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An Analysis of Factors in Reading Achievement Scores of the Third and Sixth Grades of Garfield County

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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS IN READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES

OF THE THIRD AND SIXTH GRADES OF GARFIELD COUNTY

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The problem of reading continuity through primary and intermediate grades in Garfield County has been one of growing concern to our supervisors and administrators for some time. It has been felt that, because of the high correlation of good reading and success of other school subjects, all possible effort should be made in developing a reading program which would insure continuous progress. The slow child would then be assured of meeting only school work of which he would be capable of doing.

Learning to read is difficult. Reading may be considered as a tool, a technique which if mastered would enable the student to take his place in society and make some contribution. However, it is a highly complex process; and despite all attempts to make reading easy for young people, they still experience difficulty with it. Its importance can not be minimized, for the student has to be able to read well if he is to be able to analyze critically, weigh evidence, and evaluate in terms of his own purpose.

According to Betts,[1] reading growth takes place in every normal child, but the process is unique in each individual. Students vary in the time necessary to arrive at independence in the use of these techniques. We are told that the child is not the sum total of all his experiences, but rather the evaluator and retainer of those experiences most meaningful to him. His reading readiness will depend upon this qualitative

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1. Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction. pp. 3-15.

summation. Emotional stability, breadth of experience, extent of speaking vocabulary, interests in words, desire to read, willingness to express ideas are but some of the guide signs that will enable the teacher to detect the desire to read.[2]

Analysis of reading techniques used, methods employed, and procedures followed leads one to ponder the question, "Will those guide signs be obscured because of inadequacies which may exist in the present school organization and administration?" Schools today accept the basic premis of education "that all normal children have a learning capacity." However, does the school organization accept that all children vary in time necessary to arrive at independence in the use of learning techniques? Or, do they tend to ignore the fact that children can not all learn the same thing at the same time, nor to the same degree?

The problem of reaching all the children with a basic curricula is difficult to solve. Admittedly, children are different; they learn at different rates and respond to different teaching methods. But does the school recognize this or do they give them all the same diet? When confronted with the problem of meeting and reaching all the children, people in education begin to theorize and point to the disgruntled parent and say, "Allowances are being made to meet individual differences. The teaching techniques now employed will be adequate." Here they are admitting that the basic curricula is inadequate; yet, rather than attempt a drastic curricula change, the "red herring" (individual differences) are loosed.

Accepting individual differences and the schools attempt to adjust

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2. Kathleen C. Ammerman, "Planning Reading Programs."

to meet them raises another question of concern; can individualized teaching function adequately within the close confines of the school group without conflicting with the following basic needs which are felt to be so important if learning is to take place (positive and not negative): (1) physical well-being, (2) security, (3) recognition, (4) belongingness, and (5) achievement.[3] It is true that some adjustment can be made between the needs and wants a student has, and the satisfaction they may receive in partial attainment; but here the teacher is confronted with the task of over-coming curricula imposed obstacles.

It is the teachers duty to develop within the child and the group the feeling of belongingness; she must aid the students in their endeavor for security; the reading program must so be organized that success is not a stranger. Yet the schools have an advancement system where the pupil is carried by the group. The non-reader must feel success even though reading, the basic subject, is foreign to him. The question again presents itself, is it possible to adhere to the students' basic needs, submit to group advancement, and not develop within students a set of false values?

When the mentally retarded child is admitted to the school, it is with certainty that he is going to miss all the pleasant reading experiences enjoyed by the majority of the group. If the severity of his handicap retards reading readiness for a period of two years, what effects will it have on his personality? The child by nature is egocentric. His ego has to be fed. But even if we can do this subtly, is subterfuge justified? Can the child be expected to see white where only black exists? Can the students make grade progress without understanding

3. Utah State Department of Public Instruction, "Language Arts for the Elementary School of Utah." pp. 44-45.

that effort is necessary and with effort some achievement is expected? Isn't it rather ironical to assume intelligence at one time and stupidity another? Why can't the curricula undergo a change so as to work with the teacher and not against her? For do what we can, we must give credit where credit is due. We must recognize that the pupil is able to distinguish between opposites and that he is not living in a vacuum. Though the day of awakening is due, another question is, "Will the student read when ready?"

As grade advancement is made and reading readiness develops, can the student be assured that he will get similarly complete and gradually ascending attention that his peers received when they began reading? In reviewing second and third grade offering are they equivalent to the first? Do the teachers in these grades use techniques not too different from those employed by the first or is the student to be confronted with advanced methodology which will be even more confusing than it was in the first grade? As these questions remain unanswered at this time, the only solution seems to lie with the teacher. Is she competent enough to overcome those first harrowing experiences encountered when his group reads and he does not? Is she the genius, the omnipotent, who will be able to right all wrongs?

Reading continuity implies curricula development which will lend depth and breadth to the child's experiences, for he is the retainer of those most meaningful. As he enters school he finds advancement is continuous. Here he enters a new world in a strange setting. The close knit family group gives way to the community. As he enters school for the first time, he encounters imposed obligations. The basic curricula, seemingly functional in all situations, has been prescribed by society

with not too much concern for the receiver. Here the teacher is called to act as a mediator. Any time imposed obligations are confronted by a distinterested party, with little or no consideration given to the receiver; difficulties can be expected. Interchange of events in one's environment determines his experiences. These experiences, if meaningful, are learning situations that can add to self realization. But when some one else imposes duties and obligations which aren't meaningful, then continuity of learning begins to break down.

Problem

In noting different teaching procedures used by the teachers of the county in teaching of reading, it was suggested a study be made to determine (1) the effectiveness of the present teaching methods, (2) to determine the intensitivity of these methods, and (3) if there was some continuity within the total reading program.

It will be the purpose of this study to determine the success of the present programs in teaching of reading and to note if there is continuity, and if so, how intensively used are those methods which lend to this continuum.

Method of procedure

Realizing the extensiveness of the reading program and of our own inadequacies to make an overall evaluation of such, the writer chose the following two areas for exploration: (1) The Reading Vocabulary, and (2) Reading Comprehension. These two major headings were again subdivided into the following divisions: Reading Vocabulary into (a) word form, (b) word recognition, and (c) meaning of opposites; and Reading Comprehension into (a) following directions, (b) directly stated facts, and (c) interpretations.

In order to make this survey, it was necessary to establish a county-wide testing program. The following dates were set and grade levels decided upon. The grades to be tested were the third and sixth grades. These grades were chosen because they represent the culmination of the primary and intermediate levels. The date decided upon was the early part of the third month from the beginning of the school year.

In order to get a broad and inclusive interpretation of the county's reading program, it was necessary to give achievement tests. The nature of these tests was predictive; the purpose, to measure skills and functional reading. Growth in skills is, of course, essential; but tests of such skills do not adequately measure the pupil's development in functional reading. However, they are complementary to one another. In measuring skills the pupils are required to demonstrate their ability to read carefully for some reasonable purpose, and it is this competent reading which is the teacher's major concern in making an evaluation of her reading program. With this thought in mind, the following steps were decided upon in choosing the tests to be used: (1) the test should have items easy enough for the response of the slowest readers and some which will challenge the efforts of the best; (2) one that would give ample opportunities in purposeful reading; (3) one that would give directions for pupils to carry out.[4]

The California Achievement Test was chosen to be given throughout the county. The use made of this test was to compare group averages and to try to determine reasons for success and failure in teaching of reading.

It was felt that a knowledge of the maturity of the students was important; therefore, the California Test of Mental Maturity Elementary

4. Lee J. Cronbach, Essentials of Psychological Testing.

was given to the two groups.

In order to ascertain methods, techniques, and procedures used by the teachers in the district and to determine their effectiveness, a questionnaire was circulated among them. In this way it was hoped that the results might indicate why some teachers have success where others are experiencing failure. The items included in the questionnaire were those that were subscribed to by the teachers of the district and represented by expert opinion (that is, by a substantial majority of the people in education whose books on theory have been cited in the review of literature).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The concept of "teaching of reading" changes as the student moves from grade to grade. Relationship of component skills develop and new methods of instruction appear. Technical research and carefully controlled teaching experiences have contributed significant facts concerning the order in which these techniques should be introduced. In this review of literature, effort will be made to cite data which will support the advisability of retaining these basic primary techniques as the child makes grade progress.

The past decade has found the reading pendulum swinging from one extreme point of view to another as to the most effective ways of teaching word perception. During this time, theory and practice have moved with undue emphasis from learning the form and sound of separate words to "guessing from context" with only a slight nod toward visual perception. But of late, the significance of the total reading process and the proper relationship of one of the many factors which contribute to the reading program has been recognized.

The over-emphasis upon learning of separate words in the early 1900's became an end in and of itself. Word form, at this time, was thought to be all important. Procedures used in word form recognition were the "word method" and the "phonetic method."

In the "word method" we find the word itself being the initial teaching unit, with little or no effort being made to teach word-analysis skills. Here the sentence was designed to give further drill on words, and was the reading unit.

In the phonetic method, letters and syllables were taught and then synthesized into word wholes; identification of words in reading was based on their analysis into so-called phonetic parts.

Today, in our effort to teach word familiarity, its organization and structure, we tend to combine the above two principles. In order to develop these skills, we must incorporate those practices which will be of value irrespective of theory.

Word recognition

The child, in learning to read, must be able to use his basic stock of sight-words,[1] use context clues, word form clues, and structural and phonetic analysis.[2]

Reading, for those who are accomplished, isn't too difficult because of innate ability to overcome, if any existed, reading handicaps. It is assumed that if one is able to learn to read, why shouldn't others? Whether this assumption is erroneous or not, it prevails in today's schools. The child's first introduction to the printed page is the meeting of two total strangers. Our hope to be able to teach him to read lies in our ability to help him to generalize the association between the spoken word and printed symbol.

At this age, he has acquired vocabulary of some 2,000 words. In this stock of basic sight words lies our hope of reading success. It is believed that if he responds to the spoken word, eventually he will be able to learn to make the association of the oral utterance with visual perception and react to the printed symbol in like manner to the spoken word.

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1. Edward William Dolch, Problems in Reading.
2. Arthur I. Gates, The Improvement of Reading.

As the child becomes more proficient in word recognition, his word experiences grow. The addition of new words and extended meanings of old ones begin to pictorially portray interesting new areas of exploration.

In introducing new words and developing new methods of word attack, emphasis must be placed on techniques in word recognition such as: (1) noting interesting elements of words which lead to recognition of words by clues; and (2) noting length, height, and interesting up and down appearance of some words which will lead to an application of phonics. Each discussion should add something to the development of these fundamental techniques. These principles must be kept in mind if the discussion is going to help broaden the pupil's word attack ability and not serve only to help recognize individual words discussed.[3]

Hildreth's[4] study of meaningful word experiences further substantiates Gans' findings. She found that the child, when learning to read, reacted pleasantly and with ease and confidence to new words of pleasant emotional tone and experienced difficulty with words representing things feared or hated.

Hill,[5] in a study of the process of word discrimination among pupils who were learning to read, found among other items that ". . . the beginnings and endings of words were most frequently observed and used as clues;" that ". . . the larger the proportion of identity between two words, when configuration was considered as one aspect of identity, the more confusing the two words were."

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3. Roma Gans, Guiding Children's Reading through Experience. p. 86.
4. Gertrude Hildreth, "An Individual Study in Word Recognition."
5. Mary Buffum Hill, "A Study of the Process of Word Discrimination in Individual Beginning to Read."

Dolch[6] suggests that the general characteristics of the word are the clues by which it is recognized. When words are strange, however, additional distinctions within the word are necessary, as was pointed out by Hill,[7] ". . . unless the school trains the pupil to work out his words systematically he will do it badly and will exhibit confusion."

As early as 1925, the following methods had been identified: (1) the context, (2) the total configuration of the word, (3) significant details of words, (4) phonetic analysis, and (5) the use of the dictionary.

Recently experiments have been reported which show that training in the ability to recognize significant details of words,[8] to master letter form and sound,[9] and to see likeness and differences in words[10] is a valuable aid in promoting accuracy and independence in word recognition.

One of the controversial methods in the field of reading is the teaching of phonics as an aid in teaching students to read. Skillful application of phonetic analysis enables the reader to derive pronunciation of many printed words the first time he encounters them, also gives assistance with words known orally but which are unfamiliar in printed form. One of the chief disadvantages is that it directs attention chiefly to the form and sound of words, and thus distracts attention from meaning.

Studies of correlation between phonetic ability and reading attainment by Tiffin and McKinnis,[11] in grades 5 to 8 inclusive, give

6. Edward William Dolch, "The Efficiency of Primers in Teaching Word Recognition."
7. Mary Buffum Hill, Loc. cit.
8. Arthus I. Gates, op. cit., pp. 260-261.
9. William S. Gray, On Their Own in Reading. pp. 75-87.
10. Arthus I. Gates, op. cit., pp. 261-262.
11. Joseph Tiffin and McKinnis, Mary, "Phonic Ability: Its Measurements and Relation to Reading Ability."

positive relationship between the two abilities. Experimental studies by Gates and Russell[12] justify the conclusion that a moderate amount of training in phonetic analysis is valuable to most pupils.

Vocabulary

The development of one's vocabulary requires the ability to recognize or work out the pronunciation of a word and the learnings of concepts and new words. As previously mentioned, children in the primary grades know orally most of the words they will meet in beginning reading. The problem then presented is one of discovering ways of pronunciation. For the intermediate grades this picture changes somewhat. Here it isn't so much the pronunciation but acquisition of meanings.

Work that has been done in studying of vocabulary burdens of text books and readers has done much to expedite vocabulary studies. Betts[13] found that factors influencing comprehension and extent of meanings shows vocabulary ranks next to intelligence.

The importance of systematic enlargement of the meaningful vocabularies of pupils was emphasized by Thorndike[14] as a result of vocabulary studies, particularly at the middle grade and Junior High School levels: "By the time he (a pupil) leaves Grade 9, he should know from 10,000 to 25,000 word meanings, a large fraction of which he will learn from reading, not hearing." Dolch[15] secured evidence which indicates that children entering school should have a vocabulary of about 2,700 words on the average. It is obvious that teachers face a challenging responsibility in developing an adequate meaning vocabulary by the end of the elementary school period.

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12. A. I. Gates and D. H. Russell, "Types of Materials, Vocabulary Burden, Word Analysis, and Other Factors in Beginning Reading 1 & 2."
13. Emmett Albert Betts, op. cit., pp 83-98.
14. Edward L. Thorndike, "Improving the Ability to Read."
15. E. W. Dolch, "How Much Word Knowledge do Children Bring to Grade One?"

As one of the means of expanding the child's vocabulary, Thorndike recommended wide reading of material that introduces new words gradually. He also discussed the advantages and limitations of teaching words in isolation and in context.

Other approaches being used to promote vocabulary growth in our elementary schools are the so-called "natural" or incidental method,[16] specific study of words in context, casual emphasis on new words at the beginning of a class period, direct teaching of meanings, drills on lists of words, and use of dictionaries.

Leary[17] made a survey of various methods, as listed above, in an effort to determine those most effective in enriching meaning vocabularies. Evidence of value was found in each of these methods. The conclusion reached was that a broad training program should include various types of procedures. The improvement in a meaningful vocabulary can be secured at all grade levels. Investigations have aroused widespread interest in classroom studies to determine procedures which are most effective in increasing vocabularies. Miriams[18] contends the best way to teach reading is not to teach reading, but provide the occasion in which reading functions. Let pupils read to learn; incidentally, they will learn to read.

In reviewing different methods and procedures advanced by those people who are authorities in this area of reading, it is only possible to weigh the evidence present. In order to agree as to the procedure to be followed in behalf of the student and in recognition of existent values in each method, it may be necessary to affect a compromise.

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16. J. L. Miriam, "Avoiding Difficulties in Learning to Read."
17. Bernice E. Leary, "What Does Research Say about Reading?"
18. J. L. Miriam, loc. cit., pp. 415-419.

Comprehension

To comprehend, one must be able to grasp meanings. In order to be able to grasp meanings from printed words, phrases, or sentences, the child must be able to visualize happenings and those happenings must be associated with experiences.

The accuracy and completeness of comprehension will depend upon the child's ability in regard to recognition of previously studied words, ability to phrase well, ability to grasp words in thought units, and his ability to read at a moderate rate of speed.[19]

Auditory, visual, and kinesthetic imagery are important if the child is to fully comprehend what is read.

In auditory imagery the child must be taught an awareness of various qualities of sound. In visual imagery, words have meanings to the child only as he can visualize them. Here his past experiences will color present explorations.

Kinesthetic imagery may be developed through response to music, poetry, or stories. The child's first reaction in movement develops this imagery.

The importance of good comprehension has prompted such studies to be undertaken as those by Dewey[20] when he compared the ability of 140 pupils to secure facts and to do inferential thinking concerning the historical material read. His data led to the conclusion that ". . . pupils cannot be trained to read with understanding merely by being trained to search for facts as they read."

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19. A. I. Gates, Teaching Reading with Preparatory Books and Readers, pp. 94-95.
20. J. C. Dewey, "The Acquisition of Facts as a Measure of Reading Comprehension."

A child may have difficulty in comprehension if his attention is too largely absorbed in the mechanics of reading. Such children show excessive zeal for accurate articulation, for fluency in oral reading, and for speed in silent reading.[21]

It may be assumed that some children may be found whose comprehension is reasonably accurate when they read materials of lower level difficulty, but who are unable to read satisfactorily materials of higher level. Nolte[22] studied the effect of simplifying the vocabulary on comprehension of sixth grade pupils. The evidence secured led to the conclusion that there are ". . . no statistically significant differences between comprehension of selections in the original form and those read with reduced vocabularies."

When the child fails to comprehend fully materials of the desired level of difficulty, it is the teacher's responsibility to determine the causal factors and to reconstruct the approach. An awareness must be developed that improvement in teaching of reading will produce greater ability in all children, but it will not reduce individual differences. If anything, it will increase the range of ability; and again varying degrees of success in the reading field will be determined by teacher ingenuity.

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21. A. I. Gates, op.cit., pp 95-96.
22. Karl F. Nolte, "Simplification and Comprehension in Reading."

CHAPTER III

TEST ANALYSIS

In reviewing different achievement tests, final agreement was
made on the California Achievement Test. Authors of the test are
Ernest W. Tiegs, Ph. D., Editor-in-Chief, California Test Bureau,
formerly Dean of University College and Professor of Education at the
University of Southern California; and Willis W. Clark, Ed. D.,
Executive Vice-President and formerly Director of Research and Techni-
cal Services, California Test Bureau.

The California Achievement Tests are new editions of the diagnos-
tic-survey instruments formerly called the Progressive Achievement
Tests. Standardization of these batteries has been based on more than
50,000 cases at each level. Basic information for the age-grade norms
has come from approximately one-half million pupils in many of the school
districts in 20 different states.

Because of the wide range of ability found in most grade groups,
each battery provides for measurement several grades above and below the
particular group being tested.

Description of the tests

Reading vocabulary.   The reading vocabulary test consists of four
sections: Section A is a test of word form; Section B consists of
ability to recognize words; Sections C and D are composed of 90 words
(the key word and the word which must be selected in each case). In
Section C each of these 90 words must be properly identified in order
to make the correct response. These words were chosen from the first
4,000 in the Thorndike Word Book and are presented in gradually increasing

difficulty. The key words of Section C are identified by matching them with a word of the opposite meaning selected from the four listed; those of Section D, by matching them with words of similar meaning.

Word form.   This test contains 25 pairs of identical and different words. It includes lower-case printed words, capitals, and italics. Pupils are tested on their ability to recognize similarities and differences in word forms of these different varieties. Failure in this test may indicate not only lack of familiarity with word forms, but other difficulties as well, such as defective vision.

Word recognition.   This test consists of 20 sets of four words each in which the pupil identifies those which are pronounced to him. It includes lower-case words, italics, and capitals. The material ranges from gross differences in sound and word form to minor differences in pronunciation and includes certain phonetic difficulties. This test is useful in revealing the inability of pupils to identify the word as it is heard with the word as it is seen. It may also indicate other difficulties, such as defective vision or hearing.

Meaning of opposites.   This test contains 23 words which the pupil identifies by matching them with words of opposite meaning. These words range from concrete terms to abstract ideas and provide a measure of a pupil's vocabulary.

Meaning of similarities.   In the same manner, the pupil identifies 22 words by matching them with words of similar meaning.

Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension consists of three sections: (1) following directions, (2) reference skills, and (3) interpretation of meanings.

Following directions.   Ten reading situations which require the
following of specific directions are included in this test. They range
from directions requiring a choice to understanding definitions. Ability
to follow specific directions is essential for silent reading comprehen-
sion.

Reference skills.   This section tests the extent to which the pupil
is familiar with the vocabulary and skills needed for reference work
and library research.

Interpretation of meanings.   The test situations included in this
section provide for the measurement for the pupil's ability to comprehend
directly-stated facts, to select best titles, to make inferences and
deductions, and to understand an author's organization of topics.

There are three short stories in this section. The same basic
test elements appear in the first two. Some of the same basic elements
plus a test on sequence of events appears in the third.

Reliability and validity

Reliability.

Test	Reliability	S. E. Meas.
Reading Vocabulary	.88	0.50
Reading Comprehension	.93	0.39
Total Reading	.93	0.39

Validity.   All forms of the California Achievement Test, Elementary
Battery, possess a high degree of validity. Scores made on these tests
show accurately the degree to which the pupil has mastered the fundamental
skills measured by the tests.

In an effort to control certain other factors which might have
influence on this grade comparison, the California Test of Mental
Maturity, Elementary, 1951 edition, was given. The number of the groups

tested was 83 and 85, representing the total enrollment for the district.

This test is made up of two sub-sections, language and non-language, controlling the reading element.

The above tests were given by the same person and to all pupils in the district in grades three and six. There were no retardations in either grade and the chronological age average was that found in normal third and sixth grades.

Tables 1 and 2 show in grade achievement that the sixth grade is 1.18 years below the test norm while the third grade is .27 year above the norm. Table 3 gives the mean IQ's for the groups as 98 and 98.7.

Table 1. The accumulated number of sixth grade students within the
county achieving certain grade levels in reading vocabulary
and comprehension in October 1953

Achievement	Reading vocabulary	Reading comprehension
7.5	3	1
7.0	4	7
6.5	0	6
6.0	7	10
5.5	11	8
5.0	16	21
4.5	15	7
4.0	12	12
3.5	8	7
3.0	3	3
2.5	4	1

Table 2. The accumulated number of third grade students within the
county achieving certain grade levels in reading vocabulary
and comprehension in October 1953

Achievement	Reading vocabulary	Reading comprehension
5.5	1	2
5.0	4	4
4.5	4	7
4.0	9	10
3.5	23	7
3.0	23	23
2.5	13	18
2.0	5	10
1.5	3	4

Table 3. The distribution of the intelligent quotients of the students in the third and sixth grades as determined by the California tests of mental maturity administered when the students were in the third and sixth grades in October 1953

Class interval	Grade 3	Grade 6
130		1
125		0
120		1
115		1
110	19	5
105	2	22
100	21	8
95	12	10
90	4	12
85	21	8
80	4	9
75	1	3
70	1	3

CHAPTER IV

QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

In reviewing and examining the reading program, constant effort should be made to look at it objectively with not too much concern as to grade placement. To see the whole picture, one must explore the program both horizontally and vertically. Teachers, at times, become too concerned with materials on a one-grade basis. The second grade teacher is concerned with the second grade offerings and the sixth grade teacher with ideas of separate ideas working only at the sixth grade level.

Recent research indicates that reading is made up of a number of abilities, that the rate of growth in these varies, and that the continuous aspects of such growth are at least as important as the different stages.[1] Teachers are concerned whether their pupils are at a certain readiness level of some particular skill common to their grade, but they must also show concern for where the student is in relation to his achievement and readiness irrespective of grade.

An adequate reading program should help the teacher to know when her students are at various reading levels, such as: (1) pre-reading stage, (2) the beginning stage, (3) the primary stage, (4) the transition stage, (5) the low maturity stage, or (6) the advanced reading stage. It should enable the teacher to detect a particular level of achievement. This aid would assist the teacher to reach the student on his own ground. With this new insight activities could be stressed

1. Emmett A. Betts, "Inter-Relationship of Reading and Spelling."

which would enable the student to achieve greater efficiency in needed skills.[2]

An examination of the reading program will show it is as varied as is the personalities who are to be the recipients. Readiness, vocabulary building, reading interests and tastes, study skills, creative reading, oral reading, speed, comprehension, etc., are but a few of the many avenues of adventure; and it will show that these abilities are not at the same level of development in the same child.[3] A boy may be high in meaning vocabulary and level of interest, but low in work-type skills or critical thinking about his reading. Reading is an ability or group of abilities which develop at their own rate.[4] Whether this development is gradual will depend upon the teacher's concept of grade placement. The teacher should emphasize a graduated reading program that would lend itself to teaching continuity.

Emphasis of the reading program should be upon continuity. Reading readiness has to be discovered within each individual and not relegated to some specific area of instruction or class placement. If there is continuity within the reading program, methods and techniques will be introduced with little confusion and with gradation.

In making a survey of the reading program, attention has to be given to areas of definition. If a change in methodology is found, do the results suggest that it is a good change or is the change coming about because of grade advancement? The survey has to be conscious of the curricula offerings to the degree that methods,

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2. Roma Gans, op. cit. pp. 1-9.
3. William Edward Dolch, op. cit.
4. Constance M. McCullough, "Broadening Experiences Through Reading In The Elementary School."

procedures, and techniques used are in themselves subservient to it. The curricula, in turn, will be determined by tradition, philosophy, social, and school pressures. In fact, every force will help to determine the school offerings more than will the one most concerned, the child himself. It is imperative that teachers recognize these imposed obligations and attempt to compensate for them. However, it is difficult to correct an ill if the cause is left intact.

As the teacher meets her students each morning, there are some things she is quite sure of and some things she can only hope for. She is quite certain that all children go through similar patterns of development. She can hope that through a variety of offerings she will be able to reach all children. As this survey is made it is hoped that the offerings that prove most worthwhile will be identified for future use.

The questionnaire will help to detect the existence of a basic philosophy among the teachers, if such exists. Since this study is made up largely from suggested practices by the teachers themselves, these practices are felt to be evident in the reading program within the district and reflective of a common philosophy. From this analysis it should be possible to determine if continuity exists in the present reading program and to the degree that it does. Is there a workable basic philosophy within the district? And does the present program lend itself to a continuous and gradual ascending process in building abilities, attitudes, and understandings?

Procedure

The differences found to exist in tables 1 and 2 suggest that some effort be made to compare the teaching techniques used by the two groups

of teachers and to see if it is possible to locate and identify factors that would help to account for the differences found in student achievement.

The questionnaire included practices found within the county schools and those practices and procedures which are pertinent to any basic reading program according to research reviewed in the review of literature. The questionnaire contained 200 questions, and after review, was deleted to 110. It was then submitted to the primary and intermediate teachers of Garfield County. In order to equate the two groups, substitute teachers were also used. The number of returned questionnaires were 16 primary and 16 intermediate, 100 percent.

Tables 4 to 10 give the findings in specified areas. Table 11 is a comparison of these areas.

In reviewing the practices used in the schools, it is necessary to keep in mind that the teacher is the key to what will happen and does happen in the class room. This analysis emphasizes reading mechanics, but this does not mean that it isn't cognizant of the fact that the actual teaching of reading far transcends its mechanics. An awareness is also felt that the teaching of reading is not the job of the elementary teacher alone; that secondary and college must assume far more responsibility than they have accepted in the past if success is to be achieved.

However, the elementary schools have a job of laying the foundation for the habit of reading. To do this, mechanics must be stressed. Careful observation and comparison of reading techniques will lend themselves to those practices which seem more effective. Isolated drills do not produce efficient use of skills, but drills combined with teacher competency is basic to the reading program.

The results of the questionnaire must be objectively evaluated, misplaced emphasis will tend to distort the findings.

Word structure skills

The purpose of the reading program is to see that every pupil becomes an active and understanding reader. To do this they must become acquainted with ways of recognizing words. Working with the premis that if the word is familiar to the child in conversation he will easily identify it when he is able to unlock its sounds,[5] is a beginning place for the teacher. There are a variety of different ways of teaching word recognition. The following were found in use in the primary grades throughout the county: (1) training to use context; (2) training in phonics; (3) training in structural analysis; and (4) training with the dictionary.

In training the child to get clues from the context, the teachers of the county were using drills which required the child to use his own store of sight words to help unlock sentence meanings. The child's sight vocabulary, which is familiar to him, is used to surround the unfamiliar word to help determine what the unfamiliar word is.

Training in the use of phonics is done by having the students "sound out" words. Here the student first pronounces a new word by sounding out familiar phonetic elements in it and then trying to arrive at the pronunciation of the strange word by blending the familiar elements to make a word which is familiar to the pupil by sound, but which was unfamiliar by sight. For example, the pupil may come upon the word "important" as a new word. Assuming the phonetic elements

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5. Edward William Dolch, op. cit.

which make up the word are familiar to the student, its pronunciation can be determined by blending the familiar sounds making up the word.

Table 4 shows that Word Structure Practices marked "always" show a decline of 23 percent in the intermediate group. The practices marked "some" show an increase of 19 percent in the intermediate group and those marked "never" show an increase of 3 percent in the intermediate.

Word analysis enables the child to develop effective methods of studying new words. Here he is given the necessary keys to learn how to observe and analyze each new word in ways that enable him to detect the most helpful clues for word recognition. Table 4 shows the primary group stressing word analysis techniques 32 percent more than did the intermediate. The question here is, "Do they do it with knowledge of pupil needs, or is the shift in emphasis due to grade placements?"

Principles of syllabication are valuable for unlocking the multitude of new words which the child will meet on his way through the grades. Studies show that "word analysis" can be initiated as early as the primer level.[6] Children can easily recognize new words within a compound word by using their basic stock of sight words. The most natural step in word analysis is to guide the child to see the base word in the simplest derived forms -- run in runs, work in working, play in played.[7]

In all forms of word-analysis activities, the major objective is that of inducing the pupil to study and analyze words by himself as

6. Roma Gans, op. cit.
7. Gertrude Hildreth, Learning the Three R's.

opportunities permit. Teachers can help by allowing the pupil free reading opportunities, but they must be aware of the student's ability in this skill.

Table 4. Extent of word structure skills--shown by percent, as used
          in grades one to six

Techniques	Grades 1 to 3			Grades 4 to 6		
	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Recognizing base words in derived words	0	25	75	0	75	25
2. Do you give word drills using syllabication?	12	37	51	0	55	45
3. Do you give word drills where letters are arranged according to the number of syllables in the word?	24	24	52	37	50	13
4. Drills given omitting first or last letters	0	25	75	0	88	12
5. Work with compound word recognition	0	36	64	0	50	50
6. Dividing words into syllables	0	50	50	0	50	50
7. Studying words with more than one meaning	0	36	64	12	88	0
8. Do you teach how to divide words between consonants?	12	24	64	36	36	28
9. Do you have students sound out new words by syllables?	0	36	64	0	50	50
10. In introducing a new word do you help the children analyze it?	0	76	24	0	76	24
11. Do you teach recognition of syllables?	12	36	52	12	88	0
12. Do you have the students sound out known words?	12	88	88	0	64	36
13. Do you teach word recognition from general configuration?	0	24	76	0	88	12
14. Do you tell the children words they don't know, not allowing them to study the word?	24	64	12	50	50	0
15. In teaching word recognition do you treat all words alike?	74	26	0	50	50	0
16. The sound and meaning is familiar and the word is a polysyllable, do you point out familiar parts?	0	50	50	0	88	12
Mean average	.09	.45	.55	.12	.65	.23

N. Never
S. Some
A. Always

Word meaning skills

The first and most valuable single clue to the recognition of any word is its meaning in a contextual setting.[8] While context and pictures are valuable the use of these clues alone often leads to guessing. If the material being read is interesting so that the total pattern is woven as the child listens or is reading, they are more able to determine the meaning of the unfamiliar word from the context. Meaningful reading helps to prepare the students to meet new words. Known words introduced in new contextual settings builds meaningful vocabularies and in this way new meanings are extended for known words in terms of specific usage.

In comparing the two groups in table 5 a shift in emphasis is evident. Word meaning practices marked "always" decline 32 percent in the intermediate group. Practices marked "some" show an increase of 34 percent, and those practices marked "never" show a decrease of 2 percent in the intermediate group.

Word analysis is not effective alone. Here it begins to be combined with other skills in reading. In learning to analyze words, the child has to check his soltuion of the word with its position in the sentence. This will check him from reading nonsense. In meaningful reading material there are always contextual clues, these clues will increase in difficulty as the material read increases. This gradation increases from grade to grade and task to task, always requiring effort in this skill and giving no plausable explanation for the shift in emphasis found in table 5.

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8. Constance M. McCullough, "The Recognition of Context Clues in Reading."

However, the difference between the two groups may be attributable to a shift in philosophy. The primary teacher anticipates every new word and drills on its recognition before the reading lesson. The intermediate point-of-view is that she may be working too arduously. They reason that it is better to introduce only those new forms which she knows the children can not solve and leave some to them. This way the child is able and required to use the tools they have for solution to new words. There is merit in both approaches, but the degree of success will depend upon the students' basic preparation. From this standpoint the findings in table 5 may be justified if the teachers are aware of differences which exist in her class room and allows only those who are ready to be the recipients of the change in methods.

Experimentation among high school, college, and graduated students of Columbia University has shown a number of disappointing facts about our reading. Dr. Ruth Strang at Columbia has found that, by and large, the more intelligent, the better, the more mature readers tend to use more ways of attacking strange words, and that they are more successful in their attacks than the less intelligent, poorer, and younger readers. But the variety of their attacks is a variety in observation of the word form. When it comes to use of context, there seems little, if any appreciation of the varieties of things for which they may look.[9]

Since the grade school is the first to work with the child, it is their responsibility to begin the development of effective tools to be used by the children in their efforts with word identity. In addition to word identity they should become acquainted with the meanings of prefixes and suffixes and root words. A technique which the student must

9. Constance M. McCullough, loc. cit.

develop and rely upon at times is "guessing" which really isn't guessing but is analysis of the context. Guessing requires the use of: (1) definition, (2) experience, (3) comparison, (4) synonyms, (5) familiar expression, (6) summary, (7) mood. The clues the child uses will depend upon the teacher. How effective his usage will be will again be determined by the teacher, and when he advances he will also be subjected to teacher approval.

The teacher is aware, or should be, of the students' needs and weaknesses. She is the one who knows what type of practice they need. Ear training and visual acuity starts early in school and so must contextual clue training. Some of this is done casually and by accident, but teachers must see to it that it is done systematically so that all children will surely be exposed to all types of situations.

Table 5. Word meanings skills--shown by percent, as used in grades one to six

Techniques	Grades 1 to 3			Grades 4 to 6		
	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Inferred meanings from context clues	12	50	38	12	50	38
2. In word recognition do you teach the initial sound with context clues?	0	25	75	0	75	25
3. Matching phrase and word exercises	0	55	45	0	100	0
4. Do you have students study words with more than one meaning?	0	37	63	12	88	0
5. Matching words with definitions	37	63	0	12	76	12
6. Recognizing synonyms and antonyms?	0	55	45	0	75	25
7. Do you stress the uncommon word when teaching?	12	37	51	0	37	63
8. Do you stress the common word when teaching?	0	37	63	12	75	13
9. Do you give drills using homonyms?	25	37	38	0	75	25
10. In learning new words do you continue to give exercise with those previously learned?	0	12	88	12	50	38
11. Should students attempt to guess word meanings from context?	12	50	38	12	88	0
12. Do you give drills on association and comparison?	24	50	26	0	100	0
13. In teaching new words do you tell the pupils the right pronunciation and explain the meaning?	0	50	50	0	88	12
14. If the meanings are known and the sound is familiar and the word, if a monosyllable, do you tell them the word?	12	50	38	24	76	0
15. On new material do you preview it and extract the new words which are likely to cause difficulty and have the class study them before beginning to read?	0	36	64	0	88	12
Mean average	.08	.42	.50	.06	.76	.18

N. Never
S. Some
A. Always

Word comprehension skills

To comprehend is to grasp meaning. How do printed words, phrases, or sentences carry meaning to a child? This is the teacher's responsibility, in all grades, to help the pupil to developea meaningful vocabulary closely associated with actual experiences.

The child must be taught to form sensory images if they are to fully comprehend what they have read. Emphasis should be placed on the use of all the senses whether the child is listening to or reading a story or poem, hearing music, or looking at a picture.

Comprehension occurs when the reader is able to recognize words, develop new and use old meanings, and grasp units of thought. The child must learn that a complex unit can be broken down into series of facts and ideas; that the whole can be understood only as parts that make up the whole are understood.

Table 6 shows those practices marked "always" show a decline of 19 percent in the intermediate group. The practices marked "some" show an increase of 20 percent in the intermediate and those practices marked "never" show 1 percent decrease in the intermediate group. These results can be viewed with some alarm. As students make grade progress, the subject difficulty increases and relationships are more uncertain. The shift shown in table 6 might be viewed with skepticism, for the need of techniques increases with subject complexity.

Facts suggest that there must be a motive for reading suitable to the kind of comprehension we wish to develop. In the early grades, motives are set through a discussion of experiences and pictures, but soon become the outgrowth of class discussion of subject matter. The facts seem to be these: The kinds of comprehension demanded by textbooks

of science, history, and other subjects are basically no different from those used in the understanding of stories such as we find in the readers series and in children's story books. Therefore, we can not say that a given method or procedure is distinct from another but that all are important. So much so that they should not differ in ingredients but might do so in proportion of ingredients.

As the student makes grade progress, adjustments must be made. The more adjustments the reader has to make as he reads, the more difficult that subject is to read, unless he has been taught to adjust his reading to the problems the material presents. Adjustments to these changing demands must be taught and can not be done by deleting methods and procedures, but there might be a change in emphasis.

Table 6. Word comprehension skills—shown by percentages, as used in grades one to six

Techniques	Grades 1 to 3			Grades 4 to 6		
	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Do you have children read for the main idea?	0	45	55	0	88	12
2. After reading short selections do you have the children select a title?	12	88	0	12	88	0
3. Do you have the children answer specific questions after reading?	0	75	25	0	88	12
4. Do you have oral reports on reading assignments?	0	88	12	0	100	0
5. Do you have the children carry out written directions?	0	50	50	0	88	12
6. Do you have written reports on reading assignments?	0	55	45	0	100	0
7. Do you have children read silently and report orally?	0	100	0	0	100	0
8. Do you check student comprehension of articles read?	0	75	25	0	88	12
9. Do you check for comprehension after giving a speed test?	0	55	45	24	55	21
10. In oral reading do you have your students reread silently to answer questions?	12	76	12	12	88	0
11. Do you list a sequence of events and have the children arrange them in order?	0	100	0	0	88	12
12. Do you analyze events for cause and effect?	0	50	50	12	88	0
13. Do you emphasize comparison of materials?	54	46	0	12	88	0
Mean average	.06	.69	.25	.05	.89	.06

N. Never
S. Some
A. Always

Practical application

Reading experiences must be related to the child. Methods used, techniques employed, and procedures followed can aid in the acquisition of skills; but the child's reading diet must be balanced and skill drills should be included with reading that will be satisfying. It is the teacher's responsibility to direct the child's selection of reading material that best fits some purpose. The child has to be able to read skillfully enough to understand what is being read before reading can be satisfying. Developing reading skills and stimulating student interest requires constant evaluation of teacher efforts:

1. Does the program provide for continual diagnosis of many kinds to ascertain individual strengths and weaknesses?

2. Is the reading program planned and continuous for all pupils in grades?

3. Is systematic and sequential instruction given in reading skills on all grade levels?

4. Is there variety and flexibility in the reading activities so as to meet the needs of the children?

5. Are children grouped for guidance in developing basic skills?

Some people believe these skills can be acquired incidentally through contact with a wide variety of reading materials.[10] Such outcome is possible with a certain small percentage of the school population. However, for the majority, there is no substantial evidence to support this idea.

The functional approach to the study of reading requires attention

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10. Gertrude Hildreth, "An Individual Study in Word Recognition."

to the following concepts:

1. The learner must learn to distinguish between word and fact, between symbol and reality. Not only do words change, but the activities to which they refer are in a constant state of flux. Teachers must strive for greater clarity of relationships and meanings. Young people have many rich and varied experiences which, if called upon, would make reading very practical and meaningful.

2. Grade advancement confronts the child with situations which demands him to distinguish clearly between feelings, judgments, and opinions. The ability to make such distinctions is of particular importance in the reading news in the daily press and in listening to radio news and comments today.

3. Teachers have to develop an awareness of word versatility. Meanings will change in form and manner as the students continue to advance in reading. They will have to receive constant attention if they are to be able to glean from the context clues that will aid them in this technique.

Table 7 shows those skills marked "always" to decline by 28 percent in the intermediate group, those marked "some" to increase 18 percent, and skills marked "never" to increase 6 percent in the intermediate group.

The above results cause one to wonder if the shift in method and procedure can be justified. If the practices found in table 7 could be mastered by all the students, this might be sensible; but any time the basic skills are neglected or are assumed to have been taught without proper checking, some students are going to be neglected. When practices are omitted or are half-heartedly taught, the pupil faces a situation

quite like that in which the first rungs are left out of a ladder; and, regardless of short legs, he is required to stretch to a third or fourth rung to begin the upward climb. In the reading program, as on the ladder, only the most fit can make the stretch over the parts left out.

Many fine opportunities for training in the use of practicable application are lost by teachers who do not make it necessary for the pupil to listen carefully to directions and explanations whenever they are given for some important activity which the teacher wishes the child to carry out. Teachers too frequently show and tell pupils how, when, and why without allowing the pupil to experience this activity for themselves.

Granted that many of the pupils have had experiences in applying facts learned in life situations, but some haven't had as much as others and some were not ready for this method of learning at the time it was taught.

Grade advancement suggests new approaches to reading, but these new skills should not be introduced without first determiming if the student is ready for them. Grade advancement and achievement are not synonymous. Student progress should depend upon his ability to produce. However, where social promotion is practiced, as in this district, teachers have to be more or less opportunists. They have to be alert to skills necessary for reading achievement and foster such skills, for techniques are rarely over-learned no matter how intensive the instruction. As the student progresses, new situations are confronted which call for new attacks. Here drill can be given with purpose, and only continual vigilance on the part of the teacher as to the needs of students will determine the effectiveness of the reading program.

Table 7. Practical application skills--shown by percentages, as used
in grades one to six

Techniques	Grades 1 to 3			Grades 4 to 6		
	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Should children make booklets of their own experiences?	0	50	50	12	53	35
2. Do you have children interpret news and magazine articles?	0	100	0	0	100	0
3. Are newspapers read in your class rooms?	0	100	0	0	75	25
4. Do you have your students recreate what they have read?	0	64	36	12	88	0
5. Do you use pictures to introduce a reading lesson?	0	50	50	12	76	12
6. Do you have students give their own illustrations and interpretations of readings?	0	50	50	12	88	0
7. Do your students relate facts in a story to past experiences?	0	36	64	0	88	12
8. Are the facts found in reading applied to the pupil's own experiences?	0	36	64	0	88	12
Mean average	0	.60	.40	.06	.82	.12

N. Never
S. Some
A. Always

Phonetic analysis

The present reading approach is related to the modern concept of learning; whole and part relationship. In applying this learning concept, its converse "the whole is no greater than its parts" is also accepted. Phonetic analysis has found and lost favor during the past decade. The basic argument was that the excessive drill required of phonics was too far removed from reading experiences. As this argument gained favor, we found the pendulum swinging away from the phonetic approach. As a result, phonetic analysis was neglected in the reading program. People who have been denied this basic instruction find it hard to attack new words. When this situation arises they are classified as "remedial cases."[11]

All teachers have different devices for the teaching of word analysis. Whether these devices can be defended or not doesn't seem to bother them too much. In the teaching of reading teachers realize that reading must be functional and that experiences must be meaningful, but they are also aware that the child must be taught to walk before he can run. The teacher has to make the child conscious of words and that words are made up of symbols, single letters, and clusters of letters, that these symbols have to be associated with sounds, and that he must "catch on" to this association between sound and symbol.[12]

Some students, almost without teacher aid, "catch on" to word analysis while others need to be guided continuously over a period of several years.

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11. William Edward Dolch, op. cit.
12. Roma Gans, op. cit.

This difference in abilities poses the problem. Can the emphasis change as much as they do in table 8 without neglecting some of the children? Table 8 of the questionnaire points out that the emphasis does change between the primary and intermediate level. Phonetic skills marked "always" show a decrease of 33 percent in the intermediate group. Those skills marked "some" show an increase of 30 percent and those practices marked "never" show an increase of 3 percent in the intermediate group. The trend seems to be away from specifics and to rely on the total reading program to satisfy all areas.

The phonetic attack is a skill used in word recognition. One learns a little and then a little more and keeps on improving. The child will thus learn a little of word attack each year. Word attack is taught and retaught, and what counts is not how often we teach it but how the child learns to use it.[13]

Grade progress implies added amount of reading and added difficulty of reading material. It doesn't seem that constant advancement of growth would suggest curtailing those practices which would inhence it.

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13. Edward William Dolch, op. cit.

Table 8. Phonetic analysis and ear training skills--shown by percentages, as used in grades one to six

Techniques	Grades 1 to 3			Grades 4 to 6		
	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Recognizing consonant blends: wh, th, sh, ch, etc.	0	24	76	12	50	38
2. Recognizing consonant sounds	0	24	76	12	88	0
3. Recognizing phonetic elements of highest frequency: at, in, to, on, etc.	0	24	76	0	100	0
4. Knowing long and short sounds of vowels	0	37	63	0	63	37
5. Recognizing vowel combinations: ee, oo, aw, ew, etc.	0	37	63	0	63	37
6. Recognizing vowels with r, er, or, ir, etc.	0	50	50	12	50	38
7. Do you give exercises in listening for beginning and final sounds?	0	24	76	12	76	12
8. Do you give help in rhyming?	0	24	76	0	76	24
9. Do you give drills on vowels?	0	55	45	0	87	13
10. Should sounding of letters be taught?	0	50	50	0	75	25
11. Do you teach sight-recognition of the twenty-six letters and have the children memorize the letters in words?	12	76	12	25	75	0
12. Do you let the child sound letters so as to enable him to sound out words letter by letter?	24	76	0	36	50	14
13. Do you teach phonograms?	36	50	14	24	64	12
14. Do you teach polysyllables as words?	50	25	25	24	76	0
15. Should sounding of letters be taught in the first three grades?	0	75	25	0	100	0
16. Do you cultivate intelligent guessing of new words using sounding to catch mistakes?	12	76	12	24	76	0
Mean average	.08	.43	.49	.11	.73	.16

N. Never
S. Some
A. Always

Teaching techniques

The approach the teacher uses in her class-room is reflective of her educational philosophy, and her philosophy in turn is reflective of that of the district in which she teaches.

Teachers may be relegated to set demands or they may be free to choose their way. The teachers' freedom and philosophy will help to determine techniques used in the teaching of reading. Some will recognize individual differences in their classes, but, in the main, textbooks will dictate each course of study. Mastery of subject matter assigned to each grade level may be the chief goal of instruction, or they may be aware of individual differences and feel that something should be done about them. Here the teaching emphasis will be on systematic and sequential development rather than grade placement of subject matter.

As the child moves through school, the teachers have to determine (1) when the teaching of certain skills should begin, (2) which skills prove more valuable, and (3) should they be taught in reading or content periods? Table 9 suggests a possible shift from the specific instruction of skills in the primary group to content periods in the intermediate. Those skills marked "always" show a decrease of 28 percent in the intermediate; those skills marked "never," an increase of 8 percent in the imtermediate grades; and skills marked "some" increase 20 percent. This transition period is a controversial one. The present philosophy determines the teachers approach, but regardless of philosophy they are faced with endless unanswered questions of which approach is best.

The primary group has the responsibility of providing a basic reading foundation. If the district is assured of their professional competence then the practices which they use to teach beginning reading should be

adhered to as needed in the upper grades. Whenever a teacher is found that is enthusaistic about teaching reading skills, in a reading class or in any class, there reading skills are taught and no doubt are more or less learned. Whenever a teacher is found who is not enthusiastic, one will find skills being neglected in favor of content subjects. Now, in going back to the basic premis "that all students learn but at varying rates," a supplication can be made "that teachers hold the key which will determine students rate efficiency."

There is an inter-relationship between skills and content reading which needs to be recognized if the teaching of reading is to be a process of re-evaluation rather than subject mastery. Reading is a social tool rather than an isolated set of skills and yet they are complimentary to each other. In light of the findings of table 9 it might be well if the district was to re-evaluate their reading program and attempt to determine those skills felt to be necessary and to see to it that there was some continuity to their presentation.

Table 9. Teaching drill techniques--shown by percentages as used in grades one to six

Techniques	Grades 1 to 3			Grades 4 to 6		
	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Do you give sight-word drills?	0	46	64	12	88	0
2. Do you teach by telling new words?	0	75	25	0	88	12
3. Do you give recall tests on readings?	0	75	25	0	100	0
4. Should pupils attempt to guess word meanings for context clues?	12	50	38	12	88	0
5. Do you use word and phrase matching exercises?	0	55	45	0	100	0
6. Do you use flash cards?	0	55	45	45	55	0
7. In teaching do you treat all words alike?	60	40	0	50	50	0
8. Do you ever test your students as to the number of sight-words they know?	24	12	64	24	76	0
9. Do you allow good readers to help those who read slowly?	0	88	12	12	76	12
10. Are your children allowed to puzzle out words when reading?	12	76	12	0	88	12
11. Do you give exercises with jumbled sentences?	0	88	12	12	88	0
12. Should the art of skimming be taught?	12	64	24	12	76	12
13. Do you have children who omit words when reading?	0	50	50	0	75	25
14. Do you have ways of detecting those who omit and refuse to attack new words?	0	50	50	40	38	22
Mean average	.08	.58	.34	.16	.78	.06

N. Never
S. Some
A. Always

Dictionary and vocabulary skills

Through adequate use of these skills, students are able to observe a page of print, not as words, but rather as action, color, movement, scenery, sounds, ideas, thoughts, and feelings.

The more familiar the student is with the words he is reading, the less conscious he will be that he is reading words. The less he realizes that it is by means of word recognition that he is reading, the greater will be his comprehension.[14]

Vocabulary awareness arouses the child's interest for meanings of words. This awareness helps to develop word consciousness which is un-measurable and yet is one of the most important goals of the vocabulary program. Skills aid in word recognition, but skills, as such, are quite meaningless unless accompanied by an atmosphere which actively encourages the child to appreciate the importance and satisfaction of a large and meaningful vocabulary.

Studies have shown that the direct approach to the teaching of vocabulary is superior to the indirect method of teaching.[15] By using the direct approach the teacher is able to develop a program of independent word analysis. Such a program would include phonics, use of context, structural analysis, and the use of the dictionary. Which part to minimize and which to concentrate on will be determined by the teacher in her effort to develop word consciousness. Such a program would include stimulants to arouse student interest, such as field trips, creative writing, retelling stories, and show-and-tell periods.

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14. Thomas Schottman, "Encouraging the Growth of Vocabulary."
15. J. L. Meriam, loc. cit.

Reasons for vocabulary development are many, but one that shouldn't be overlooked is that of self gratification. The student should acquire a socially useful and personally satisfying vocabulary. It is here that the teacher is really challenged. The students will not sense the need for vocabulary improvement unless he is made to be aware of his own short comings. Local language docility is now confronted. Here at times teachers efforts are in direct conflict with local usage; and unless she is able to show a need for vocabulary improvement and make the student feel this need, there will be no change. The ills of such a situation are many, and one that worries administrators is that teachers along with grown-ups become bored with the demands made of them and become content with common-place expressions in which they may or may not use inaccurate words.

In effort to overcome this dulled non-interest, the teacher has to play upon the students curiosity. Interest can be whipped up through give-and-take situations in the class room. A friendly and permissive atmosphere does much to encourage free expression. Through these informal discussions, faulty information, incomplete understandings, and lack of knowledge come to light so that the teacher can correct and enlighten the student.

This interest in classroom life then can reflect itself in other areas of the learning program. Children begin to enjoy listening to and watching for new words and old words with new meanings. As they watch and listen, new, colorful, sound-filled, and emotionally stimulating experiences begin unfolding before them.

Direct attention to words and meanings are essential for vocabulary enlargement. If teachers are to help students become independent in

attacking new words, they will have to help the student see the importance of precise meanings. The student has to be able to express himself and to do this he must know and understand the language he uses. According to Thomas,[16] word familiarity increases comprehension and comprehension effects achievement. New grades mean new worlds; and as the student advances in school he will be confronted with new tasks such as detecting shifts of meanings, metaphorical language, the connotations of words, and the like. Drills have a place in such a program and it is unlikely that the shift in emphasis found in table 10 is altogether wholesome.

Comprehension increases as the reader is able to recognize new words and old words with new meanings. But it becomes more difficult as the student makes grade progress; and it would seem, since they are again exploring new areas, that old and tried techniques would still be of use. According to Betts,[17] reading growth takes place in every normal child, but the process is unique and different in each; that students vary in the time they take to begin the mastery of reading techniques; that they also vary in the time necessary to arrive at word independence in the use of these techniques. This would not substantiate the findings of the table.

Table 10 shows those dictionary and vocabulary skills marked "always" to decrease 27 percent in the intermediate grades. Those practices marked "some" to increase 31 percent in the intermediate and practices marked "never" to decrease 4 percent in the intermediate grades.

An adequate grade level vocabulary and good reading habits are inseparable. From the first grade on up the child augments his

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16. Thomas Schottman, loc. cit.
17. Emmett Albert Betts, Foundation of Reading Instruction. pp. 3-15.

vocabulary and as a result improves his comprehension. It only stands to reason that, if the student has an adequate supply of skills, greater emphasis can be placed on the utilization of these skills.

Table 10. Dictionary and vocabulary skills—shown by percentages, as used in grades one to six

Techniques	Grades 1 to 3			Grades 4 to 6		
	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Do you teach alphabetizing?	12	55	33	0	88	12
2. Do you give drills in syllabication?	12	36	52	0	64	36
3. Do you give work with vowels, accent, guide words?	0	55	45	0	88	12
4. Do you give drills in respelling for pronunciation?	24	32	44	12	88	0
5. Do you use the "table contents" in books?	0	75	25	0	88	12
6. Do you compare index and table of contents?	0	75	25	0	88	12
7. Do you give instructions on how to use the dictionary?	12	38	50	0	45	55
8. Do you give questions based on book indexes?	24	44	32	12	88	0
9. Do you have students acquaint themselves with guide words in the dictionary?	24	38	38	0	76	24
10. In vocabulary building do you give special attention to extension of meanings for known words?	0	36	64	12	88	0
11. Do you give sight-word drills?	0	46	64	12	88	0
12. Do you ever test your students as to the number of sight-words they know?	24	12	64	24	76	0
13. Do you teach new words by first telling them to the students?	0	75	25	0	88	12
Mean average	.10	.47	.43	.06	.78	.16

N. Never
S. Some
A. Always

<u>Summarization of tables 4 to 10</u>

The findings of tables 4 to 10 would lend themselves to the question "What is reading?" Is it sight vocabulary; is it word analysis; is it getting ideas from the printed page; is it speed; is it critical thinking? To be sure these practices are included in a reading program and each has its place.

Sight reading practices, as shown by the questionnaire, has an urgency at the beginning of the primary grades that decline in the intermediate; a practice which isn't supported by research. According to recent studies the acquisition of reading skills should be a continuous one.[18] For at all levels of reading skill the same basic conditions are required. Meanings must be well established and associated with form; form must be learned through the sense avenues of sight, sound, and touch; and the word form must appear in a meaningful setting at frequent intervals so as to be well established and retainable.

Sight vocabulary must be fostered at all levels of reading.[19] Beginning readers will meet materials which will deal with a common environment. At this stage reading development is largely a matter of checking on and providing for the child's acquaintance with the spoken symbol that he is to read. Later as reading becomes more complex with the addition of words that are complete strangers and common words used in strange ways, there is even greater need, if that is conceivable, for the activities which will help clarify concepts. It is for this reason that drills used in the early grades should be re-evaluated and retained to some degree in advanced grades. On every reading level new problems

18. Bernice E. Leary, <u>loc. cit.</u>
19. Edward L. Thorndike, <u>loc. cit.</u>

require a certain amount of re-adjustment. Reading readiness is not an isolated skill to be associated only with school beginners, but is a constant student companion all the way through school.

Table 11 shows that many of the skills felt to be important by the primary group begin to receive less emphasis as we advance in the grades. Some teachers of the intermediate grades seem to take for granted that children will acquire, without further special training, the reading skills necessary for reading fluency. This attitude is one that needs careful attention for it is the teachers duty to provide a well balanced reading program.

In advance content fields, students are going to experience difficulties if they do not receive attention from the teacher in the area of reading. Research shows that even in content fields achievement can be effected when combined with the reading program, and that the converse of this is true, that reading ability is effected when combined with interesting material. The basic reading program cannot function adequately if isolated and it cannot function in all reading situations. The teacher has to be the judge as to what areas she is to explore and what skills she will help develop. She knows that all pupils need, at different times, some reading guidance; and it is her job to see that a basic developmental program is provided on all levels.

Table 11. Summary of questionnaire findings--shown by percentages,
as used in grades from one to six

Methods	Grades 1 to 3			Grades 4 to 6		
	N	S	A	N	S	A
1. Word structure skills	.09	.45	.46	.12	.64	.23
2. Word meanings	.08	.42	.50	.06	.76	.18
3. Comprehension of words	.06	.69	.25	.05	.89	.06
4. Practical application skills	.00	.60	.40	.06	.82	.12
5. Phonetic analysis and ear training skills	.08	.43	.49	.11	.73	.16
6. Teaching techniques	.08	.58	.34	.16	.78	.06
7. Dictionary and vocabulary skills	.10	.47	.43	.06	.78	.16
Mean average	.07	.52	.41	.09	.77	.14

N. Never
S. Some
A. Always

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The results of the questionnaire indicate that new techniques are being used in the intermediate grades and that the methods and procedures used in the primary grades receive less attention as grade progress is made. Some of this shift in emphasis is natural and would be expected in any learning situation, for growth cannot take place in a vacuum. However, the degree of shift in the areas where it appeared more evident is cause for concern.

The tests show a difference in achievement of nearly two years. The sixth grade shows a loss of 1.18 years while the third grade shows a gain of .27 year. The groups tested had mean I. Q.'s of 97.8 for the third grade and 97 for the sixth grade, giving no practicable explanation from this area as to the differences found in achievement.

Here a paradoxical situation presents itself. The child makes grade progress, and as he does he is going to meet new and complex material. At the same time, according to the survey, teaching concepts are going to change to where he will receive less individual attention. The results of such a change isn't advantageous to the child, as is shown by the achievement scores of the two groups. This discrepancy between theory and practice gives little assurance to the student that his needs will be taken care of.

As previously stated, some shift in teaching techniques is to be expected and will be regarded as wholesome; but according to research, students vary in the time they take to begin the mastery of reading techniques. They also vary in the time necessary to arrive at independence

in the use of these techniques, suggesting that at no time can teachers assume that a skill has been taught. It is the teacher's job to make certain of mastery before allowing the child to progress in content fields. Techniques used in the primary grades are basically sound and are found to be useful in any grade where the discovery is made that the student needs assistance.

Reading continuity implies a reading program which is adherent to the child's basic needs. Such a program would insure the child that he would meet school work of which he is capable of doing. No longer would the teacher be alone in her concern for the student, but it would be shared by the school administration. This harmonious working arrangement would do much to erase the effrontery of the paradoxical situation the schools find themselves in today.

To achieve in school, the student has to be able to read. To be able to read he must be acquainted with those skills and principles applicable to reading. He has to be assured that as he makes grade progress he will be taken from where he is, not in relation to his grade, but to achievement; and he will receive similarly complete and gradually ascending attention his peers received as they were first introduced to those skills of which he is in need.

The schools have to do more than give lip service in recognition of individual differences. They accept the fact that all children can not learn the same thing at the same time nor to the same degree, but their very organization tends to ignore and refute this knowledge. The advancement system used by the school is not in harmony with their teaching concepts. Admittance of differences and suggesting teacher

correction is admitting the existance of an illness; teacher correction is a remedy but the cause is left intact.

Table 11 shows a shift of 38 percent in the use of specific skills and an increase of 27 percent in teaching techniques which incorporate principles of indirect teaching. These findings combined with the results of the achievement tests indicate that neglect is taking place in some areas of teaching and would warrant a re-evaluation of the county's reading program.

Recommendations

The reading program developed within the school is for the purpose of promoting and stimulating student growth. The survey has not revealed the exact nature of the difficulties in the county's reading program, but it has suggested review and adherence to the following areas:

1. Respect for the personality of each child.

2. Clear recognition that pupils vary in their capacity to learn and in their rate of progress.

3. School, on grade levels, should provide adequate readiness programs.

4. Making a systematic and thorough study of the reading interests, attainments, and needs of pupils at the time of grade admission. This study could then be used as an aid in identifying their status and level of achievement and assist in noting and locating deficiencies, if any exist.

5. Adjusting materials and methods of teaching to individual needs within the frame-work of group instruction.

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