THE USE OF EASY READING MATERIALS WITH
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

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Dean of the Graduate School
THE USE OF EASY READING MATERIALS WITH
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
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By

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Odessa, Texas
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study is to determine the effectiveness of the use of easy reading material in improving the reading ability of retarded students in the junior high school. Ordinarily, direct reading instruction is not a part of the junior high school program—it is assumed that students learn to read in the elementary school. An inquiry in any junior high school would reveal, however, that this is not the case. A large number of pupils at this level cannot read with profit or satisfaction the materials designed for that level. There is need, therefore, for special instruction for these pupils.

One of the major recommendations of authorities in the field of the teaching of reading is that improvement in this skill is dependent upon much practice at the level of the learner's ability.\(^1\) This study is an attempt to determine the validity of this recommendation applied at the junior high school level.

\(^1\)Edward W. Dolch, A Manual for Remedial Reading, p. 25.
Significance of the Study

Since reading holds the most important role as a study tool and has intimate relationship with school success, it is the duty of the school to teach the child to read so that he can live intelligently and with pleasure in a complex civilization. He must be able to learn, through the medium of reading, most of the subjects which the school attempts to teach. Many children reach junior high school unable to derive any satisfaction from, or to use, reading as a learning tool.

By the use of tests and careful observation of the student, the teacher can gain an insight as to the needs of each individual and can assist him in overcoming his weaknesses.

Source of Data and Method of Treatment

The reading needs of the students were determined by standardized tests and informal inventories. These were given to the students at the beginning of the school year and again near the close of the school year.

The standardized tests given were Gray's Oral Paragraph Reading Test, Otis Classification Test, Form R, Revised, and Iowa Silent Reading Test, Form Am, Revised. The teacher observed the students closely for the first few weeks of school and secured all the information available concerning reading habits, home life, health conditions, physical defects, and
social interests. The students' permanent record folders were studied for any additional information they might contain.

The first step in the study was the Gray's Oral Paragraph Reading Test, given September 12, 1951. This test was the basis for determining the student's present reading level. The Otis Classification Test, Form R, Revised, given October 8, 1951, revealed that the mental ability in intelligence quotients of the group ranged from 58 to 108.

The first informal testing with a home life questionnaire was given September 19, 1951. A questionnaire revealing the choice of books and magazines was given October 11, 1951. Information pertaining to social interests was obtained from a questionnaire on October 17, 1951.

A record of the findings of these tests and questionnaires, together with any additional information, was kept for each student so that the teacher might know the needs of each student.

The final test, Iowa Silent Reading Test, Form Am, Revised, was given near the close of school, May 13, 1952. From the results of this test the teacher was able to determine the progress made in reading during the school year.

Limitations

The evidence in this study was limited to three administrative reading classes in the Crockett Junior High School,
Odessa, Texas. All data used have been carefully planned and were considered valid for these special classes. One teacher taught all three classes, which eliminated any variation as to the method of teaching. All tests were given by the same teacher.

All the causes for reading failure could not be controlled in the school room. Some of the most serious difficulties came from within the home--this was beyond the teacher's control.

Organization

Chapter I of this study gives the statement of the problem and the significance of the study. It contains the source of data and proposed methods for the treatment of the data. The limitations of the study are included. The organization is given at the close of the chapter.

Chapter II gives the method of determining the reading level of the students at the beginning of the school year. It contains a survey of the home life and economic status of each family. An inventory of health conditions, physical defects, social interests, and reading habits is included. A broad proposal of the program is also given.

Chapter III explains the development of the program and the use of the basic text. It gives methods used in teaching reading. It describes the free reading period and the use of
the Reader's Digest, the Gates-Peardon Practice Exercises in Reading, and the spelling booklets. It gives provisions for individual differences.

Chapter IV deals with the evaluation of the program and reports the standing of the students at the close of the school year. It also gives an evaluation of the procedure used in light of the information gained at the close of the year.

Chapter V is a summary of the study with certain recommendations and conclusions.
CHAPTER II

DETERMINING THE READING LEVEL OF THE STUDENTS

AT THE BEGINNING OF SCHOOL

In order to meet the needs of the retarded reader in the seventh grade it was necessary at the beginning of school to have a meeting of the reading consultant of the Odessa Elementary Schools, the principal of Crockett Junior High School, the counselor, and other adjutstive teachers. At this meeting plans for the year were made. Meetings were held regularly throughout the year to discuss progress made by the students and to evaluate the method of teaching.

Factors Included in the Analysis

The first step was to give the Gray's Oral Reading Paragraph Test, on September 12, 1951. This test revealed the present reading level of each student and was the basis for grouping the pupils into classes. The next formal test was the Otis Classification Test, Form R, Revised. This test revealed the chronological age and scholastic ability of each student.

Table 1 reveals the present reading level, the chronological age, and mental ability of each student at the beginning of school. Table I is divided into three classes, A, B,
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<tr>
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<td>87</td>
<td>3.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
and C. Each class is limited to fifteen pupils. The pupils in Class "A" have mental abilities ranging from 63 to 108, a difference of 45 from the lowest to the highest score. Four of the fifteen pupils made 100 and above; four made 91 and above; two made 81 and above; three made 74 and above, and the remaining two made 63 and above.

The chronological age ranged from 12 years and 9 months to 14 years and 10 months. The present reading level ranged from 4.5 to 6.1. This wide range in reading level made it necessary to have more than one reading group in Class "A."

Each pupil was from one to three reading levels below his grade level. Pupils with mental abilities above 91 could be expected to make more improvement than those pupils with mental abilities below 91. Pupil 5 has mental ability of 63, chronological age of 14 years and 9 months, and present reading level of 5.1. Pupil 5 cannot be expected to improve very much. Pupil 15 has mental ability of 93, chronological age of 13 years, and present reading level of 4.5. Pupil 15 is three grades behind his class and has the mental ability to do better work; therefore, he can be expected to improve. Pupil 10 has mental ability of 99, chronological age of 13 years and 5 months, and present reading level of 4.7. Pupil 10 is almost three grades below his mental ability. Pupils 3, 9, 11, and 12 are Latin Americans, and language handicap may be partly the cause of their being retarded in reading.
Class "B" in Table 1 shows mental abilities ranging from 74 to 96, a difference of 22 points from the lowest to the highest score. A range in chronological age from 13 years to 15 years and 3 months, and present reading level ranging from 4.0 to 4.5 is also shown. Five pupils had mental abilities of 93 and above; nine had mental abilities of 80 and above, and one had mental ability of 74. The pupils in Class "B" were nearer the same reading level than the pupils in Class "A." Pupils 17 and 25 were Latin Americans, and here again the language handicap must be considered.

Pupils in Class "C" showed mental abilities ranging from 58 to 98, a difference of 40 points from the lowest to the highest score. Chronological ages ranged from 12 years and 9 months to 15 years, and reading levels ranged from 3.0 to 3.9. Three students in Class "C" had mental abilities of 90 and above; nine, 80 and above; one, 78; one, 66, and one, 58. Pupils 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, and 43 cannot be expected to improve as much as Pupils 40, 44, and 45. Pupil 42 was Latin American. This class was four reading levels below average.

From the conclusions reached as a result of these tests it seemed evident that fifteen students in Classes "A," "B," and "C" had reading difficulties that were not due to lack of mental ability. The results of these tests are of value to the teacher so that she may see which pupils are capable
of doing better work than they are doing and to see which pupils will not be able to do work on their age level.

All reading difficulties cannot be determined by tests. Some of the most serious difficulties come from within the home. In order to determine more definitely the needs of the students it was necessary that the teacher become acquainted with each student and secure information concerning home life, social interests, health conditions, physical defects, and reading interests and habits of the students.

**Home life.**--The first informal testing was a questionnaire pertaining to home life. The following questions were answered by each student:

1. With whom do you live?
2. Do you have a step-mother?
3. Do you have a step-father?
4. How many children are in your family?
5. What position are you in the family?
6. What language do you speak at home?
7. What is your father's occupation?
8. Does your mother work?
9. Do you help with work at home?
10. Do you help care for smaller children in your family?
11. Do you have a job after school or on Saturdays?
12. Do you earn your own spending money?
On checking the above questions it was found that thirty-three children lived with their father and mother; four had step-fathers; six had step-mothers; one lived with grandparents, and one lived with an uncle and aunt.

In four of the families there was one child; in seven families, two children; in eleven families, three children; in nine families, four children; in seven families, six children; in one family, seven children; in three families, eight children, and in one family, nine children.

Twenty-one of the children were the first child in the family; nine, the second child; ten, the third child; four, the fourth child, and one, the fifth child.

English was spoken in thirty-eight homes, and Spanish was spoken in seven homes.

The economic status of the families was that of a day laborer. The majority of the fathers were roughnecks (oil field workers), drillers, and truck drivers. Only one of the fathers owned his own business. Thirteen of the girls helped with the home work; one boy often cooked breakfast, and eight of the boys helped their fathers in the oil field. Only three helped care for younger children in the family. Nine worked after school, and seventeen had Saturday jobs. Twenty-five earned their own spending money.

Health survey.—On checking the students' health records, in addition to questions answered by the students, it was
found that health conditions in the majority of the homes were good. Only seven of the homes could be said to be unfavorable for good health. These families lived in one- and two-room houses with no modern facilities.

The students' health records revealed that out of the forty-five students, four wore glasses, and one was nearsighted. Seven had Spanish accent; one could not talk plain; three had hearing defects; one had heart condition; one had seizures, and four missed school frequently on account of illness.

Social interests.--A questionnaire on social interests revealed that eighteen attended church regularly; ten attended sometimes, and seventeen seldom attended. Thirty-two attended the movies more than once each week; eight attended once a week, and five seldom attended. The favorite sports were skating and swimming.

Reading interests and habits.--It is almost always the case that students who are below their level in reading find reading uninteresting. The teacher asked the students to answer the following questions so that she might gain a better insight into their reading habits and attitudes:

1. Do you like to read?
2. Do you like for someone to read to you?
3. Do your parents encourage your reading at home?
4. Do you have a card for the public library?
5. How often do you get books from the library?
6. How many books do you have of your own?
7. About how many books are there in your home?

Out of the forty-five students, only twenty-three said that they liked to read. All liked for someone to read to them. They insisted on bringing books for the teacher to read to them during home-room period. Most of the parents seemed very indifferent concerning reading in the home. Fifteen homes had books, and eight children owned books. Seven had cards to the public library, but they used them mostly during the summer months.

Table 2 gives the types of stories the students enjoyed most. The favorite books among the girls were comics, detective stories, and adventure stories. Five girls read the newspaper. The favorite books among the boys were comics, mystery stories, detective stories, adventure stories, and science stories. Nineteen boys read the newspaper. Books the students did not enjoy were plays, poetry, fairy tales, and music.

By taking an oral check of the reasons for poor reading among the students, it was found that all thought the vocabulary was too difficult, and they could not understand what they were reading. Spelling among the entire group was very poor. Some moved their lips while reading, and several read aloud.
## Table 2

**Favorite Types of Books**

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<tr>
<td>Travel</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plays</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adventure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Science</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poetry</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
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**Broad Proposal of Program**

The problem facing the teacher was setting up a program that would meet the needs of this particular group of students. Would it be possible to place each student on his own
reading level and at the same time to keep him interested in reading? These boys and girls with chronological ages ranging from 12 years and 9 months to 15 years and 5 months would have to be placed at third, fourth, and fifth grade reading levels. How would they react to this situation? Would they resent this type of reading program?

After a conference with the reading consultant, the principal, and the counselor, it was decided that this group should be taught the mechanics of reading. The same method used in teaching primary children would be used in teaching this group. They should build a sight vocabulary, the use of phonics in word attack, contextual clues, and the use of the dictionary. They should be taught to recognize "root words," as well as how the addition of a prefix or suffix changes the meaning of the root word. Reading is a skill and must be developed step-by-step.\(^1\)

It was decided that the Scott Foresman readers would be used as the basic text in this adjunctive work. Books from the second grade through the sixth grade were placed in the room. Grade II, *Friends and Neighbors*, Grade III, *Streets and Roads*, Grade IV, *Times and Places*, Grade V, *Days and Deeds*, and Grade VI, *People and Progress*, were included. Each child would do one *Think-and-Do Workbook* to accompany the basic reader. The Ginn series, Grade II, *Around the

Corner, and Grade III, *Friends Far and Near*, were used as supplementary readers. The *Teacher's Guide Book* was used in preparing the reading lessons.

The *Reader's Digest, Reading for Skill*, grades four and five, were used. Fifteen *Webster's Student Dictionaries* were placed on the book shelf. Gates and Peardon, *Practice Exercises in Reading*, Books A, B, C, and D were available to the students. These books give practice in the following types of reading:

A - Reading to appreciate the general significance of the story.

B - Reading to predict the outcome of given events.

C - Reading to understand precise directions.

D - Reading to note details.

These books were on fourth-grade level.

Spelling words were taken from *The 2000 Commonest Words*, by Edward W. Dolch. Words from daily lessons were added to the spelling list.

In setting up this program it was decided that the giving of marks or "grades" would be de-emphasized. An effort would be made to keep the students from being "grade conscious." The student must meet success so that he might find confidence in himself and have a feeling of "belongingness" in all his classes.
CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROGRAM

Recommendations of Authorities As Basis for Procedure

This chapter tells somewhat in detail the program as it developed to meet the needs of these students. The procedure was based upon the recommendations of authorities in the field of reading.

The classes were limited to fifteen pupils in order that more effective teaching might be done. Each class period was forty-five minutes long. Class "A" was divided into three reading groups because of the wide range in reading level. Class "B" had only one reading group, and Class "C" had two reading groups.

Two directed reading lessons were given each week. Monday was used for a free reading period in the library. One day each week was given to the Reader's Digest and other current news. One day was given to the studying of spelling.

Use of Basic Test

Presenting a directed reading lesson.--In presenting a directed reading lesson an effort was made to establish a background for each story. It was necessary to build a sight vocabulary as an aid to good reading. The following
aids to word perception were used: (1) meaning clues, (2) word-form clues, (3) structural clues, (4) phonetic clues, and (5) use of the glossary or dictionary.\(^1\)

Establishing a background.—Since many of the stories presented to the pupils were stories of low interest level, it was very important that the teacher establish a background for each story. This was done by relating interesting facts about the story being presented. Thought questions were asked that caused the pupils to make comparisons with certain characters in the story or with their own experiences. The pupils were asked to select certain parts of the story relating to certain incidents or to find the sentences that answered a particular question. Certain words and phrases were asked to be explained.

A map about four feet by three feet of the United States was placed on the bulletin board. On this map were pictures illustrating regional stories which paralleled the actual reading being done. For example, a small picture of Pecos Bill riding the mountain lion with a rattlesnake for a lariat was placed in the Panhandle of Texas and in New Mexico. This added interest to the story that was being taught at the time.

Building a sight vocabulary.—Building a sight vocabulary is very necessary in order for the child to be a good reader. Many words in the English language have no other approach except visual. For example, "quiet" and "quite" the child must learn by sight.

In the primary and elementary grades each reader introduces to the child words that are to be learned on that grade level. New words are introduced slowly, and much repetition of the word is used. If the child is fortunate enough to learn all the words introduced at each grade level, he will become a good reader. Many children fail to learn all the words introduced; some learn only a few. Therefore, the step from one grade level to another is considerably more difficult for many children.²

When the child is passed from one grade level to another, too often the teacher takes for granted that he knows all words previously introduced. No attempt is made to teach him the words he does not know, but he is expected to learn the additional words of that grade level. If this procedure is continued, by the time the pupil reaches junior high school he is completely lost in his reading.

The teacher selected words from each reading lesson that were difficult for the pupils to pronounce. These words were

placed on the board, and the class as a group was given help in pronouncing the words. Individual help was given when necessary. Previously introduced words were reviewed once or twice each week.

Words for sight vocabulary were not limited to stories in reading, but words from newspapers, Reader's Digest, and other reading material were added to the list.

Aids used in word perception.--Meaning clues provide the most important single aid in word perception. The context of the sentence or paragraph which the child reads often aids in understanding the meaning and pronunciation of the word. The meaning clue, together with a visual impression of the word form, may be all the child needs to accurately use the word.

For example, the child who is reading about a person who has just finished writing a letter, when the reader meets the sentence "At last Mary was ready to seal and stamp the envelope," finds that the general context has given strong meaning clues for the words "seal," "stamp," and "envelope." Even though the child has not seen the words before, he may recognize them by noting their general form. "Seal" and "stamp" are short words; "envelope" is long. If the child thinks "letter" for the last word, he will immediately notice that "letter" is a short word. He will notice that "envelope" does not look like "letter."
Not only must the pupil use the general context as an aid in identifying words, but he must also be able to attach to a given word a meaning that is appropriate to the context. The child must know that a word has more than one meaning. He must be able to use the word that "makes sense" in the sentence.

Word-form clues furnish another valuable aid in word perception. Children must be taught the length of the word, its general contour, or any distinguishing characteristics it may have.\(^3\) Accurate visual perception of word-form is essential for rapid perception of sight words.

Sometimes visual impression of the general contour of words is inadequate for accurate perception, even though the printed forms are familiar, as for example the words "though" and "through." In order to avoid confusion the child must be taught to note one or more significant characteristics of the words, such as the "\(r\)" in "through."

Observation of the total word-form or a significant part of a word will also help in pronouncing a new word. As an example, in the sentence "The announcer raised his megaphone,"\(^4\) the child may at first think "raised his hand," but he immediately sees that the last word is long; therefore it cannot be

\(^3\)Gray and others, op. cit., p. 26.

\(^4\)Ibid., p. 27.
"hand." He may be able to recognize the word "phone," and his meaning clue may instantly tell him that the word is "megaphone."

Structural clues are of particular aid in pronouncing long words. The length and general form of such words as "discourage," "warehouse," "charmed," and "transatlantic" contain root words, prefixes, suffixes, or syllables which are pronounceable units. The pupils must be able to identify these units before they are able to sound and blend them into words.\(^5\)

Detailed visual scrutiny of a word may reveal a known root word or inflectional ending. The pupil may look at the word "discourage" and recognize "dis" as a common prefix and then attach "courage" as a pronounceable unit. As soon as the pupil realizes that the word "warehouse" is made up of two words, he has analyzed the structure of the word and has determined the pronounceable unit.

Phonetic clues involve the association of sound with printed symbols. As the child reads, he consciously or unconsciously associates sounds with parts of word-forms. Often a single phonetic clue, when combined with meaning and word-form clues, will tell the reader what the word must be.

In order to use phonetic analysis as an aid to word perception, the child must have a knowledge of the sounds that

\(^5\)Ibid., p. 28.
are used in the language and of the symbols that stand for
the sounds. Approximately forty-three separate sounds are
used in general American speech. Each of these is either
a consonant or a vowel sound. The twenty-six letters in the
alphabet are the written symbols that are used to represent
these sounds. Since there are more sounds than there are
symbols, a different symbol cannot be used for each sound.
Phonetic understanding cannot be developed, therefore, by
teaching the child that when he sees a certain letter or com-
bination of letters he must say a given sound. However, an
effort was made to teach the following basic skills:

1. The pupil should be able to recognize consonant and
   vowel sounds.

2. They should know when letters are silent.

3. They should know the phonetic principles that aid
   in determining the sound of elements.

4. They should know the effect of syllabic divisions
   on the sound of vowels.

5. They should know the effect of accent on vowel
   sounds.

6. They should be able to recognize clues that aid in
   identifying accented syllables.

7. They should be taught the recognition of sound and
   symbol.

 ibid., p. 31.
8. They should be able to associate sound with symbol application.

9. They should know the use of phonetic principles.  

The use of the glossary or dictionary is another aid in word perception. Fifteen Webster's Student Dictionaries were available for the students to use. In order to be able to use the dictionary successfully to locate entries and to learn how to derive meaning and pronunciation, an attempt was made to teach the following skills:

The pupils were taught to recognize alphabetical sequence, to locate words in an alphabetical list, to learn the use of the guide words at the top of the page, to identify the "root" word, to recognize prefixes and suffixes, to comprehend the definition of words, to select from several meanings the one appropriate to the given context, to recognize the function of the accent mark, and to blend syllables into word wholes.

The alphabet was placed on the board for the pupils to see. Some of the pupils did not know the alphabet in sequence.

Use of workbooks. -- In order to extend skills and abilities in reading, each child did one Think-and-Do Workbook to accompany the basic reader he was using. These books followed a systematic program for building essential skills in

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Ibid., p. 39.
word perception and comprehension and for promoting ability in reacting to and applying ideas gained through reading. The workbooks were carried along with each reading lesson in the basic series. The teacher explained the technique when necessary. After completing each exercise, the pupils and the teacher discussed it together in class. Each pupil understood clearly the things he had missed, but no marks or grades were placed in the book.

Free Reading

Each Monday the pupils went to the library for free reading. The teacher and the librarian helped the pupils find the books they wanted to read. All the books with high-interest level, but with low-ability level, were placed on certain shelves in the library. The pupils could check out a book from the library for a period of one week. If they were unable to finish the book in that length of time, they were permitted to re-check the book for another week.

One series of books that was found to be very interesting to the pupils (especially to the boys) was the American Adventure Series. These books were stories about life in early America. Such stories as Fur Trappers of the Old West, Buffalo Bill, Cowboys and the Cattle Trails, and others were included.

The teacher helped the pupils in using reference books to find information pertaining to certain interests. Three
daily newspapers were in the library for the pupils to read. These newspapers were the Odessa American, the Fort Worth Star Telegram, and the Dallas Morning News.

On the magazine shelves there were twelve different magazines. The ones which the pupils seemed to enjoy most were Life, Look, National Geographic, Field and Stream, Seventeen (girls), Better Homes and Gardens, and Science. The students were free to select any of this material they wanted to read.

Use of Reader's Digest (Reading Skill Building)

These magazines are written on fourth, fifth, and sixth grade reading levels. Each magazine has the number of dots at the top of the cover page to designate the reading level on which it is written, that is, the fourth grade reading level has four dots at the top of the cover page; the fifth grade reading level has five dots, and the sixth grade has six dots.

The magazines present especially interesting articles taken from the Reader's Digest. The pupils enjoyed reading these stories and were always eager for Reader's Digest day each week.

At the end of each story there were exercises for the pupils to do. These exercises included comprehension, reading for facts, increasing word power, and selecting the correct definition for a given word. At the end of each story the number of words the story contains is given. By
timing himself each pupil could determine his rate of reading per minute by dividing the number of minutes used in reading the story into the number of words in the story. A clock was placed in front of the room so that the pupils could time themselves. By doing this, they were able to keep a record of their reading speed.

Use of Practice Exercises in Reading

The Gates-Peardon Practice Exercises in Reading, Book IV, was also used for remedial purposes. This reading series consists of four types of reading. These are: Type A, "Reading to Appreciate the General Significance of a Story," Type B, "Reading to Predict the Outcome of Given Events," Type C, "Reading to Understand Precise Directions," and Type D, "Reading to Note Details."

These four types of reading are believed to be the most important forms which children are called upon to use. There is much in common among them so that training in one helps to improve the other. The best way to give a pupil a well-rounded and adaptable equipment of reading technique is to provide him with an abundance of experiences in at least four types of reading. Each of the four booklets gives special emphasis to one type of reading. These booklets

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were used in class and individually. They were good aids in developing reading skills.

Method Used in Teaching Spelling

The 2000 Commonest Words, by Edward W. Dolch, was used in teaching spelling. These booklets contained the words used most in everyday conversation. The words, including homonyms, were arranged alphabetically.

The first half of the spelling period was used in studying the spelling words. Twenty words were included in an assignment. The teacher placed the words on the board, and, with the help of the teacher, the class pronounced the words several times. The words were scrutinized as to form, length, and any other characteristics the words might have. If there were words that the pupils did not know the meaning of, or words that they could not pronounce, the dictionary was used. The pupils talked about the words and used them in sentences.

The last half of the period was used in writing the words. In addition to the spelling pamphlets, other words were added to the spelling list from various reading materials.

Provision for Individual Differences

The planning of this program was based upon the needs of the individual. At the beginning of school each student was placed on his present reading level. Each student was allowed to progress at his own rate. Various types of reading
materials were made available to the students. The reading program was flexible in order to care for the individual needs. No pupil was held back because of another. A pupil should compete only with himself.\footnote{Wayne Jeans, Class Lecture, North Texas State College, Summer, 1950.}
CHAPTER IV

EVALUATION OF THE READING PROGRAM

Test Results

This chapter gives the status of the students at the close of the school year. An evaluation of the procedure used in light of the information gained at the close of the year is also included.

Near the close of the school year, May, 1952, the Iowa Silent Reading Test, Form Am, Revised, was given to the students of the remedial group. This test was compared with the results of the Gray's Oral Paragraph Reading Test, given at the beginning of school, September, 1951, in order to determine the progress made by the students during the year.

Table 3 gives the comparison of these tests. It gives the mental ability, the reading level as determined by the Gray's Oral Paragraph Reading Test, and the gain made by each student during the school year.

Class "A" showed a gain in reading level ranging from eight months to three years. Pupils 1, 2, 6, 15, 4, and 14 showed a gain of two reading levels and above. Pupils 3, 9, 13, 7, and 8 showed a gain of one reading level and above. Pupil 11 had mental ability of 68 and made a gain of three months in reading level. Pupil 5 had mental ability of 63
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**TABLE 3**

**GAIN IN READING LEVEL DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR**
and showed a gain of eight months in reading level. Pupils 5 and 11 were not expected to make much progress. Pupil 9 had mental ability of 94, but made a reading gain of only one year and eight months. Pupil 9 did not make as much progress as was expected. This might be explained by the great number of absences from school. Pupil 12 had mental ability of 81 and made a gain of three reading levels. Pupil 12 made good use of his time; this could be the reason for his great amount of progress. Pupil 12 made more progress than was expected.

Class "B" showed a gain in reading level ranging from one year and two months to three years and three months. Pupils 17, 16, and 27 made a gain of three reading levels and above. Pupils 29 and 30 made a gain of two reading levels and above. Pupils 18, 21, 25, 20, 23, 26, 19, 22, 28, and 24 made a gain of one reading level and above. Pupil 25 had mental ability of 74 and made a reading gain of one year and nine months. The gain in Class "B" was more uniform than the reading gain in Class "A."

Class "C" showed a reading gain ranging from minus six to three years and eight months. Pupil 45 made a reading gain of three years and eight months. Pupils 33, 44, and 43 made a gain of two reading levels and above. Pupils 34, 39, 38, 36, 32, 40, and 35 made a gain of one reading level and above. Pupils 31, 37, and 41 made a gain of less than
one reading level. Pupil 42 showed a loss of six months. Pupil 42 was Latin American and spoke English very poorly. This, no doubt, helps to account for the loss in reading, as he seemed to have average intelligence.

In this group of forty-five pupils, five made a gain of three reading levels and above; ten made a gain of two reading levels and above; twenty-two made a gain of one reading level and above; five made a gain of less than one reading level, and one had a loss of six months.

Informal Evaluation

The teacher observed the reading interests and habits of the students during the school year. At the beginning of school most of the students had very little interest in reading, and their reading habits were very poor. In the library they were restless, and their interest span was very short. Many of the students spent most of their time looking at the books on the shelves. Some would change books three or four times during the forty-five-minute reading period. They were unable to decide upon a book and read it.

Before the year was over, the pupils had overcome much of this restlessness. They would go to the library, select a book, paper, or magazine, and read during the entire period. Some complained that the reading period was too short and that they did not have time to finish the article they were reading. As the school year progressed, more and more pupils
checked books from the library to read. Some read as many as two books during the week, and they were always eager to give a short oral book review to the class.

By discussing current events in class the students became more interested in reading the daily newspapers. The teacher took special care to mention some incident in the newspaper and asked the students to predict the outcome. This caused the students to read the daily papers in order to discuss different articles in class.

The majority of this group was frustrated because of an inability to read. All students were given passing grades on their report cards. They were not embarrassed in taking their cards home for their parents to see. Fear of failure was lessened, and they gained more confidence in themselves. One student remarked that "it was the first time he had passed in reading since he was in the third grade."

Parents voiced their appreciation for the reading program; they felt that their child was given special attention and was being helped in his reading difficulties. Some students improved in other subjects, and their teachers thought it was because of their improvement in reading. The Superintendent also received compliments from parents and citizens who expressed their appreciation for this adjutive work.

The basis of this reading program was placing the student on his present reading level. This was done, and two
directed reading classes were taught each week. When the stu-
dents were given third and fourth grade books to read, they
were not embarrassed, but they seemed happy because here was
something they were able to do. The students realized that
they were not up to the grade level in reading that they
should be, and they were very anxious to help themselves.

The students were furnished much reading material at
low-grade level, but high interest level. The county li-
brary cooperated with the school library in furnishing this
type of reading material. The hearty cooperation of the ad-
ministration and the entire teaching staff was a great help
in making this program a success. The fact that this group
of students was a homogeneous group economically and socially
probably helped make it possible to carry out this type of
reading program.

Near the close of school the teacher asked the students
to evaluate this reading program. Some said that their read-
ing vocabulary had increased to such an extent that it made
reading easier, and they were able to understand better what
they were reading. One student said he liked this reading
program because "hard things are told in a simple way."
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study has been to demonstrate the effectiveness of using easy reading material among retarded junior high school students. The main procedure emphasized was the placing of each student on his present reading level.

This study was made with forty-five students who composed three reading classes. Each student was given the Gray's Oral Paragraph Reading Test and the Otis Classification Test, Form R, at the beginning of the school year. The Gray's Oral Paragraph Reading Test revealed a wide range in reading level which made it necessary to have more than one reading group in two of the reading classes.

Informal testing included questionnaires and surveys pertaining to home life, health conditions, physical defects, social interests, and reading interests and habits of each student.

After finding the reading level of each student, the teacher made an attempt to develop a reading program according to the recommendations of authorities in the field of reading in order to care for the needs of these retarded students.
The *Iowa Silent Reading Test, Form Am, Revised*, was given near the close of the school year to determine the progress made in reading. In light of the information gained at the close of the school year, an attempt was made to evaluate the reading program.

**Conclusions**

In terms of the results of this reading program the following conclusions may be reached:

1. The program has seemed successful in that results from the final test showed that a gain in reading was made by the class as a whole, and the students' attitudes toward reading were improved.

2. The program was a success because of an economically and socially homogeneous group of students and because of the full cooperation of the total teaching staff.

3. Junior high school students can be placed on third and fourth grade reading levels without resentment on their part.

4. Students enjoy reading material that is easy, regardless of the reading level.

5. Reading material that is too difficult is uninteresting and blocks learning.

6. Discipline problems were kept at a minimum, because the work required was within the range of the student's ability.
7. Low-interest level stories can be made interesting to junior high school students by establishing an interesting background.

8. Retarded students can be helped to have a feeling of "belongingness" and a sense of security by de-emphasizing grades and meeting success in their reading efforts.

9. Improvement in reading brings improvement in other school subjects.

10. A good adjutiv reading program makes possible rehabilitation of large numbers of poor readers.

11. School staff members were of the opinion that the reading program reduced the behavior problems previously exhibited by these pupils.

12. Parents of this group seemed unaware of the need for wholesome reading materials in the home for their children.

13. Students in these classes were able to learn the sounds of letters, but they were unable to apply phonetic principles.

14. The sight vocabulary was increased largely by means of repetition through easy reading and contextual clues.

Recommendations

In considering the foregoing conclusions, the following recommendations can be made concerning retarded readers at the junior high school level:
1. Every teacher should realize that reading is a developmental process, and guidance should be provided; instruction in reading at the appropriate level should be given regardless of the child's age or grade.

2. At the beginning of the school year the teacher should ascertain the pupils' capacities and achievements in reading and then should build a program to fit their needs.

3. The students should have access to an abundance of reading materials on their interest level, but on a low-vocabulary level.

4. The students should be allowed to progress at their own ability reading rate.

5. Class groups should be small so that each student may receive individual attention.

6. The teacher should have access to professional books that she might become familiar with recommendations of authorities in the field of reading.

7. The teacher should take a diagnostic point of view and should study the individuals in the class.

8. The teacher should gain the respect and confidence of the students in her class by accepting them regardless of their status in reading achievement.
APPENDIX

The American Adventure Series was found to be especially interesting to the students. These books are recommended for remedial work. They have a high interest level, but low vocabulary level. Teachers manuals come with each book. The following books are included in this series:

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<td>The Rush for Gold</td>
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<td>John Paul Jones</td>
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Books at Reading Level of Grades 1, 2, 3,
with Interest Up to Grades 5 and 6

Who Blew that Whistle
Blaze and the Gypsies
Twelve O'clock Whistle
The Man Who Lost His Head
Turtles
Coyotes
Fast Sooner Hound
Slappy Hooper
Andy and the Lion
The Pleasant Pirate
Too Many Dogs
Derry the Wolfhound
Cap'n Dow and Hole in Doughnut
Pancakes for Breakfast
Whitey's First Round Up
Hercules the Gentle Giant
Five-Hundred Hats
Eagle Jake and Indian Pete
The King's Stilts
Honk the Moose
BIBLIOGRAPHY


