based upon basic experiences of the individual child, (4) new vocabulary training developed from direct or vicarious experiences for eventual development in meaning, and (5) an acceptance of his own vocabulary as a tool of communication so English could be taught as a second language.

Applications pertaining to instructional practices and writing materials guidelines. Riessman (23:10)

strongly recommends that the program be geared to the mental style of the disadvantaged and be positive in approach. He emphasizes the following positive elements:

1. Develop approaches and techniques appropriate for the cognitive style of deprived children.
2. Teachers should aim high, expect more, to work for more from these children.

3. Function against the current tendency of over-emphasizing vocational, nonacademic education for these children.
4. Teachers need not simply aim to "bring these children up to grade level," but rather that they actually develop new kinds of creativity.
5. Work for more pluralistic and democratic school environment because different cultures and styles will exist and interact side by side.
6. Use more approaches and techniques, such as role-playing and visual aids, for eliciting the special cognitive style and creative potential of these children.
7. Give more rewards so that it will lead to a real appreciation that slowness, one-track learning, and physical learning are potential strengths of these children. Speed is not of their culture.
8. Have program stress games and action rather than tests. Tests are not necessary to learning; indeed, some youngsters do not learn through tests.
9. Disadvantaged children can be taught test taking skills by making the task into a game.
10. Utilize a great many physical and visual techniques already in operation in the school.
11. Teach test-taking know-how. Do not take this school know-how for granted, but rather teach it explicitly.
12. Stop teaching by I.Q. They are strictly a product of the school culture and reward only certain types of learning and ways of working.
13. Look for creativity as the untapped source of originality and independence for talent in learning styles.
14. Bring out the hidden verbal ability of the deprived through role-playing and the use of formal vs. informal language.

15. Improve the listening style of the disadvantaged as they are not accustomed to listening to people.
16. Do not attempt to make disadvantaged children carbon copies of middle-class people.
17. Offer guidance in scheduling work according to the patterns of the child. For example, allow for a warm-up time and insist on perseverance once they get involved.
18. Use other disadvantaged pupils to tutor lower grade pupils having reading difficulties. The necessity to explain something to others will cause the student to find it necessary to focus their own attention more sharply.
19. Involve parents in the program so parents may assist their children.

Olsen (19:1-3), in writing guidelines for making supplementary materials for the disadvantaged, suggests the following be observed:

1. Keep sentences short, not more than 10-15 words on the average. Avoid sentences that involve qualifications, extensions of an idea and etc.
2. Keep sentence structure simple: subject, verb, object. Avoid complex inversions, dangling modifiers, participial phrases, etc.
3. Use present tense verbs whenever possible.
4. Avoid verb forms like: to be, was, has, make, etc. Use strong verbs.
5. Use definite and indefinite articles sparingly. Try not to open sentences with "a", "the".
6. Avoid tricky punctuation like colons and semi-colons, and dashes.

7. Avoid words that link and relate: "then" and "when" (time words), "because" and "therefore" (cause and effect words), "if" (conditional). Such words point up relational properties of things, people, and ideas that call for mental leaps that many of the disadvantaged find difficult.
8. Be personal. Use the "you" approach and include many personal references.
9. Do not weight paragraphs with too many ideas at one time.
10. The one language the disadvantaged knows well is speech. Research indicates that he does best with writing that approximate speech. Therefore, use a casual and conversational style. Use quotes and dialogue whenever possible.
11. To "tie down" an abstract idea, use a metaphor or simile that the reader knows. Illuminate generalizations with many examples.
12. Avoid large number and arithmetical symbols. For example, make 25% "one in four".
13. Do not be afraid to repeat words . . . with moderation.
14. Above all: do not be moralistic. Avoid "ought", "must", "should", etc.
15. Involve the reader as much as possible. Ask him questions, tell him jokes, "bait" him, challenge him, dare him, etc. This helps to pull him into the communication act.
16. Include exercises that involve critical thinking, differentiating fact from opinion and so on rather than just recall.

Many current instructional materials and programs examined as part of the research and included in the bibliography discloses an indication that people in the

field of educating the disadvantaged intermediate student have followed a pattern of writing materials in these styles:

1. Had kept the reading level of exercises on the same reading level as suggested in texts used.
2. Had avoided ambiguity. Seemed to know exactly what was to be brought out of the student by the questions asked.
3. Questions were clear and precise in their meaning.
4. One, and only one, answer would correctly or clearly be the best answer to the question.
5. Indefiniteness or "open" completion items were avoided.
6. If any completion exercises were used, the blanks were placed at the end of the sentences.
7. Not more than ten questions within any exercise.
8. Great variety was exercised in the exercises.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The characteristics of the disadvantaged child have been cited in this chapter. The reader has been given a greater insight into what the child is apt to be like and what this child is likely to bring with him to the classroom in school. Implications for programing reading instruction for disadvantaged children are proposed. Other major considerations found vital to teaching reading were: the criteria for choosing suggestive techniques

pertaining to effective teachers and other personnel and guidelines for selecting instructional materials for use that may assist in removing the learning barriers in the areas of (1) experience background, (2) cultural differences, and (3) language.

The following chapter presents a summary and recommendations for a reading program designed for meeting individual needs in teaching reading based upon the major considerations cited in review of the research.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter describes techniques to "sell" disadvantaged intermediate elementary children on the idea that reading can be exciting, fun, stimulating, useful and is the essential skill for living. The description relates approaches for meeting individual needs. Recommendations are made for further study.

I. TECHNIQUES

It is imperative to determine the instructional reading level of the individual before the techniques could be utilized. Research indicates that a child attains the greatest amount of growth in reading if he is instructed at the proper level. Not all disadvantaged children are severely handicapped readers or deficient readers, but research indicates that reading deficiencies are more apt to be prevalent among this group.

It has already been pointed out by Bloom (4:20) and others that traditional testing methods are not effective with measuring ability of the disadvantaged. This is due, primarily, to the language deficiencies, cultural differences, and lack of experiences background.

Core of program. The core of the program will be to develop a vocabulary through direct and vicarious experiences. Cultural differences will be undertaken through direct and varied experiences in role-playing activities. Experiences deficiencies will be direct experiences that may give positions of responsibility and independence.

The basic learning problems of the disadvantaged are discussed in Chapter II. An array of techniques and guidelines for selection and creation of instructional materials have been advanced. Research indicates that traditional curriculum, basal readers or textbooks, and materials are not geared to the vocabulary of the disadvantaged.

Reading materials and activities are to be designed for what the disadvantaged might like to read and could relate to their lives and not what is "good" for the student to read. Fader (9) stresses throughout his book that unless a person associates reading with pleasure, he is unlikely to read at all. It is recommended that a collection of varied reading materials be made available to the student. These materials may include trade books, magazines, newspapers, series books, book club materials, originally written student books, simplified and teacher made materials, workbooks, games, records, tapes, and etc.;

in lieu of basal, traditional materials. Reading materials are to be assembled on the basis of instructional levels within the range of the class.

Directed experiences cited are to serve as the connecting link between helping the child learn to read and building specific skills in reading. Evaluation for determining reading levels and growth in reading will be through informal testing methods. Pre-testing and post-testing is to be systematic and frequently. If a child fails to improve in reading during the school year, the teacher should look for other areas of success. Results are more important than procedures.

Informal testing to determine instructional levels. Teacher designed oral and silent reading inventory which measures comprehension may be used to determine the most appropriate grade level of materials to use. The results of the diagnosis may be valuable in guiding the selection of materials and specific methods of teaching reading. Certain of the findings and major recommendations from the research offer that no single method of instruction be advocated. A variety of techniques could be utilized and adjusted to the competencies and needs of the individual. Techniques and instructional materials are based in large measure on conjecture.

Informal test. The classroom teacher may prepare his own materials for the oral or silent reading test with comprehension measurements. This may be prepared from any set of books with which the pupil is unfamiliar. Paragraphs are selected from each level and the number of words counted. The number of errors in oral reading should not exceed one for every twenty words read when attempting to find the instructional level. No more than four comprehension questions should be asked on the oral reading test and one error is allowed. Comprehension check on the silent reading would consist of no more than four questions asked and one error allowed. No time limit is to be set on the silent reading activity.

An individual record and results from the oral and silent reading informal test is to be kept. Specifics to look for in oral reading are: word by word, poor phrasing, substitutes, repeats, omits, carelessness, expressionless, loses place, reverses and points to words. In silent reading, look for: moves lips, points to words and vocalization noises. Also, a record of what he needs help with in word attack skills.

The pupil is asked to begin with material at or somewhat below his grade level. He should be reminded to read carefully and the best he can. He is to be told that he is to answer questions on the reading material.

Through the use of lower to higher reading levels as determined by the number of errors in the preceding paragraph, the approximate instruction level is identified.

When a pupil has considerable difficulty in oral reading from material at a low reading level his recognition of basic sight words should be checked. The Dolch Basic Sight Words or Queens College Educational Clinic Grade Word Lists have generally proved to be reliable and useful to determine instructional level. If a child has difficulty with four or more words in any list, he is likely to find many unknown words in books of that level. Three errors on a list is a doubtful or marginal score. If he makes only one or two errors on a list, he should be able to read independently at that level.

It is well to continue diagnostic process until the child's reading level is established according to the following suggestions by Betts: (2:189f) (1) A Free Reading Level should be determined at which the child can read independently with ease and complete understanding. At this level he should do extensive horizontal (supplementary) reading and unsupervised library reading for pure enjoyment or for information along the lines of his own interests. The following standards will help identify the free reading level using the informal reading inventory

constructed by the teacher. The pupil should make a 90 per cent comprehension score based on both thought and fact questions. The pupil should be able to pronounce at least 99 out of every 100 running words. The child reads orally in a natural conversational tone and is free from tensions. (2) The Instructional Reading Level is the highest book level at which the pupil is able to read with success under the teacher-directed reading. The following standards will help identify the instructional reading level if the pupil is able to make a minimum 75 per cent comprehension score based on both thought and fact questions. The pupil should be able to pronounce at least 95 out of every 100 running words. The child should be able to read orally in a conversational tone, is relaxed and free from tensions. (3) The Frustration Reading Level is the book level at which the child "bogs down" because he is unable to comprehend what he is trying to read. The teacher makes no use of this level, but the child acquires undesirable habits and attitudes that could be avoided. Aids in identifying a child's frustration would be if the child makes a score of less than 50 per cent on comprehension of fact and thought questions. If the child mispronounces 10 or more words out of every 100 running words, reads jerkily, in an unnatural voice, substitutes, omits or repeats the reading should be stopped.

Language techniques. Language approaches have been developed for this study by combining various facets of existing programs, drawing from a variety of sources, and creating materials. These children's needs warrant an immersion in vocabularies. Bold approaches are advanced to help in developing learning materials directed toward overcoming communication barriers. Any activity that leads to increasing the development of a vocabulary through awareness of many kinds of words lends itself to building reading proficiency.

Continuous word study program. A continuous word study program has been devised and used by the writer with disadvantaged fourth graders. The program has been designed to arouse curiosity about words, create pleasure in using them and be relevant to academic objectives,

The teaching objectives are:

1. To develop vocabulary through awareness of many words.
2. To develop interest in words.
3. To encourage the use of new words.
4. To develop skill in the use of dictionaries.
5. To develop skill in the use of the thesaurus.
6. To motivate language development.

Words used in the continuous program are to be taken from materials used in reading, language, spelling, science, social studies, music, art and mathematics. The word study program consist of five categories: nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs and weekly specials. The word study operates on a twice-weekly basis. A weekly test, re-test on once-a-month basis, and review of all words every two months. Each of the five categories to have a list of 30 words each week. These may be chosen by teacher, teacher and pupils or a "word committee". Students are to work for approximately forty-five minutes, depending upon class need, on Mondays and Fridays. On Mondays each child chooses any three words from any of the five categories. When a word is chosen from a categorical list, the word is marked with the student's name beside it. On Fridays the child returns with the three words. He is expected to pronounce the word, spell it, and use it in a sentence or tell the meaning. This may be done orally or in writing. If he meets this requirement, then the word or words are his to be kept in a word file. Pupils work in teams of two and check each other. Teacher is consulted only in times of doubt. Anyone electing to be tested individually uses a tape recorder and that is checked by teacher.

After the first two months when each child has had opportunity to choose 24 words the teacher then checks for retention. Any word missed at this time is removed from student's own word file and returned to the word bank. The pupil may choose the same word a second time. After the next two months and so on throughout the school year, the same checking procedure is used. At the end of the year the children hopefully, may have learned a minimum of 108 new words for the year. Children upon their request, may select more than three words per week.

The Weekly Specials category may consist of words from these areas: Holidays, homonyms, synonyms, antonyms, greeting and salutations, weather, prefixes, suffixes, curious, humorous, shoptalk, Indian, Spanish, dance, circus, calendar, clipped words (like "gymnasium"); quaint, historical, childish, undignified, space age, boy, girl, magic, mystery, family names, famous people, school, nature, reduplication, tradenames and others.

In order to keep the word study program alive, meaningful, useful and unforgettable, it was necessary to give it an attractive name. "The Greatest Word Circusopolis on Earth" was used. Each of the five categories were named as follows: "Big Top" Nouns, "Under the Big Top" Verbs, "Ponderous Pachyderms" Adjectives, "Flying Trapeze" Adverbs, and "Circus" Weekly Specials. Each

category list of words was operated by two students, chosen weekly, on a rotating basis. The choosing and listing of names of students for the activity gave each student in the room an opportunity to participate in the program sometime during the year.

Introduction of the study was motivated by reading to the class these books: "Big Top" by Fred Branda, "The Ringlings" by A. F. Harlow, and "Under the Big Top" by Courtney Ryley Cooper.

A display of all kinds of dictionaries and word books was set up in the room. Some of the word books used were: Asimov, Isaac. Words from the Myths; Chapman, Bruce. Why do We Say Such Things?; Epstein, Sam and Beryl. The First Book of Words: Their Family Histories; Funk, Charles E. A Hog on Ice and Other Curious Expressions; Juster, Norton. The Phantom Tollbooth; Funk, Charles Earle, Jr. Horsefeathers and Other Curious Words; Laird, Helene and Charlton. The Tree of Language; Lambert, Eloise. Our Language: The Story of the Words We Use; and Lambert, Eloise and Pei, Mario. Our Names: Where They Come From and What They Mean.

Motivation to pick up the lag in the program consisted of using the following:

1. Construction of dialect dictionaries, such as a "Hiptionary", "Soultionary", "Dialectionary" with a definition of each word used.

2. Games, such as: "Alphabet Accident", the use of scrambled list of words to be unscrambled by a timed game.

"Bomber Code", . . . 383-2-14 . . . First number gives the page in the dictionary, the second is the column, and the last is the number of the entry counting down from the top of page.

"Stump the Class", student brought a word from outside reading. The would be "stumper" found his word and read the definition from the dictionary. Then the class guessed the word.

Coded alphabets were used. Messages were written in code. Crossword puzzles and riddles were used extensively.

The following types of books were made by the students: Accordion palindromes, texturology, poetry with original compositions, music, folklore, and recipes.

The word study program correlated with all areas of the curriculum. Specific skills were taught, as needed, for utilization of words in writing and speaking activities. Cumulative records showed through informal testing that gains were made in increasing ability to help learning for the individual.

Experience techniques. From the basis of the research, reading materials for the disadvantaged is an area of concern. Publishing houses have not geared their reading materials to the needs of the disadvantaged child, especially in the intermediate elementary grades. Strides that have been made are limited. Whatever is done for these children is going to have to be done by the classroom teacher for the time being. A sharing of ideas, working together, experimenting with new techniques, establishing better relations with parents and the public in general seems to be the present solution.

These children are desperately in need of acceptance, stimulation, and encouragement. Suggestive techniques to help in overcoming deficiencies in experience would be:

1. Have all new books, magazines, newspapers and etc. which come into the school reviewed by these students.

2. Have all new records, tapes, slides, film and pictures which come into the school reviewed by these students.

3. Adopt a lower-grade classroom. Write, tell or tape original stories for these children to enjoy. Listen to them read orally. Read to them. These

activities makes the student more aware of details necessary to accomplish these things.

4. Write, tell, type, or tape original stories after hearing many read by the teacher or by listening to recordings and tapes.

5. Illustrate and bind these original stories into book form for acquiring into the library for others to borrow and use.

6. Prepare and illustrate original stories on rolls of acetate film to be used on the overhead projector.

7. Write original play and present through the use of puppets made by the children.

8. Use direct experience approaches with opportunities to visit places not normally connected with the disadvantaged child's background. Planetariums, museums, industrial plants, shopping centers, and nature trails are suggested. Also, arrange visits to other classrooms in different school building and areas.

9. Establish a library within the room that contains some of the following materials:

- (1) The Banks Street Readers
- (2) The Jimmy Series
- (3) The Miami Readers
- (4) The Jim Forest Series

- (5) The Deep Sea Adventures Series
- (6) Radlauer's Multi-Media Reading Incentive Books on Slot Car Racing, Drag Racing, The Mighty Midgets, Motorcycles, Karting, Teen Fair, Dune Buggies, Drag Racing, Funny Cars, Horses, Surfing, Dune Buggy Racing and Custom Cars.
- (7) Sailor Jack Series
- (8) Teen Age Tales
- (9) Cowboy Sam Series
- (10) Children magazines such as Ranger Rick, Golden Magazine, Boys Life, and Children's Digest.
- (11) Children's newspapers, funny books, riddle and joke books.

Most of the books suggested are language experience orientated designed for high interest on low level vocabulary.

10. A structured technique to meeting deficiencies in skills could be the use of the Specific Skill Series developed by Barnell Loft for developing the following from level 1-6: Getting the Main Idea, Using the Context, Working with Sounds, Following Directions, Getting the Facts, and Drawing Conclusions.

11. A programed reader series that is phonetic-linguistic in design is suggested. The pacing and non-competitive nature of a programed reading program is relevant to the characteristics as pointed out in Chapter II. One such program used in poverty pockets and Job Corps Centers has been the Sullivan Associates Programmed Reading.

12. It is strongly suggested that a Parent's Reading Room or Corner be established, so parents may feel free to come read, browse and read with own child.

Meeting cultural differences techniques. To effectively help develop an understanding of other people, it is necessary to have some background information.

There are many ways to induce students to find out about themselves and others. It is suggested that books be read aloud that deal with the heritage of other people. Discussions and questions about the customs, dialect, music, art and etc. may lead to more acceptance of themselves and others.

This lends itself to role-playing. Role-playing provides a common base for students from different backgrounds to share and learn together about each other. Role-playing gives a new dimension of reality to the

classroom learning situation. A number of applications are suggested in the teaching of academic materials. For example, act out a history lesson; teach arithmetic by playing "bank" or "store"; or a science lesson on some new discovery by a scientist.

Use native music, language, and dance for cultural expression. Music and dances known to the child help develop confidence in himself without fear of disapproval. There is usually high success in any activity of expression and a reward for the child who has experienced far too many failures.

Making costumes of native clothes, cooking and tasting favorite recipes of other countries and people lend to oral communication enrichment and more use of vocabulary building.

It is recommended that a Record Bank be established for listening to music, stories, song, and dance.

II. SUMMARY

In meeting the needs of the disadvantaged intermediate child, an even greater challenge is offered to educators, as supplying these needs is complicated by experience background, cultural differences and language barriers which impedes the progress of education.

Unless these barriers can be broken down, they will continue to culminate in educational retardation of the disadvantaged child.

The objective of the research has been to identify techniques that might be of help in meeting reading needs of the disadvantaged intermediate child. Suggestive approaches in Chapter II and III are conclusions from the research of the literature within the limitations of the study.

The activities suggested in Language Techniques, Experience Techniques and Meeting Cultural Differences Techniques are intended to serve as a beginning reading technique. These materials are to help confirm their identity and experiences before being introduced to materials which take them beyond their background.

Challenges of education offered in the Techniques are: providing individualized instruction; scheduling enrichment opportunities; creating motivation; and helping build self-esteem.

Much research remains to be done in the field of reading as it concerns the disadvantaged intermediate elementary child. Existing materials are not completely satisfying to teachers' needs nor those of the children. More and better materials are needed. Much help is needed from the publishing houses and other sources.

Recommendations in regard to the teachers of disadvantaged intermediate elementary children are: Only teachers that possess a high degree of empathy, sensitivity, and perceptiveness should be working with the disadvantaged. Teachers that are not afraid to replace the present system of marks, tests, and competitive comparisons with other types of incentives to learning are recommended. Those teachers who welcome change, can assemble and use carefully designed innovative learning activities are needed now. For centuries, private industrialists and entrepreneurs have known that innovation is the key to profit. Now it is the educational community's turn to learn that innovation may be the key to quality.

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