

ADAPTING A READING PROGRAM TO  
INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to test the effectiveness of adapting the reading instruction to the level and ability of individuals or small groups of a particular group of second grade children.

#### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to discover and propose a reading program which would meet the ability and needs of each child of a particular group of second grade children. After making a survey of educational thought in the field of reading methods and techniques it was believed that the abilities and needs of this particular group could be achieved by adapting the reading instruction to varying grade levels. "The merit of instruction to small groups lies in the opportunity for making the lessons more nearly fit the level, rate of progress, and interests of the individual pupils."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Donald D. Durrell, "Providing for Individual Differences in Reading," Education, LVI, (September, 1935), 30-36.

### Sources of Data and Method of Treatment

This study was conducted by giving a mental test, and two reading achievement tests at the beginning of the term to twenty-three children of a particular group of a second grade of the Mirabeau B. Lamar Elementary School, Dallas, Texas. At the same time written reports describing each child's personal and social traits were written and kept on file. In order to discover these data each child was encouraged to talk freely. He was also observed very closely in classroom, lunchroom, and on playground. After determining each child's ability and needs a reading program recommended by experts in the area of the teaching of reading was proposed and developed. The tests were repeated at the end of nine months and scores were compared with the norms for these tests.

### Organization

Chapter I of this study states the problem and its purpose. It also gives the sources of data and method of treatment. It presents the organization at the end of the chapter.

Chapter II explains the method of determining the abilities and needs of the pupils and proposes a reading program to meet their abilities and needs. The Pintner-Cunningham, Primary Test, Form A, was given in order to determine the mental ages and intelligent quotients of the

pupils. Two achievement reading tests, the Gates Primary Reading Test, and the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test, Battery I, Form R, were given to determine the reading achievement or reading level of each child. Since the tests showed that the reading levels of the pupils ranged from pre-reading readiness level to second grade reading level, the writer proposes a plan of instruction by which the abilities and needs of the pupils will be met by teaching them in small groups according to their reading ability. "It is regular practice today to divide each class into groups for reading instruction."<sup>2</sup> A paragraph describing each child's personal and social traits is included in this chapter. This chapter also includes a broad proposal of the program.

Chapter III describes the development of the reading program. It gives methods of teaching reading, including the provision for individual differences, the use of the home library, and the use of related activities.

Chapter IV gives an evaluation of the effectiveness of the program according to the final tests. It reports the reading level of the pupils.

Chapter V provides a summary of the study, drawing conclusions, and making recommendations.

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<sup>2</sup>Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability, p. 108.

## CHAPTER II

### DETERMINING THE READING PROGRAM

In this chapter the writer explains the method of determining the ability and needs of the pupils of this particular group of pupils and proposes a reading program to meet the abilities and needs of these pupils. It also includes a description of each pupil's personal and social traits.

#### Classification of Pupils

At the beginning of the school term the Pintner-Cunningham Primary Test, Form A, was given in order to determine the mental ages and intelligence quotients of the pupils. To analyze a child's reading difficulties, his mental age rather than his intelligence quotient should be used.

The mental age indicates in a general way the level of difficulty of what a child can learn; the intelligence quotient indicates his rate of mental growth and suggests how fast he will probably learn.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, in Table I each child's mental age is recorded beside his reading grade. His intelligence quotient is also included in this table. The results of this test were

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<sup>1</sup>Albert J. Harris, op. cit., p. 24.



kept, as they helped the teacher discover the abilities of each pupil.

Two reading achievement tests, the Gate's Primary Reading Test, and the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test, Battery I, Form R, were also given at the beginning of the term. These tests were given in order to determine the reading achievement of each child as compared with the norms of the tests.

Any grouping of pupils of a given second or third grade class for purposes of instruction in reading must be based upon correct information about each pupil's reading ability, including his general silent reading ability, his general oral reading ability, his control of specific reading skills, and his undesirable reading habits such as lip movement and word pointing. The needed information can be acquired through (1) using suitable standardized reading tests and home-made informal tests, (2) listening analytically to each pupil read aloud, and (3) observing each pupil as he reads silently.<sup>2</sup>

After scoring the tests, it was discovered that a majority of this particular group of pupils fell below second grade reading level. As has been stated in Chapter I, page 3, since the reading level of this group ranged from pre-reading readiness level to second grade reading level, the writer proposes a plan of adapting the reading instruction to the abilities and needs of the pupils. This plan provides for the grouping of the pupils according to their reading abilities and needs.

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<sup>2</sup>Paul McKee, The Teaching of Reading, p. 283.

Any elementary teacher knows that the various pupils entering any given second grade class or any given third grade class at the opening of school are by no means equal in reading achievement. In the second grade class some children will read no more effectively than many first grade pupils who are just beginning to read a so-called first reader. ....These wide differences among the reading abilities and needs of entering second and third grade children make it advisable if not imperative that those pupils be grouped for instructional purposes.<sup>3</sup>

The teacher divided this particular group on the basis of reading grade levels.

When the range of ability of each class is wide, it is usually advisable to set up reading groups primarily on the basis of reading grade levels.<sup>4</sup>

As Table I indicates there are eight pupils who scored below 1.6 reading level on both of the reading achievement tests. Although one of these pupils did score below 1.6 reading level, he read orally as well as many who scored much higher. He also comprehended what he read. Under these circumstances, the teacher placed him in the next highest group. The other seven were placed on the pre-reading or reading-readiness level. Table I shows that five pupils scored 1.6 reading level on the Metropolitan Achievement Reading Test. One of these five pupils scored 1.6 reading level on the Gates Primary Reading Test, and four of the other pupils scored 1.7 reading level on the Gates Primary Reading Test. These five pupils and the one who scored 1.5

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<sup>3</sup>Paul McKee, op. cit., pp. 282-283.

<sup>4</sup>Albert J. Harris, op. cit., p. 110.

TABLE 1

THE READING ACHIEVEMENT AND MENTAL  
AGE OF A SECOND GRADE

Pupil	Pintner Cunningham Mental Test					Grade Equivalent on Metro- politan Test	Grade Equivalent on Gates Test
	Chronological Age		Mental Age		IQ		
	Year	Mo.	Year	Mo.			
Group I							
A	7	2	5	7	77	1.2	1.1
B	7	4	6	7	90	1.3	1.4
C	7	5	6	6	88	1.3	1.3
D	9	10	7	11	80	1.3	1.4
E	8	11	5	6	62	1.4	1.5
F	10	1	7	4	73	1.5	1.4
G	7	6	6	8	89	1.5	1.5
Group II							
H	7	4	6	4	86	1.5	1.5
I	7	0	7	10	111	1.6	1.6
J	8	5	7	4	87	1.6	1.7
K	7	4	8	5	115	1.6	1.7
L	7	11	6	11	87	1.6	1.7
M	7	4	8	3	113	1.6	1.7
Group III							
N	7	5	7	0	94	1.8	1.8
O	8	1	6	4	76	1.8	1.9
P	7	4	7	0	95	1.9	1.8
Q	7	0	7	4	104	1.9	1.8
R	7	4	7	4	100	1.9	1.7
Group IV							
S	7	3	8	0	110	2.0	2.0
T	7	6	7	4	98	2.1	2.0
U	7	3	9	5	129	2.1	2.0
V	7	4	7	5	101	2.1	2.2
W	8	2	10	2	124	2.2	2.3

were placed on the pre-primer reading level. Two pupils scored 1.8 reading level and three pupils scored 1.9 reading level on the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test. As the table indicates one of these five pupils scored the same on the Gates Primary Reading Test as he did on the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test. One scored one point higher on the Gates Test and two scored one point lower, while one scored two points lower. These pupils were placed on the primer reading level. The six remaining pupils scored 2.0 and above on both tests. Even though they showed by these tests that they were ready for second grade reading level, they were placed on first grade reading level. According to the records, they had read only one first grade reader. The readers in which they read were those which were new to them. The teacher thought that they should begin to read in these easier readers in order to give them confidence in their reading.

For convenience, the teacher assigned the pupils who were on the pre-reading level to Group I. Those pupils who were ready for the pre-primer reading level were assigned to Group II; those ready for primer reading level were assigned to Group III; and those ready for first grade reading were assigned to Group IV.

#### Personal and Social Traits of the Group

Most of the children of this particular group were happy children. With the exception of a few pupils they got along

very well with each other. Most of them seemed to feel secure in their social relationships. Six of them appeared maladjusted in some respect. The group refused to accept two boys and two girls.

For the protection of the pupils of this group a letter name was designated to each pupil.

Pupil Q was a very unhappy little girl. She was one of the youngest of the group. When playing games, she always wanted to be leader. If she could not be the leader, she wouldn't play. She also had the habit of slapping other children for no reason whatsoever. Almost every day she found something to cry about. The teacher talked with this girl and tried to convince her that she must consider the rights of others if she wanted to be liked and accepted by the other children. Even though Q was socially misfitted to her group she had good work habits. She always carried out any assignment which was given to her to the best of her ability. She was neat and accurate in her work. Not only did she accomplish the assignment, but she attacked it enthusiastically. This pupil was assigned to Group III.

M, the other little girl who was not accepted by the group, had the habit of taking things which did not belong to her. The teacher was quite surprised when she learned that the child had this trait, because her family's financial condition was better than the financial conditions of most of the childrens' families. She was neither cooperative with the

teacher nor the group. Many times this pupil was discourteous. Her work habits were poor. She failed to accomplish her assignments even though she was capable of doing good work. The teacher had many conferences with this child trying to convince her that she would have to overcome this habit if she expected to be accepted by the group. She also talked to this pupil about her work habits. Sometimes this pupil did better work than she did at other times. When she did this better type of work, the teacher commended her for this improvement and encouraged her to try to do even better the next time. This pupil was assigned to Group II.

O was better accepted by the group than the other two little girls. At the early part of the term this pupil had the habit of pinching other children. With the exception of this fault, which she quickly overcame, this child had a well rounded personality. She seemed to be a happy child and was very affectionate. The teacher talked to this pupil about this undesirable habit. She soon overcame this habit and was accepted by the group. Her work habits were good. She always carried out any task to the very best of her ability. She had a keen desire to read. When reading orally, if she missed one word, she asked to be allowed to reread her selection. She enjoyed reading library books. Many times the teacher observed this pupil while she was reading silently. She observed that the child had such happy expressions while reading. Even though the child had been in school two years

previous to this last school term, she did not seem to be conscious of the fact that she was a year older than most of the children of her group. O was assigned to Group III.

Pupil F, Pupil A, and Pupil H were the three boys who failed to get along with the group. Pupil A was Pupil O's brother. This was his first year to be in the second grade even though he was ten years old when he entered this grade. The fact that he was older than the other members of the group did not seem to make him unhappy. However, he was very aggressive. He tried to boss the other children, and tried to convince them that he knew all the rules of the games better than they even though he didn't know the rules as well as the other children. When the teacher asked one of the pupils to do an errand for her, this pupil invariably arose from his seat and tried to take care of the job. The teacher talked to him and told him that his willingness to want to help was appreciated. She tried to convince him that this aggressive manner was making him very unpopular with his group. His work habits were adequate, because he applied himself to the very best of his ability. F was assigned to Group I.

A and H were the two boys who had the most difficulty in becoming adjusted to the group. They fought with other children. Both boys absolutely ignored the rights of others.

Pupil A had experienced a rather unhappy home life. He lived with his mother part of the time. When he was not

living with her, his home was with a cousin of his mother. His mother was divorced from his father. After securing a divorce from his father, she married again, divorced this man, and married a third man. The teacher sympathized with A because of his unhappy home life. She made every possible effort to help this child adjust himself to the group. This pupil's work habits were inadequate. He never completely carried out any written assignment. Instead of working on his assignment, he annoyed children around him. A was assigned to Group I.

Pupil H did not have as much difficulty in adjusting himself to his group as Pupil A. His home life was the opposite of that of A. He enjoyed a happy home life. His failure to get along with the other children was probably due to the fact that he had been given too much attention at home. He was the youngest child of his family, and the other members of the family had always let him have his way. At the beginning of the term it was difficult for this child to understand why he should not be allowed to do as he desired. His work habits were limited. He took twice the time he should have taken to complete an assignment. H was assigned to Group II.

B was a normal little boy. Most of the time he got along very well with the other children. He enjoyed working and playing with them. His work habits were satisfactory. Although he worked rather slowly at times, he always



completed his assignments to the best of his ability. He was conscientious about his work. This pupil was assigned to Group I.

J was also happy. He seemed to have a secure feeling and enjoyed playing and working with the group. His work habits were adequate. He completed his assignments even though he worked a little slowly. J was assigned to Group II.

G was a little shy at the beginning of the term, but he soon overcame this shyness. He enjoyed working and playing with the other children. He accomplished any activity assigned to him to the very best of his ability. He was assigned to Group I.

Pupil C was also a happy child. He got along well with the other children and enjoyed playing with them. He worked to the best of his ability. He was assigned to Group I.

C's sister, Pupil D, was also a happy child even though she was two years older than most of the other children of her group. She was a hard worker. This pupil was assigned to Group I.

N was a happy child. He also got along well with the other children. His work habits were adequate. This pupil was assigned to Group III.

L was a sweet, affectionate, and happy child. Her work habits were adequate with the exception that she could have been neater in her written work. She was assigned to Group II.

Pupil I was one of the youngest pupils of the group. She always seemed to be happy. Even though she was physically immature, she was one of the hardest workers of the group. This pupil was assigned to Group II.

E was a very obedient child. He was also very courteous. Most of the children liked this child very much. His work habits were excellent. E was assigned to Group I.

P was a little inclined to disregard the rights of the other children at the beginning of the term. She soon overcame this fault. At the beginning of the term her work habits were inadequate, but she soon developed a better attitude toward her work. P was assigned to Group III.

Pupil V was always courteous, cooperative, and obedient. The children liked him. His work habits were excellent. This pupil was assigned to Group IV.

Last year S attended another Dallas school. At first, this child did not seem to feel secure with the group. All the children accepted him, and he soon became a happy member of the group. His work habits were adequate. S was assigned to Group IV.

Pupil R had always been given a lot of attention at home. However, she got along with the other children. Her work habits were not adequate at the early part of the term, but she showed promise of developing better work habits. R was assigned to Group III.

W was a very happy child. She played well with the group. She liked to read. During the term she read many books. Her work habits were excellent. W was assigned to Group IV.

Pupil U had the highest mental ability of any pupil in the group. Her work was up to grade standards, but she did not apply herself as well as she could have. Some of the pupils who had lower mental capacity did better work than she did. This pupil was a happy child. She got along very nicely with all the children. U was assigned to Group IV.

T was a very happy little boy. He had a well-rounded personality. He was obedient, cooperative, and courteous. He enjoyed working and playing with the other children. His work habits were excellent. He followed directions well. T was assigned to Group IV.

Pupil K got along well enough with the other children most of the time. He seemed to be a happy child, and enjoyed playing. On the other hand, he did not like to work. It took him an undue amount of time to complete an assignment which he could have easily completed in much less time. K was assigned to Group II.

#### Early Predictions for Each Pupil

At the beginning of the school term the teacher studied the results of all the tests which had been given. At the same time she observed each pupil daily as he responded.

Upon these data she made mental predictions of probable reading achievements to be expected of each pupil.

She expected no pupil of Group I to achieve more than one year of progress in reading. She doubted if many pupils of this group would achieve even one year of progress.

As the table indicates B of Group I had the highest IQ of any pupil of this group. His IQ was 90. His mental age was six years, seven months while his chronological age was seven years, four months. He scored 1.4 on one reading test and 1.3 on the other reading test.

G's IQ was 89. His mental age was six years, eight months, while his chronological age was seven years, six months. He scored 1.5 on both reading tests.

C's IQ was 88. His mental age was six years, six months while his chronological age was seven years, five months. He scored 1.3 on both reading tests.

D's IQ was 80. Her mental age was only seven years, eleven months while her chronological age was nine years, ten months. She scored 1.3 on one reading test and 1.4 on the other reading test.

A's IQ was 77. His mental age was five years, seven months while his chronological age was seven years, two months. He scored 1.1 on one reading test and 1.2 on the other reading test.

E had the very low IQ of 62. His mental age was five years, six months while his chronological age was eight

years, eleven months. He scored 1.5 on one reading test and 1.4 on the other reading test. He came from a non-English speaking family. Even though he scored low on both the mental tests and the two reading tests, this child responded orally much better than the other pupils of Group I, and better than some of Group II.

F was not only the oldest boy of Group I, but was the oldest boy in the room. His IQ was 73. His mental age was seven years, four months while his chronological age was ten years, one month. He scored 1.4 on one reading test and 1.5 on the other reading test.

The teacher expected each of the pupils of Group II to achieve one year of progress in reading provided they attended school regularly.

F's IQ was 86. His mental age was six years and four months while his chronological age was seven years and four months. He scored 1.5 on both reading tests. Even though this pupil failed to score average on all the tests, he responded well orally most of the time.

L's IQ was 87. Her mental age was six years, eleven months while her chronological age was seven years, eleven months. She scored 1.6 on one reading test and 1.7 on the other reading test. This pupil also responded very well orally most of the time. She had been in the first grade two years. She liked to read. Even though this child was a

little below average in ability and achievement the teacher thought that she probably would achieve a year of progress.

#### Broad Proposal of the Program

After classifying the pupils of this particular group according to their ability and needs, and after much study in the field of reading, the teacher planned a program of reading instruction which she believed would meet the abilities and needs of each particular group.

The general nature of this program provided for four levels of reading instruction, one for the pupils assigned to the pre-reading group, one for those pupils assigned to the preprimer reading level, one for those pupils assigned to the primer reading level, and one for those pupils assigned to the first-reader level.

Learning to read is treated as a series of developmental experiences through which a child moves from level to level through the pre-reading level, the preprimer level, the primer level, the first-reader level, and so on. In any year we may find groups reading at three or more levels.<sup>5</sup>

The entire program was a flexible one. Pupils were shifted from one group to another as needs arose.

It is clear that pupils progress at different rates, and that children placed in a given group because of common difficulties or a similar degree of achievement do not learn with equal rapidity. This means that provision should be made for a given pupil to transfer from one group to another as his needs dictate.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>William S. Gray, Adjusting Reading Programs to Individuals, p. 88.

<sup>6</sup>Paul McKee, op. cit., p. 139.

The materials used for this particular study were basal readers, supplementary readers, out-of-adoption readers, city-owned readers other than those furnished by the state, and many library books. These books ranged all the way from preprimer reading level to fourth grade reading level.

In this chapter the writer attempted to classify this particular group of pupils according to their mental abilities and their reading grade levels. In order to find the mental ability of each pupil the Pintner-Cunningham Primary Test, Form A, was given at the beginning of the term. At the same time two reading tests, the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test, Form R, and the Gates Primary Reading Test were given to determine the reading level of each pupil. The personal and social traits of each pupil has been described in this chapter. This chapter also has included a broad proposal of the program.

## CHAPTER III

### DEVELOPMENT OF THE READING INSTRUCTION

As was stated in Chapter II, the entire program of this study was a very flexible one. Even though the teacher did plan the program in advance, if a pupil wanted to read a certain selection on a particular day he was allowed to read it.

Many experience charts were developed during the school term. Reading from these charts supplemented other reading activities. However, the basal readers were used all the way through the term.

It should be understood that experience stories are not designed to replace basal reader materials. Schools which have relied entirely on stories growing out of the activities of children have not produced satisfactory results..... Experience stories obviously cannot match the controlled vocabularies of basal reader materials as a means of teaching word recognition. The experience method, therefore, is not ordinarily used to teach real reading. The purpose is rather to introduce reading as a form of communicating ideas.<sup>1</sup>

Generally speaking, during the early part of the school day, the basal reading materials were taught. It was at this time when most of the reading skills were taught. In the afternoon easy reading and library reading were taught much

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<sup>1</sup>Irving H. Anderson and Walter F. Dearborn, The Psychology of Teaching Reading, p. 265.



more informally. However, the teacher at all times directed these informal activities.

Reading was also correlated with music, and arithmetic. It was closely related with social studies and science. The pupils learned the importance of reading through all these activities. In order to learn the words of a favorite song they discovered that they must be able to read. Likewise, they learned that they must be able to read in order to read the problems in their Arithmetic workbooks. In addition to chart reading incidental reading was promoted through such activities as the reading of labels, posters, and notices on bulletin boards.

One unit of work, "Plants that Help Us" was developed by Group III and Group IV.

#### Development of Reading Instruction of Pre-Reading Group or Group I

As a group, these pupils had had limited experiences, expressed themselves poorly in spoken English, had meager vocabularies insofar as word meanings were concerned. Even though each child had been exposed to reading and knew a few sight words, the teacher planned and developed a reading program designed to promote individual growth and strengthen those specific skills essentially prerequisites to a readiness to read.

In planning a program for these pupils the teacher worked in terms of three fundamental principles.

(1) She planned that the boys and girls in this group should have a real and important part in all the activities of the class.

(2) She planned that their experiences should be so rich in meaning that they would eventually give meaning to the printed page.

(3) She planned that a definite time each day should be given to this group for basic instruction in reading suited to the needs of the individuals.<sup>2</sup>

In line with these principles the group with the aid of the teacher composed charts about their families, their pets, and their toys. They planned excursions such as "A Visit to the Bakery," and "A Trip to the Zoo." The teacher talked with these children using, and helping them to use, words in association with their experiences so that a larger vocabulary of word meanings would result.

Each day this group had a proportionate share of her time.

Special reading ability habits and techniques of work were encouraged through the use of a reading readiness workbook. This workbook aided the systematic transition from the less specific activities of the pre-reading stage to the more detailed and more exacting demands of the formal reading activities.

The reading readiness workbook which the teacher selected was Before We Read. Records showed that last year this group of pupils had used only one workbook, Here We Go. Before We Read centered along two main interests, work and

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<sup>2</sup>William S. Gray, op. cit., p. 140.

play in the home and community.<sup>3</sup> The children were encouraged to discuss the pictures and to tell of their own similar experiences or the probable experiences depicted in the pictures. Thus the individual child's past experiences were discovered. The language activities of the group were adapted to clarify and correct the concepts gained from those past experiences. These concepts were broadened when the children participated in the group discussion and shared their experiences.

The specific abilities encouraged by the workbook pages were those of visual and auditory discrimination, muscular adjustment, coordination of eye and hand, habits of left to right eye-movements, and a general transition from the recognition of similarities and differences in the form of objects to similarities and differences in the form of words. This was accomplished by games, tracing pictures, or parts of pictures, or by detecting and matching pictures or objects.

Attention was centered on the learning situation for short periods of time.

During this preparatory period a picture book containing large pictures was made. Experience charts were developed by the group with the guidance of the teacher. The essential vocabulary of preprimers was included in these experience

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<sup>3</sup>William S. Gray and Lillian Gray, Before We Read, preface.

charts. The charts were short, and were about the family, pets, animals, and toys. Charts continued to be made all through the term. Each sentence of every chart was printed on strips of tagboard. The pupils matched each sentence strip with the corresponding sentence on the chart. After much practice was given to this method, the children matched word cards with the corresponding words on the chart.

The sentence and story methods especially are sometimes described as an application of the Gestalt concept that we should begin with a large, meaningful whole and leave the discovery of the individual words to a process of individuation.<sup>4</sup>

Spelling words were those used in the charts.

In language the pupils wrote and read their names, addresses, and birthdays. They wrote and read sentences about themselves, their families, their pets, and their toys.

As soon as some of the necessary reading skills were learned Group I was introduced to systematic reading. The skills included a number of sight words gained from a picture dictionary compiled by the teacher and from the charts.

Easy preprimers were read first. All the pupils of Group I except F read the following preprimers: Tom's Trip, Tom & Jim, Baby Pony, Come and Ride, Before Ninky, Ninky, Bill and Susan, Bigger and Bigger, Frisky the Goat, Who Are You, Hundreds of Turkeys, Run Away Toys, Christmas Story, Don and Fanny, At Don's Farm. None of these books had been

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<sup>4</sup>Anderson and Dearborn, op. cit., p. 57.

read by the group before. F read books which interested him. The teacher instructed him individually.

Preprimers continued to be used for easy reading in the group or for individual reading at the library table.

The group was never pushed or made feel that it had to cover too much work.

As soon as these pupils had learned such skills as associating symbols with meanings, matching sentences, phrases, and words, distinguishing capitalized and small letter forms, and recognizing script forms, and anticipating meanings and supplying missing words, they were introduced to primer reading.

The teacher was careful to select primers which had not been read before by the group. Only the easiest half of each primer was read first, allowing for more repetition of the sight vocabulary than one primer could provide.

Findings carry the definite implication that slow-growing and backward children will learn if only they are given enough repetition or drill.<sup>5</sup>

By the time the easy halves of several primers were read, the remaining portions of each primer was read better and with real enjoyment.

F continued to read books which interested him. Many times one of the best pupils in the room helped him with the words he did not know. He later read to the teacher.

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<sup>5</sup>Anderson and Dearborn, op. cit., p. 57.

The other six pupils of this group read the following primers: The New Day In and Day Out, With Jack and Janet, The Little White House, At Home and Away, The Ranch Book, To School and Home Again, Days of Fun, Watch Me, and Away We Go to Mexico.

During this period of instruction the group applied the reading skills which they learned during the preprimer period. In addition to these they learned to analyze sentences for the purpose of finding out a given word within a familiar sentence; recognize words through content, configuration, and other perceptual cues; comprehend word, phrase, and sentence meanings; find out unrecognized words by referring to self-help pictures; and by discriminating between true and false statements. It was at this time when E joined Group II as he was making much faster progress than the other pupils of this group.

After the remaining five pupils read fifteen preprimers and eight primers in addition to correlated, incidental, and library reading they were introduced to the instruction of first grade readers.

All through the term F continued to read the books he desired to read. The other five pupils of Group I were given instruction in Our New Friends. In teaching this reader the teacher followed the Guidebook for Our New Friends rather closely. After much study in the field of the teaching of reading, she was convinced that better techniques could be

applied and more skills could be attained if this manual was used.

It is the deliberate conclusion of this writer that recent teachers' manuals are the finest expressions of the teaching techniques of reading, in content, extent, and specific coverage of any tools of teaching that have ever been made with respect to any subject-matter area.<sup>6</sup>

The stories of the book were taught in accordance with the needs and interests of the pupils. For example, one day the dog of one of the pupils of this particular group followed his master to school. Another little boy said, "Oh! last year we read a story in Fun with Dick and Jane about Sally and Spot following Dick and Jane to school." A bright little girl in Group IV said, "I remember the story. The name of it was 'Fun at School'." After this remark several pupils spoke up and said that they remembered the story. The teacher then said, "I know a story in Our New Friends similar to this story. Would you like to read it?" The Group was anxious to read it. Several pupils of the higher groups knew the story the teacher had in mind. They asked to be allowed to join Group I and reread it. The teacher allowed them to join with the group. They were asked not to tell the others the name of this story. After glancing down the page of the table of contents, one little boy guessed the name of the story. As Group I had read only two stories of Our New Friends and as this new story was in the

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<sup>6</sup>William S. Gray, Classroom Techniques in Improving Reading, p. 17.

third unit of the book, the teacher had to teach several new words. However, the attention of the class was very good as their interest was high.

After Our New Friends was completed, four other first grade readers were read, namely; The New Round About, We Three, On Cherry Street, and Up and Away.

In addition to the reading skills which this group knew they learned to answer questions on content; complete thought units by supplying missing words or phrases; get main idea of a selection; follow directions; and select words and phrases which complete meanings. Even though F was allowed to read books which interested him, he was given formal instruction in these books.

All through the term the instruction was suited to the abilities and needs of the individuals. At all times sufficient time was provided to allow real growth to take place.

#### Development of Reading Instruction of Preprimer Group or Group II

Five of the pupils of Group II were only four months below second grade reading level. As explained in Chapter II the mental ability of three of the pupils was good. The other two pupils, J and L, each had an IQ of 87. H was five months below second grade reading level. His IQ was 86.

Although these pupils read fairly well in primers they began reading in preprimers in order to give them a review in



preprimer vocabulary, and to give them speed and confidence in their own reading.

They read the following books: Peanuts the Pony, Little Lost Dog, Tots and Toys, Biddy and the Ducks, My Dog Laddie. None of these had been read before.

After reading these books the group developed speed in reading.

Records showed that this group had read only two primers last year. These pupils were given instruction in four other primers: The New Day In and Day Out, The Little White House, With Jack and Janet, and I Know a Secret. The manuals for these readers were followed rather closely in the teaching instruction.

After each reader was read a vocabulary test was given. The results of these tests convinced the teacher that this group was ready for the instruction of first grade readers.

The following first grade readers were read by the group: Our New Friends, The New Round About, On Cherry Street, Up and Away, Through the Day, Billy Goes to School, Many Homes, Downy Duck Grows Up, and At Home and Away. As each reader was read the group was given a vocabulary test. The results of these vocabulary tests convinced the teacher that the group was ready for the instruction of second grade readers.

The group began to read in the basic second grade reader, Friends and Neighbors. This reader has been

recommended for use during the first half of second grade. The instruction of the reader was followed by the guidebook which accompanied it.

Other second grade readers completed were: The New Down the River Road, Come Along, We Are Neighbors, Around the Corner, More Friends and Neighbors.

After Christmas H, I, K, L, and M began to make rapid progress. It was at this time when E joined Group II. J was moved back with Group I since he did not progress as fast as the other pupils of Group II. This move was handled in a tactful manner. In a few days he became very happy as he was able to do his work with ease and enjoyment. As had been planned in the program, sufficient time was provided to allow real growth to take place. As time passed each individual learned to work independently.

#### Development of Reading Instruction of Primer Level or Group III

With the use of several primers and first grade readers, the teacher expected four of the pupils N, P, Q, and R to be ready for second grade reading level. She placed O with this group since the pupil responded well orally. The pupil had repeated the first grade once. O had scored 1.8 on one reading test and 1.9 on the other test. Her IQ was only 78. However, as has been explained before this child was a hard worker.

After Group III read through several primers and a number of first grade readers, it was introduced to second grade readers. It progressed fast. In the spring it was doing so well that the teacher let it work with Group IV on a unit of work "Plants that Help Us."

#### Development of Reading Instruction of First Reader Level or Group IV

As stated before this group was ready for second grade reading level. However, in order to review the vocabulary of the first grade and to promote speed and confidence in the pupils the teacher started this group to read in first grade readers. In a short time all of the pupils of the group were reading well on second grade reading level.

They were given formal reading instruction. However, they were encouraged to do a lot of independent silent reading.

As has been stated before all the pupils had access to a wide variety of reading material. This group was encouraged by the teacher to engage in a wide variety of reading activities.

During the early part of spring Group III joined with this group to help with a unit of work, "Plants that Help Us."

#### Approach to Unit

The center of interest was initiated by the teacher in an informal way by bringing plants into the school room and

by calling attention to the things that were happening to plants in spring, which was the season chosen for this unit of work. Interest developed from the observation and casual remarks concerning plant life, and in periods of cooperative planning which became a vital part of the program of these two groups. A unit of work centered around ideas related to ways that plants help us was started. The pupils had had some experience related to plant life. They had observed flowers blooming in the room, and had seen new leaves come on plants. One pupil had a garden at home.

After the general center of interest was decided, the groups worked cooperatively in setting up objectives and in organizing the work. Different pupils asked questions concerning the problem and the group recorded these questions. Some of the questions asked at the beginning were:

1. What is a plant?
2. Where do plants come from?
3. What are the parts of a plant?
4. What do the roots of plants do?
5. What do the leaves of plants do?
6. Where do plants get their food?
7. How do plants get their food?
8. What plants give us clothes?
9. What plants give us food?
10. What plants give us shelter?
11. What plants give us beauty?

The list of questions grew as the unit of work progressed.

The pupils then suggested how plants could be studied and arrived at the following outline:

1. Write down questions and find their answers.
2. Write down answers so that information could be shared by all the pupils.
3. Find pictures to illustrate the questions and answers.
4. Draw plants for illustrations.
5. Read stories to find answers.
6. Tell stories and happenings to each other.

The group then decided how to organize the material collected. After much discussion the pupils decided to make books in which to keep the material.

The pupils were guided to realize that more could be accomplished if they divided their work with each small group being responsible for the development of one part of the unit. After some discussion, it was decided that four groups would be a good number to have for the problem to be solved. Each group was to give specific attention to questions relating to one of the following topics:

- Plants that give us food
- Plants that give us clothing
- Plants that give us shelter
- Plants that give us beauty

Each child chose the topic on which he wanted to work. After deciding on the main theme for each group, the children realized that they needed to decide the activities in which they could engage to answer the questions for which they were responsible. As this was a common problem, all groups combined to work on it. The solution of the problem for the children resulted in the following list of suggestions:

1. Read stories.
2. See moving pictures, film strips, and slides.
3. Ask other people for information.

4. Look at real plants and seeds.
5. Plant and experiment with seeds and plants.
6. Collect pictures.
7. Make a trip to a green house.
8. Look at pictures.

At this point the teacher made sure that the children became aware of the skills and processes that they needed in order to achieve their objectives. They learned that information about plants could be achieved only through reading, writing, listening, speaking, story-telling, proper use of books (using table of contents and index), location of illustrations, mounting of illustrations, proper selection of pictures, and the organization of the material collected into a book that had a pleasing appearance and had something to say to the reader.

During this unit of work there was an integration of such subjects as reading, speaking, writing, spelling, science, and social studies.

The children learned to work cooperatively. Through the study of this unit of work the children gained such attainments as the following:

The ability

1. To apprehend clearly and accurately the meaning of what is read,
2. To think about and to use the ideas secured through reading,
3. To increase skill in the use of books and the library,
4. Participate in many types of reading activities in the various curriculum fields.

During the development of the entire program for this particular group of twenty-three children the teacher had the personal and social development of each child in mind. At all times she tried to make conditions as favorable as possible. F was allowed to read books which interested him. "The personal well-being of many pupils is promoted best by being given opportunity to sit alone and enjoy a book that they have chosen."<sup>7</sup>

Many other pupils of this particular group of second grade pupils were seen at the library table or over in a corner reading their favorite books.

Sometimes various pupils brought things to school. These objects gave the children first-hand experiences. Motion pictures, film strips, and slides were used to help clarify meanings.

The teacher tried to help each child interpret the confused world in which he lives. She selected those interests and curiosities that seemed to have the greatest value for his development. She directed his attention to one problem at a time, helped him observe accurately, think clearly, to attach proper meanings to experiences, and form suitable goals for activities.

Charts, picture books, and booklets, made in the classroom, had real value in helping the children to interpret and

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<sup>7</sup>W. S. Gray, Promoting Personal and Social Development Through Reading, p. 36.

recall their own experiences. Such materials provided for growth in art and language as well as in reading ability.

The children were encouraged to discuss the content of stories read and to compare the incidents with their own experiences.

This reading program contributed to social growth. The pupils developed through their reading lessons a greater appreciation for the workers in the community who provide food, clothing, shelter, and protection.

Many of the primary readers are full of stories based on activities pertaining to small children, pets, toys, and animals. Such stories furnished real enjoyment to the children.

The pupils learned to work together cooperatively. In the reading circle they learned to respect the rights of others. Each pupil learned to wait until his turn to discuss a personal incident.

During the development of the unit of work each pupil learned what responsibility meant.

In this chapter the writer has attempted to describe the development of a reading program which she believed would meet the abilities and needs of a particular group of pupils. A discussion relative to the development of the reading instruction for each of four groups was explained.



## CHAPTER IV

### EVALUATION OF THE PROGRAM

The effectiveness of this particular reading program upon the reading abilities and needs of each pupil of this second grade was measured by repeating two reading tests of different batteries and forms at the end of the school term.

When it is a question of whole classes being above, at, or below the age and grade standards, both the survey and the analytical or diagnostic tests may ordinarily be counted on to give trustworthy answers. There is thus safety in numbers. In appraising the individual's progress, it is well to remember that to err is human....., and tests are not infallible. ....When in doubt, a retesting with a different form of the test, or preferably with a somewhat different type of test, will make for more accurate appraisals in the individual case.<sup>1</sup>

As has been stated before, the teacher gave two different tests at the beginning of the term and more advanced forms of the same tests at the end of the term. Even though the tests were different at the beginning of the term, the grade norms for each pupil derived from both tests were more or less comparable. This same principle held true at the end of the term when the advanced forms of these tests were repeated.

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<sup>1</sup>Anderson and Dearborn, op. cit., p. 334.

Table 2 on page 39 shows the results of the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test, Battery I, Form R, and the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test, Battery II, Form T, which were given at the beginning of the fall term, 1953, and at the close of the spring term, 1954. The same table shows the grade equivalents for each pupil derived from each of these tests and the gain made by him. On the opposite side of this table the results of the Gates Primary Reading Test and the Gates Advanced Primary Test are given. The grade equivalents for each pupil derived from each of these tests and the gain made by him is also included.

A study of the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Tests shows that within the group of twenty-three pupils two made an average reading grade equivalent of three years; three progressed two years in reading grade equivalent; sixteen progressed one year or more; and two failed to make a year of progress. The average gain made for the group was one year or more.

A study of the Gates Reading Tests shows that within this group of twenty-three pupils two progressed three years or more in reading grade equivalent; three progressed two years or more; sixteen progressed one year or more; and two failed to progress one year. The average gain made by the class was one year.

Pupils F and O, brother and sister, were the two who failed to make one year of progress in reading grade

TABLE 2

GAINS IN READING LEVEL IN A SECOND  
GROUP FROM SEPTEMBER TO JUNE  
ON TWO TESTS

Pupil	Metropolitan Reading Achievement Tests			Gates Primary Reading Test and Gates Advanced Primary Reading Test		
	Grade Equivalent			Grade Equivalent		
	Battery I	Battery II		Primary	Advanced	
	Form R Fall	Form T Spring	Gain	Fall	Spring	Gain
Group I						
A	1.2	2.5	1.3	1.1	2.4	1.3
B	1.3	2.6	1.3	1.4	2.4	1.0
C	1.3	2.6	1.3	1.3	2.5	1.2
D	1.3	2.6	1.3	1.4	2.6	1.2
E	1.4	2.8	1.4	1.5	3.0	1.5
F	1.5	1.9	0.4	1.4	2.1	0.7
G	1.5	2.8	1.3	1.5	2.9	1.4
Group II						
H	1.5	3.0	1.5	1.5	3.0	1.5
I	1.6	3.0	1.4	1.6	3.3	1.7
J	1.6	2.7	1.1	1.7	2.7	1.0
K	1.6	2.9	1.3	1.7	3.4	1.7
L	1.6	3.1	1.5	1.7	2.9	1.2
M	1.6	3.0	1.4	1.7	3.0	1.3
Group III						
N	1.8	3.2	1.4	1.8	3.0	1.2
O	1.8	2.5	0.7	1.9	2.6	0.7
P	1.9	3.1	1.2	1.8	2.9	1.1
Q	1.9	3.4	1.5	1.8	3.0	1.2
R	1.9	3.1	1.2	1.7	3.3	1.6
Group IV						
S	2.0	4.1	2.1	2.0	4.4	2.4
T	2.1	4.3	2.2	2.0	4.2	2.2
U	2.1	4.3	2.2	2.0	4.2	2.2
V	2.1	5.1	3.0	2.2	5.3	3.1
W	2.2	5.2	3.0	2.3	5.5	3.2

equivalent. Table 1 shows that F scored an IQ of 73, and that O scored an IQ of 78. In the opinion of the teacher, F probably made as much progress as he could have made in any other situation because of his mental ability. His lack of progress could have been partly due to the fact that he came from a non-English speaking family. Even though the sister failed to show a year of progress according to the results of the tests, she responded well orally during the term. When the teacher checked her for comprehension, at different periods of time, she measured up to average standards.

One pupil made a greater gain than the teacher had really anticipated. However, it was her opinion that he failed to score as high as he could have on the mental test had he not been handicapped by language difficulties. He came from a non-English speaking family. On the mental test he scored an IQ of only 62. "Tests are not infallible."<sup>2</sup> During the entire term this pupil did good work. At the end of the term he scored a reading grade equivalent of 2.9 on one reading test and 3.2 on the other reading test.

V, who made a gain of three years in reading grade equivalent, scored an IQ of 101 on the mental test. This child had a radio, a television, and books in his home. He liked to read, and during the term he read a wide variety of materials. These factors probably contributed to his noticable progress.

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<sup>2</sup>Anderson and Dearborn, op. cit., p. 334.

According to the results of the tests, W made a gain of three years in grade equivalent. This was not a surprise to the teacher as she scored an IQ of 124 on the mental test; and was repeating this grade not because of inability, but because of non-attendance the previous year.

S, T, and U showed a gain of two years. S scored an IQ of 110 and had excellent work habits. He read a variety of books. T scored an IQ of 98 on the mental test. He also read a wide variety of materials. U scored an IQ of 129. She also read many books.

At the beginning of the term, within the entire group of twenty-three pupils only five were ready to read on second grade level; five others were a little below this reading level; six were ready for the last half of first grade reading level; while the remaining seven needed some preparatory work before they began to read.

At the close of the school term, within this same group of pupils, two were ready for fifth grade reading materials; three were ready for fourth grade reading level; eight were ready for third grade reading; three were almost ready for third grade reading; and six others were almost ready for the last half of second grade reading level. Pupil F was almost ready for second grade reading materials.

In general, all the pupils were happier than they were at the beginning of the school term. Some of the children did not need to improve their behavior as much as others.

As has been explained before, most of the pupils of this second grade were, in general, happy at the beginning of the term.

The six pupils who needed to make adjustments made notable improvement.

Pupil A developed a much more acceptable personality. He learned to respect the rights of others. He also learned to assume a few responsibilities. The teacher no longer had to help him keep up with his supplies and personal belongings. His work habits had improved considerably. He completed his assignments to the best of his ability. His written work was very neat.

H also had a better attitude toward his classmates as well as toward his work. The group had accepted him. His work habits were better. When he completed an assignment, he was very anxious for the teacher to see his work.

F was better adjusted to school than he was at the beginning of the school term. He still wanted to be the leader. However, he played better with the other children.

M developed a better personality. She was more courteous than she had been. As far as the teacher knew, she had stopped taking things which did not belong to her. Her work habits were much better. She had a sense of pride in her work which she lacked when she entered the group. It was her delight to show the teacher her work and wait for a word of praise.

Q improved as much as Pupil A. She was getting along very nicely with the other children; and they had accepted her.

O did not have to make as many adjustments as the other five pupils. Soon after school began, she stopped the habit of pinching other children. She had no other adjustment to make.

In this chapter, the writer tried to evaluate the effectiveness of this particular reading program upon the abilities and needs of a second grade class. This chapter included a table comparing the results of two reading tests given at the end of the term with the results of two reading tests given at the beginning of the term.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

The purpose of this study was to discover and propose a reading program which would meet the abilities and needs of each child of a particular group of second grade children of the M. B. Lamar Elementary School, Dallas, Texas.

In order to determine the mental ages and the intelligence quotients of the pupils the Pintner-Cunningham Primary Test, Form A, was given. Two reading achievement tests, the Gates Primary Reading Test and the Metropolitan Reading Achievement Test, Battery I, Form R, were given in order to determine the reading achievement or reading level of these pupils. Each pupil of this group was observed closely. He was encouraged to talk freely. From this observation reports concerning his personal and social traits were written and kept on file.

After determining the mental status and the reading level of each child, the pupils were classified into four groups according to grade levels; and after studying the recommendations of experts in the field of reading a reading program which was believed to meet the abilities and needs of this particular group was developed.



To appriase this particular reading program two reading achievement tests were given at the close of the term. From the results of each of these tests the grade equivalent for each pupil was found. Each pupil's grade equivalent found from each of these tests was compared with his grade equivalent found from each of the tests given at the beginning of the term. Within this particular group of twenty-three pupils two made an average grade equivalent of three years; three progressed two years; sixteen progressed one year or more; while two failed to progress one year. As a result of this reading program some behavior adjustments were noticed.

### Conclusions

The following conclusions have been drawn from facts discovered in previous chapters:

1. According to the results from the tests, the program was successful as only two pupils from this group failed to make a year or more of progress in reading grade equivalent.
2. Even though only five pupils of this class were ready for second grade reading level last fall, at the close of the term sixteen were ready to read on or above third grade reading level. Three were ready for fourth grade reading equivalent; and two were ready for fifth grade reading equivalent.
3. Probable factors preventing the two pupils' failure to make a year of progress have been given.

4. According to the results of the tests one child with the low IQ of 62 scored 2.8 on one reading test and 3.0 on the other reading test. During the entire term he responded very well. It was the belief of the teacher that he failed to score as high as he could have had he not been handicapped by language difficulties.

5. At the beginning of the term two different tests were given. The grade equivalents derived for each pupil from each test was more or less comparable. This same principle was true when different tests were given at the end of the term.

6. Six pupils who were maladjusted at the beginning of the term had adjusted themselves to the group. They were happier, and had developed some desirable traits.

#### Recommendations

After this study was completed and after all facts were gathered and given due consideration, the following recommendations were made.

1. A reading program should be adapted to the abilities and needs of the particular group concerned.

2. When possible children should be taught to read in small groups. Small groups make it possible for reading objectives, materials, and activities to be selected and brought into sharp focus so as to meet the abilities and needs of the individual pupil. Such groups encourage

individual participation. Time can also be saved, for adjustments are made to the attention span of the children. Such groups enable weaker children to be helped by brighter children. This opportunity assists brighter children to develop leadership. More content material can be read by more children who need it. Teaching by small groups allows the individual child to grow and develop at his own rate.

3. A reading program should be flexible, as such a program enables each pupil concerned to move from group to group as his needs arise.

4. Information for grouping may be secured from reading test scores and by informal observations made from day to day as the work of the group progresses.

5. Each individual should be allowed to progress at his own rate. He should never be placed under tension by unfavorable comparisons.

6. Different individuals require different methods of procedure.

7. A reading program should be well planned by the teacher, even though it is flexible.

8. The reading program should be functional. It should be a part of the child's daily living. The growing child should be given a variety of interesting experiences. He should be allowed to talk, write and read about activities of his own. He should also be taught to understand the importance of reading through other subjects.

9. In planning a reading program adequate reading materials should be selected. Such reading materials should be so selected that every pupil in the group would be reading at his own level.

10. A pupil should not be taught formal reading until he is ready for such.

11. Adequate teaching methods should be found. No one method can be expected to work equally well with all children.

12. Personality problems should be handled individually, and may be related to reading disability.

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