

CRITICAL EVALUATION OF A METHOD OF TEACHING  
BEGINNING READING

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
Purpose of the Study	
Procedure	
Organization	
II. A SURVEY OF LITERATURE DEALING WITH VARIOUS METHODS OF TEACHING BEGINNING READING . . . . .	5
Concepts of Method	
Two Historic Methods of Teaching Reading	
Current Reading Methods	
Pre-reading Activities	
Reading Readiness	
Aims and Objectives	
Phonics	
The Teacher's Task	
Bulletin Board and Charts	
Use of Books	
III. A SPECIFIC METHOD OF TEACHING BEGINNING READING . . . . .	70
School Site	
Schoolroom Environment	
The Child	
Activities	
IV. SELECTED CASE STUDIES THAT POINT OUT TYPICAL PROBLEMS IN BEGINNING READING AND THEIR SOLUTION BY MEANS OF THE METHOD UNDER CONSIDERATION . . . . .	95
Introduction	
Pupil A	
Pupil B	
Pupil C	

Chapter	Page
Pupil D	
Pupil E	
Pupil F	
Pupil G	
Pupil H	
Pupil I	
Pupil J	
Pupil K	
Pupil L	
Pupil M	
Pupil N	
Pupil O	
Pupil P	
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS . . . . .	119
Conclusions	
Recommendations	
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	123

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Purpose of the Study

The problem of this study is to determine, by actual classroom experiment, the most advantageous method of teaching reading to beginners. In the accomplishment of this purpose, the writer made an intensive study of various methods and techniques of teaching beginning reading, a summary of which appears in the second chapter of this thesis, and applied some of the fundamental principles of each method to the actual teaching of beginning reading to her first-grade pupils in the elementary school of Valley View, Texas. Pupil progress and achievement were noted for each method, and comparisons were made as to the adequacy of the various techniques.

A secondary purpose in connection with this study was the making of a critical evaluation of a specific method of teaching beginning reading. After studying and employing a number of distinct methods and systems of teaching reading to beginners, the writer selected the method which appeared to be most promising as to adequacy and pupil achievement

and made an intensive application of it in her own teaching procedures. The method was evaluated in terms of the degree to which it attained the accepted goals of beginning reading in general, and it was then analyzed in terms of a number of other widely used methods of teaching beginning reading. Out of these analyses grew the bases for the conclusions in Chapter V.

#### Procedure

The writer made use of various publications, especially books and periodicals, in her effort to determine the fundamental characteristics and principles of various methods of teaching beginning reading. Each method was analyzed to ascertain its principal procedures, and some of these systems were utilized in actual classroom work. Comparisons of method and adequacy were made. A far more detailed treatment was accorded to the method which appeared to be most efficient, and which the writer adopted as her own specific technique. Every phase of this method which was significant in the writer's peculiar schoolroom situation was accorded intensive application in classroom work, and results were noted and compared with those of the other systems of teaching beginning reading that are utilized in schools today. The Harlow Achievement Tests for the First Grade were administered to the group to determine ability

and progress in reading. These tests were given near the close of school in the spring, after a nine-months' period of effort in beginning reading. These tests had been preceded, at the beginning of the school year, by the "Park-Franzen Test of Readiness of Pupils to Do First Grade Work" (mimeographed), for the purpose of ascertaining the pupils' various abilities, with especial emphasis upon their degree of reading readiness.

A number of case studies are included for the purpose of pointing out certain typical problems in beginning reading and of outlining the techniques involved in their solution by means of the principal method under consideration in this study.

#### Organization

This report of the study is organized according to the following plan:

Chapter I consists of an introduction to the study, including a definition of the problem and the procedure used in carrying on the investigation.

Chapter II presents a survey of literature dealing with various methods of teaching beginning reading, including outstanding characteristics of each method, classroom procedures in each case, and the results claimed for each method in the development of reading ability and comprehension.

Chapter III consists of a detailed discussion of the writer's specific method of teaching beginning reading, including aims and objectives of the method, classroom techniques and organization, methods of ascertaining progress, typical projects and units in beginning reading, and outcomes of the method.

Chapter IV is composed of selected case studies that point out typical problems in beginning reading and their solution by means of the method of teaching being considered in this study. Specific pupils and situations are dealt with, and a description of the method of approach in each case is included, together with an estimate of the outcomes of the techniques.

Chapter V is a summary of the study, including a listing of conclusions and recommendations that seemed to be logical outgrowths of the investigation.



## CHAPTER II

### A SURVEY OF LITERATURE DEALING WITH VARIOUS METHODS OF TEACHING BEGINNING READING

#### Concepts of Method

All children who are in possession of normal intelligence can be taught to read, although with varying degrees of interest, appreciation, and skill. Just as music and art are more highly appreciated by some individuals than by others, so reading cannot have the same value for all people. For some, reading is one of life's greatest blessings; for others, it will never be more than a useful tool, always of secondary importance to some greater interest.<sup>1</sup>

Although modern educators recognize the existence of many valuable methods and procedures,

So widespread is the idea that there must be some one way better than any other for introducing children to the technique of reading that many parents are afraid to respond to children's inquiries along this line, before they start to school or after, for fear of confusing them. Names of the letters of the alphabet are taboo, for they have been told that to learn the letter name will interfere with learning the sound for which the letter stands. Children must never be allowed to print, especially in capitals, for this causes

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<sup>1</sup>Dorothy E. Willy, "Reading," Childcraft, XII, 10.

an undue analysis of the word into letters. Calling the letters in a word (or spelling) and asking what the word is, likewise endangers sound foundational work, according to certain authorities. And according to those who ardently espouse the whole-thought or sentence method, the tendency of children to pick out single words should be discouraged. The advocates of a system predominantly phonetic feel that any effort of the child directed along other lines in the early stages is wasteful if not positively harmful, and therefore carefully to be guarded against.<sup>2</sup>

Too often, when a new method of teaching reading is evolved, textbooks are written with the express purpose of carrying that method out in schoolroom situations, and teachers are warned of the bad consequences of departing from the elaborately prescribed course and procedure. Even when there is no such strong insistence regarding the way which a textbook in reading should be used, the books in a given series of readers often reveal the fact that they have been painstakingly compiled to conform to a particular teaching method, which may not even be mentioned but which is nonetheless apparent. The contents of the books, and the books themselves, are mere cogs in the machine of a specific method. They have been clearly designed to present a mass of printed matter to imply a special kind of technique. The contents are almost always "inane, disjointed, uninteresting, and often not very intelligible. A normal

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<sup>2</sup>Annie E. Moore, The Primary School, pp. 195-196.

four-year-old in a family of fair education is intellectually far beyond the content of such books."<sup>3</sup>

Many differences of opinion exist as to how beginning reading should be taught. The following excerpt is illustrative of this condition:

Teachers in different places or under different regimes are told that they must print or must not print on the board; that they must write or must not write; that they must or must not both write and print at a certain stage. They are warned never to allow a child to encounter a word in reading which has not been previously taught, never to teach a new word by sight if it is capable of phonetic analysis or synthesis, never to permit a child to determine a word by spelling it, never to tell him a word or always to tell him a word in which he is at a loss or which he does not know when reading aloud -- and so on, with a score of other restrictions and prescriptions. . . . It is evident that such conflicting ideas regarding teaching beginners to read cannot all be equally sound and good.<sup>4</sup>

Interest and zeal on the part of the learner, and a feeling of satisfaction in the procedure and in the attainment of results are of such significance that it may safely be asserted that any method of procedure which considerably lessens or postpones or entirely destroys these attitudes cannot be the best procedure, or even an acceptable one. Interest and zeal in reading come largely through a knowledge of meanings. It is always a mistake to ignore or to be indifferent toward meanings, although at times it may be necessary to emphasize such things as mastery of word forms,

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 193.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 196.

response to phonic elements, quick reading of phrases, and concentration upon meanings. Sometimes the mere sense of mastery in the process of reading, and the feeling that he is capable of meeting the task at hand, are sufficient for a time to give the pupil satisfaction and pleasure. Other children, however, exhibit little response to such stimuli; and all intelligent children soon become indifferent if the "more fundamental and permanent appeal of intrinsic interest is greatly minimized or postponed."<sup>5</sup>

The desire to avoid a rigid procedure has in some instances produced an unfortunate reaction. The belief that thoroughness is often overemphasized has produced a practical abandonment of all types of orderly and definite planning for the teaching of beginning reading. It is being too optimistic to believe that if children are brought into informal contact with an abundance of attractive, easy books, they will easily become proficient in the art of reading. This type of stimulation is seldom effective, for it is generally conceded that "the majority of beginners will make normal and sure progress in acquiring the various controls necessary to good reading habits" only if they are given "very careful and intelligent guidance and training." There is considerable evidence that such inefficient teaching as does not provide this guidance will result in the

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 199-201.

development in the children of the type of inadequate reading techniques which they are likely to work out for themselves if proper direction is lacking. These improper reading procedures, if long continued, often tend to produce a type of eye-movement radically unlike that of an efficient reader, and to set up misconceptions and habits pertaining to the reading process that are quite hard to correct. Proper guidance and assistance in the beginning will insure that the child forms correct reading habits instead of ineffective or harmful ones.<sup>6</sup>

#### Two Historic Methods of Teaching Reading

In the evolution of the teaching of reading, two distinct general methods have become defined -- the synthetic method and the analytic method. Underlying each of these historic methods of teaching reading has been the persistent search for the basic unit of language that is most important in guiding the child toward the attainment of literacy. Authorities are still not agreed on whether this basic unit is the letter, the sound element, the word, the phrase, the sentence, or some larger unit of language. Practically all of the commonly used systems of reading in present-day schools have accepted one of these elements, or a combination of them, as the basic factor in language. Most of them,

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 209.

also, for aiding vocabulary building, combine the synthetic with the analytic, although the analytic is usually considered basic.<sup>7</sup>

Through the memorization of the alphabet, or the learning of sounds that make up a word -- the study of phonics -- the teacher who employs the synthetic method leads her pupils progressively from a knowledge of the simplest symbols to an understanding of words of one syllable and then words of greater complexity. Words are finally read in sentences. In both the alphabetic and phonic approaches, the pupils begin with the smallest language units, either written or spoken, and out of these gradually -- perhaps laboriously -- build up larger and larger wholes. In either case the goal is clearly that of enabling the child to attain proficiency in precise oral reading, with a mastery over words, rather than thought-getting, as the primary objective.<sup>8</sup> The synthetic method begins with the elements of words -- letters or sounds -- and then proceeds to build these up into syllables, syllables into words, words into phrases, and phrases into sentences.<sup>9</sup> Emphasis upon the alphabet is one of the characteristics of the synthetic method of teaching beginning reading.

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<sup>7</sup>Samuel W. Patterson, Teaching the Child to Read, p. 31.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

Until well beyond the middle of the last century the alphabet method reigned supreme in most English-speaking classrooms. Until very much later, it continued to have its warm advocates and practitioners. To be able to say one's ABC's was for long ages a prime accomplishment on the part of any young person. For neither teacher nor taught, however, was there much, if any, genuine interest in the larger objective, thought-getting. "Drill, drill, drill!" was the order of the day. The school atmosphere was chilled with formality, the discipline was rigid. The only outward and visible sign of even the rudimentary idea of what we nowadays call the social side of classroom work was the concert recitation where all of the pupils recited in unison. For the most part, the reading period consisted of a succession of minutes punctuated by a teacher-pupil duet, with the pupils rendering syllables orally, and the teacher commanding or directing everything. The individual child followed as best he could. His classmates were presumably ever alert for the unhappy error. Self-activity came through a "show of hands."<sup>10</sup>

Some seventy years ago, sounds tended to supplant letters in the teaching of beginning reading. In that day, oral reading was the principal objective, and it was widely recognized that sounds were superior to letters in the light of this objective. Hence the phonic method was a much better way of attacking new words. The child's ear was taught to discriminate sounds, and he was led to clear and precise articulation.

Teachers who employed the phonic method were drill masters and formalists, as were their colleagues, the devotees of the alphabetic method. Their primary concerns were to get the word mastered and to get it pronounced correctly.

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 31-32.

There can be no doubt that pupils, once they learn the phonic symbols, do learn to pronounce words more quickly and with reasonable acceptability. For this reason a certain amount of phonics is valuable as a helpful adjunct to the reading process in the beginning years. But phonics alone will not teach a child to read. Probably the greatest service that phonics can render is not in the reading lesson as such, although it is important here, but rather in the class designed for speech improvement, in which the correction of defects and the general improvement of oral English may be attained through the use of phonics by teachers who are competent in this field.<sup>11</sup>

The analytic method of teaching beginning reading differs from the synthetic in that it emphasizes taking larger language units apart instead of putting smaller units together. It differs even more radically in its concept of reading as a thought-getting process. Reading as thinking is coming to be more and more in the forefront of modern teaching. The child, along with what he is asked to read, takes the center of the stage because the schoolroom today is no longer teacher-centered but child-centered.

The analytic method develops ability to think and read in terms of words, then sentences, then paragraphs, then the total composition. Emphasis on the word necessitates much

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-35.



drill, with primary concern centered upon vocabulary building. The concept of the sentence and of the story as a language unit eliminated much of the irksome drill and provided much more interesting reading material in larger quantities.<sup>12</sup>

If the analytic method is used, the teacher seeks first to interest her pupils in a story which she tells the children and which they discuss with her. Then important sentences, followed by significant phrases and words, are then singled out for special study. Certain word parts, such as root words, suffixes, and prefixes, which are frequently repeated in various words, are singled out for special attention. Whereas the goal of this method includes more fluent oral reading and more rapid silent reading, thought-getting, rather than mere word mastery, is the primary objective.<sup>13</sup>

#### Current Reading Methods

Although the synthetic and the analytic methods are outstanding general categories in the teaching of beginning reading, there are a number of other more specific methods which may be classified under either synthetic or analytic procedures. In the discussion to follow, some of the principal ones among these methods will be dealt with.

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-38.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-31.

One of these is the reading-from-memory method, in which the child memorizes the sounds of a set of words and then matches the sounds to the visual appearance of the words as they are arranged in the same order on the page. This is sometimes called the "story method." Of course, in the beginning, the material to be memorized must be brief, easy, and simple in wording. A common practice is for a child to learn a Mother Goose rhyme, a jingle, or a child's poem, and then to match the sound to the printed words, which he does not see until after he has committed the verse to memory. Another procedure uses memorized stories, which may or may not be cumulative, or the titles to pictures or other similar types of labels. In every case the child memorizes the sounds in their proper order and then "reads" by matching sounds to printed words.

Among the advantages of this method may be mentioned the following. The child is, in part, his own teacher. He can match the auditory word to the visual word and thus go through a story, depending partly upon this method and partly upon word recognition. He naturally makes progress in learning to give the right names to the printed symbols. The method appeals to the child's interest by giving him a story or a rhyme to memorize, after which he is usually eager to discover it in the printed page. The child begins to "read" at the very outset of his instruction, and finds it pleasant, since he, having already learned the content

before "reading" it, does not have to struggle with words. With pride and pleasure the child goes home and announces that he can "read" in his book.

Despite its advantages and its values, however, this method has some shortcomings. It is very wasteful of time if it is unwisely used. There may be much repetition of familiar material without progress in learning. Children tend to rely upon their memory and to repeat the words glibly without actually learning to read. If the teacher is neglectful about seeing that the sound-word is accurately matched with the sight-word, there is likely to be only reciting with the eyes fixed somewhere on the page. A cardboard liner helps in this matching. Even with an accurate matching of words, some children continue to depend upon the location of the word in the story to tell them its sound and consequently experience difficulty in recognizing the word in a different context setting. Children who have "read" their primer in this way are often helpless when given their first reader, although the words in the primer may be little different from the vocabulary supposedly learned in the reading-from-memory procedures. For these reasons, this method is eliminated from most schools as an exclusive method of teaching; instead of being used alone, it is almost always used in conjunction with some effective

type of systematic training in the art of word recognition.<sup>14</sup>

✓ Because children quickly learn to distinguish certain phrases or word groups, it has become the custom specifically to teach phrases which may be found in pre-primer books or presented on the board or on cards or placards. Phrase study enables the children to read stories with greater ease and effectiveness, and hence they enjoy their reading and are proud of their accomplishments. This method is a worthwhile practical expedient in the early stages of reading.

The teaching of phrases is a transition step between reading from memory and word recognition. Each phrase is a memorized unit. This method, though, frequently may be a waste of time, because the emphasis is necessarily upon the phrase as a whole and not upon the individual words comprising it. It is easily seen that the phrases will have, at best, only a limited use in the reading situations which the child experiences. On the other hand, the words which make up the phrases will be encountered frequently throughout life, and these are the units which the child should be able to recognize immediately.

The recognition of phrases may function advantageously as a means of simplifying the initial steps in reading, but

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<sup>14</sup>Edward W. Dolch, The Psychology and Teaching of Reading, pp. 42-46.

no time should be wasted upon it. It should serve as a step toward the essential process of word recognition.<sup>15</sup>

Perhaps the most universal of all methods of dealing with the individual word is known as the sight method, which is based upon the assumption that the child sees the word as a whole, especially after the teacher has pointed to the word form, pronounced it, and told the child to look hard at the word. Thus the whole sound is associated with the whole word form, and in this way word recognition is supposed to be made more simple and more rapid than by any of the methods of word analysis.

In the beginning, the sight method succeeds with most children because of the comparatively few words learned, all of which are quite different in appearance. But as more words accumulate in the child's experience, they become increasingly harder to distinguish. Most children become more and more uncertain in word recognition and are likely to become quite discouraged unless other methods are introduced to enhance and bolster their lagging feeling of accomplishment.

The outstanding error of this method is the naive assumption that because the child can repeat the names of a hundred or more words in pre-primer or primer work, he really knows these words. What he actually knows is only

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 47-53.

one or two details of their appearance, and he soon will become confused when he discovers that many other words also possess these general characteristics.<sup>16</sup>

Still being used successfully in England -- and in some American schools -- is the alphabetical method of teaching reading. Fundamentally, this method requires a child to learn how to spell a word before he can read it; the sound of the letters is first connected with the sound of the word, because the letters and words are thought to need concurrent emphasis. By spelling out the word on the printed page the reader can decide what sound-word should be connected with it. The sequence of this method is sight, spelling, sound, and meaning.

The progress of beginners is usually very slow because of the spelling that has to be learned first. The sequence of letters seldom suggests the sound of the word, because the letter names are used instead of letter sounds. Because of these difficulties the average pupil usually does not go very far, but the brighter persons often become good readers because they are able to shorten the procedure to the look-and-say method, and with them the spelling of words becomes unnecessary because they can formulate their own means of word recognition. The alphabetical method assists in

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., pp. 53-56.

word recognition by making children look at the individual letters in a word. When the teacher is able to carry the children over the initial stage of learning the letters, dropping the spelling as soon as possible, excellent results can be obtained by the use of the alphabetical method. This method, however, has been abandoned in most schools in the United States, largely because of the initial period of difficulty; but its value in teaching children to notice how the appearance of one word differs from that of another should not be forgotten.<sup>17</sup>

Children must be assisted in developing the habit of looking for differences in words. This habit is the primary goal in all teaching of word recognition. The teacher should systematically call attention to the way words begin and end, and point out similarities and differences in word roots. Emphasis should be placed upon unusual letters and letter groups as distinguishing features of certain words. All kinds of practice material should be used to emphasize the importance of noting word characteristics.

Frequently the objection is made that the teaching of detailed word perception, or visual analysis, produces a tendency for slow reading; but there is no danger of this at the beginning, since the child's unfamiliarity with words causes him to look at every one regardless of what devices

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., pp. 56-57.

the teacher may use; besides, all efforts to cause the beginning pupil to "slide over" words cause him to rely on memory and not on perception. Later, the child knows words well enough to recognize them with only a slight glance.<sup>18</sup>

A fundamental condition for the development of skill in word recognition is repetition. All teachers recognize the necessity for repetition in establishing permanent associations of any kind. It is necessary to have attentive repetition, which is much more likely to obtain in a variety of reading materials than in a mere going over the same material repeatedly. In the latter case, the child knows the story so well that he can almost repeat the words and sentences without thinking. It is much better, when word recognition is being stressed, to use a number of different stories in which the particular words are frequently used. In this way, attention must necessarily be given to the material. Another value of studying words in many different settings is that when a word picture is met in many different settings, it is more likely to be dissociated from any particular setting and strongly connected only with its proper sound. Repetition of words should be distributed over periods of weeks or months before word recognition is assured, especially for pupils who do little or no reading outside of school. Those who read much will soon become

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., pp. 57-60.



proficient in word recognition and will build up a larger vocabulary than the others, and in a much shorter time. The "piling up" of word-recognition experiences is basic to the acquisition of skill and speed in this essential process of reading. To support this necessary procedure, the vocabulary of schoolbooks should be more carefully organized to make sure that the word recognition taught will be strengthened by re-use and by proper distribution of the repetition of words.<sup>19</sup>

When they come upon a word they do not know, many children, in their efforts at beginning reading, stare helplessly at the strange symbol or at the teacher. Instead of wasting so much time and thus experiencing frustration, they should be taught the habit of reading the rest of the sentence and then guessing what the unknown word might logically say. Bright children learn this habit without being taught, but all the children should soon acquire it. Without it a strange word may completely block all progress in getting meaning from material that is being read. Of course, some mistakes will result from wrong guesses, but even these are to be preferred to a complete halt in progress. Despite the errors they may make, children who have cultivated the "guessing" habit can be given all kinds of seat-work and independent reading matter, and they can keep

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-63.

themselves busy and interested in rich learning experiences. This habit is essential to any progress in reading outside of school or in independent reading in school. Teachers or other adults, to whom the children many times take their reading problems, are not always available, and it is well for the children to have some degree of independence in doing their own reading.<sup>20</sup>

By way of summary of the various reading methods discussed in the preceding pages, it may be pointed out that reading from memory is the best possible beginning because of the degree of interest and self-confidence it gives the pupils and because it permits the use of large and interesting units of reading matter. This method should not be continued alone to the point where time is wasted. The habit of careful matching of sight-words to sound-words leads to individual word recognition. The child must be able to recognize individual words before he can deal with these words in new combinations -- the process called reading. Hence definite training in word recognition must be given. The habit of making a visual analysis of words will be greatly enhanced if the children acquire the habit of guessing unknown words on the basis of their context.

The three main steps in modern methods of teaching beginning reading -- (1) memorizing content, (2) noting

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 63-65.

appearance of words, and (3) learning the sound of words -- must enter into any sound psychological system of teaching reading, but the three have to be balanced, and the best devices for the accomplishment of each must be selected. Throughout these efforts the guiding principle should be to maintain and enhance interest in reading, and to arrive as rapidly and as efficiently as possible at the stage of independent reading. Although many published reading systems provide valuable assistance in the effective teaching of reading, each teacher must make modifications to suit the needs, interests, and abilities of her particular group, for she will necessarily be confronted with many situations not comprehended by the manual of instructions for the reading system she may be using. She must therefore be prepared to make her own adaptations, and to work out a combination of methods that seems most fruitful in her own situation.<sup>21</sup>

#### Pre-reading Activities

Long before they enter school, most children today are surrounded by picture books, magazines, and newspapers. Even before they enter school, children "read" the "funnies," and in this way and by perusing magazines and newspapers acquire some ability to "read" pictures. Picture books, especially those depicting scenes of children in

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., pp. 117-119.

action, are valuable in school as pre-reading experiences. Children like to talk about pictures and what they mean, and they can derive highly educational and rich experiences by discussing the activities engaged in by children shown in the pictures. Talking about pictures stimulates thinking and helps in making concepts and word meanings clear.

Story-telling is another significant pre-reading activity. As a story is being told by the teacher, children should be encouraged to contribute freely to the narrative. Often the questions asked during the telling of a story draw forth spontaneous and enthusiastic comments. Steps in the story may be anticipated or ideas inferred. As an encouragement to such activity, the teacher may begin sentences and permit pupils to complete them for her.<sup>22</sup>

The little child comes to school possessed of a background of valuable experience, knowledge, and emotions, of ability acquired through varied, even if limited, contacts with life. Though he is able to express himself orally -- sometimes with great fluency and not a little feeling -- he is generally unable to recognize or understand the symbols on a written or printed page. The teacher's special problem at this stage is to teach her pupils this new mode of expression. In varying degree, this special problem of these-called mechanics of reading will continue to play a large and fundamental part in the work of the school. Naturally, as the pupil's mastery of the fundamentals of reading becomes more and more automatic -- a matter of habit -- as he vocally responds and grows mentally mature, the teaching emphasis shifts to the meaning and spirit

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<sup>22</sup>William S. Gray, Marion Monroe, and Lillian Gray, Guidebook for the Pre-primer Program of the Basic Readers, pp. 33-35.

of what is read. Even in the highest grades, however, it may still be necessary for the teacher to emphasize the elements of reading technique -- to drill on pronunciation, enunciation, and phrasing, to teach the child to grasp larger and larger language units.<sup>23</sup>

In many schools an effort is made to teach all children to read when they enter the first grade. The reason for this practice is the widespread belief that a child, when he is six years old, is ready to begin reading. The results of tests and experiments indicate that not all children of six are ready to begin reading. The fact that all pupils in a schoolroom are six years old does not mean that they are equal in mental age, alertness, physical development, kind and range of experiences, and various personality traits.

Experience proves that most children of superior ability and good home or kindergarten training require little or no additional preparation for learning to read when they enter the first grade. On the other hand, though, many pupils, when they enter school for the first time, need specific training that prepares the way for learning to read.

For those who are not ready to begin reading, the mere postponement of reading instruction is not sound as a solution to the problem. Such pupils should be introduced

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<sup>23</sup>Patterson, op. cit., p. 7.

to a program of pre-reading activities purposeful in content and practical in application, designed to develop and strengthen the abilities that are essential possessions for one to have before he can attain success in learning to read.<sup>24</sup>

These pre-reading activities should be meaningful to the children and should contribute directly to the type of growth needed. Immature children who are limited in background of information or in language ability, need an extensive program of first-hand experiences. Familiar experiences from the immediate environment should be utilized rather than attempting to explore entirely new fields. Teachers should take advantage of opportunities for broadening the understanding of children through discussions of facts relating to the homes and families represented in the group. Children are naturally interested in what their parents and brothers and sisters are doing, and they are interested in each other's families and homes. They should be led to share their everyday experiences and their pets and toys with others in the group. The activities about them, such as gardening, farming, storekeeping, and transportation, may be close to the warp and woof of everyday life, yet some of the children may know very little about them.

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<sup>24</sup>Gray, Monroe, and Gray, op. cit., p. 17.

The immediate out-of-doors provides abundant opportunities for rich learning activities. On the school lawn may be carried out a study of seasonal variations in plant and animal life. School gardens may become a rich opportunity for planting seeds and bulbs and watching plants grow. Trees, flowers, birds, domestic animals, and the weather are closely related to the child, but the teacher all too often fails to make use of them in teaching. At this early level, a walk to a nearby park may be more valuable than a trip to a factory.

The school's pre-reading program should include those areas of interest which the child is most likely to encounter in his early experiences in reading. Learning situations should be chosen to which the immediate environment may contribute first-hand experiences. For instance, at this stage of child development, attention should be directed to cows rather than to milk-bottling and to hens rather than to incubators. More complicated interests may well come in later when the child is better able to comprehend them.<sup>25</sup>

The real purposes of the pre-reading and pre-primer activities have been set forth by one educator in the following manner:

. . . to build broad and deep interests in reading, a keen sense of the values of reading, appreciation of good literature, the development of helpful reading habits, and an understanding that reading is not

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-25.

simply a process of reproducing the words which are presented but of getting the ideas which are presented, and more than this, children must see that comprehension of the ideas is not sufficient but that in return we must give thought and action; we must react to what we read with mental or physical activity.

The material which is concerned with the child's daily life and activity is uniquely suited to the development of this concept because the reading is never simply saying the words, but a matter of getting the idea which is presented and making the proper reaction. If the idea is not interpreted correctly, the right response cannot be given. . . . 26

#### Reading Readiness

Reading readiness is a stage through which children pass as a preliminary to actual reading. This period is characterized by expanding interests and activities which directly prepare the child for acquiring ability to put thought into the printed symbol. Although reading readiness is usually developed in kindergarten, some pupils are passed into the first grade without possessing reading readiness. Doubtless some of the children who enter the first grade without having had kindergarten experience are likewise relatively uninterested in reading. For these reasons, the first-grade teacher may expect to assume some responsibility for developing reading readiness. This may be done by the use of such means as providing the child with a wealth of ideas gained through interesting experiences,

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<sup>26</sup>Blanche Kent, "Procedures in Beginning Reading," Childhood Education, XI (March, 1935), 263.



encouraging abundant practice in oral language and thus fostering an increased vocabulary, placing on the blackboard printed records of children's experiences, encouraging children to look at books, reading to them and thereby causing them to become interested in printed content, using labels to identify materials, and many other similar procedures. It is necessary for the child to have an interest in reading before he can master the required skills and establish wholesome attitudes toward reading.<sup>27</sup>

Because of differences in experiences at home, in environment, in mentality, and in training, all children when they enter school are not equally prepared for immediate entry upon the adventure of reading. The newness and strangeness of the school environment, and also the physical, emotional, and mental immaturity of the pupils make advisable a period of development and adjustment, during which the children will have the opportunity to become ready for experiences in the reading of books.

One who has had a rich background may be ready to read when he enters school, whereas one who has had only limited opportunities may not be ready for reading for some time. In cases of children who are not ready for reading, it is better to delay formal instruction in reading than to push the child on before he is ready for it. Premature acquaintance

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<sup>27</sup>Willy, op. cit., pp. 1-2.

with reading may cause the child to dislike it and to be seriously handicapped in his efforts. No time will be wasted or lost by such wise delay in beginning reading, for many rich and profitable experiences may be provided. "By deferring reading until the child is ready to read, the teacher is building strength and attitudes which will enable the child to get more from reading when it is begun."<sup>28</sup>

( In determining when a child is ready to read, the following factors are worthy of consideration:

1. He has a relatively wide range of experience relating to the things and activities about which a child will read.
2. He has a reasonable facility in the use of ideas.
3. He has a sufficient command of simple English sentences to speak with ease and freedom.
4. He has a relatively wide speaking vocabulary.
5. He has good habits of enunciation and articulation.<sup>29</sup> )

In this connection, the following considerations are also pertinent in determining a child's degree of reading readiness:

1. A degree of maturity represented by a mental age of six or more and sufficient mental alertness to insure rapid progress in learning.
2. Good health and freedom from organic defects so that the pupil can give careful attention during periods in which he receives guidance in learning to read.
3. Sufficient social adjustment and emotional stability so that the pupil can participate with pleasure in the activities of the group.

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<sup>28</sup>Texas State Department of Education, Course of Study for Years One through Three, p. 98.

<sup>29</sup>William S. Gray, quoted by Marjorie Hardy, "Reading," Childcraft, IX, 13.

4. An adequate fund of ideas, or background of experience, to enable him to grasp the meaning of passages in early reading activities.

5. Sufficient facility in thinking to enable the pupil to grasp simple relationships, to perceive sequence, to recognize ideas, and to engage in simple problem-solving activities.

6. Ability to understand readily and use fluently the vocabulary and types of sentences found in beginning-reading books. . . .

7. Efficient work habits which enable the pupil to follow directions and to concentrate on the activities involved in learning to read.

8. Sufficient sensory ability to insure accurate visual and auditory discrimination of words.

9. Adequate motor control to make the muscular adjustments involved in learning to read.

10. Keen interest in learning to read.

Experience shows that a child may be introduced to reading even though he is not equally well developed in all of the foregoing requisites. Exceptional ability in one or more respects may compensate for deficiencies in other aspects of development. In general, a child is ready for reading when his total development is sufficient to enable him to engage effectively in the various activities involved in learning to read. However, it should be understood that lack of ability in any of the elements that comprise reading readiness may tend to retard the rate of progress in learning to read.<sup>30</sup>)

Various forms of seatwork may be instrumental in stimulating a more rapid development of reading readiness among pupils. Outline pictures for coloring according to oral directions, or, for more advanced pupils, according to printed directions; picture puzzles to be put together correctly, each part bearing a label; and separated sentence parts to be put together in correct sequence, are but a few of the constructive types of seatwork that may aid in

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<sup>30</sup>Gray, Monroe, and Gray, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

this direction. An excellent piece of seatwork for beginners is the making of a booklet on the order of a scrapbook. The children collect pictures of persons, objects, and scenes depicted in stories and spoken of or read about during the reading period. Together with appropriate labels, these pictures are pasted in the book. In the process, the children will be learning to read the titles in a perfectly natural way. Another valuable kind of seatwork is the silent perusal of interesting books at a table specifically for this purpose.<sup>31</sup>

#### Aims and Objectives

Children are sometimes labeled dull when, as a matter of fact, one or more of the following elements involved in the capacity for learning are missing, undeveloped, or impaired:

1. Good coordination, good hearing, good vision (the psychophysical element).
2. Good sound body -- physical well-being and vigor, not handicapped by malnutrition, bad tonsils, adenoids, or other physical defects (the physical element).
3. Background of experiences -- oral language, interests, meanings, and concepts (the experiential element).
4. Right attitude toward school, teacher, children, and learning; happiness in his school relationships (the emotional element).
5. Right attitude toward effort; willingness to do his part (the volitional element).
6. Good inherent mental ability apart from other elements.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Patterson, op. cit., pp. 119-120.

<sup>32</sup>Marjorie Hardy, "Reading," Childcraft, IX, 12-13.

These elements can be called aims and objectives of the educational program as well as of the reading phase of that program. Whereas the above elements are more general in nature, those listed below are more definitely related to beginning reading, and are referred to by their author as "assumptions underlying the initial stages in learning to read" and as "techniques in teaching primary reading":

1. The child bids fair to progress normally in learning to read if all the elements in the learning capacity are present.
2. The child learns only under the stimulus of interest.
3. A child shows genuine compelling interest in a thing which he initiates or helps to initiate or in an activity initiated by the teacher which he enjoys doing.
4. The child associates symbol and meaning most easily when his own familiar spoken sentences are used as the written and printed symbols.
5. The child finds himself in relation to reading and manifests some desire to read material not of his own making if reading is made a part of all schoolroom activities.
6. If the child begins the habit of "living" in the content of his own material, with right guidance he will live in the content of material that is not his own.
7. If one of the chief aims of the primary grades is to lay the foundation for the intelligent, voluntary use of books, very definite things must be done to develop in the child the attitudes, habits, and abilities which contribute to such a use of books.
8. There is danger of physical and emotional harm to the child if his attention is directed prematurely to words, thus making him word-conscious in an artificial way and before his eyes are ready for the tax on them.
9. If given an opportunity, the child will naturally and normally reach the word-conscious period when nature indicates that his eyes are ready for the tax.

10. With most children the greatest progress in skill in independent reading comes in the second and third grades.

11. The process of learning to read cannot really be divided into first-grade reading, second-grade reading, and so on; it is one big unit that must be mastered in the primary grades.<sup>33</sup>

As a means of extending experience and promoting child growth, reading is of special value.

1. It makes the lives of children richer and more meaningful through the stories, descriptions, and records of the past that are available in their homes and in the school.

2. It enables them to satisfy valuable curiosities about people, animals and plants, strange regions, former times, distant places, famous men and women, inventions, etc.

3. It helps them to keep in touch with friends and to know what is going on in the community, state, and nation.

4. It enables them to secure material for fuller understanding and for use in solving problems and helps them to learn how to act in new situations.

5. As a form of oral communication, it is a valuable means of informing, convincing, and giving pleasure to others.<sup>34</sup>

One authority in the field of reading asserts that "there is no best way to teach reading," and continues by saying that, in spite of the large number of research studies and publications on the subject, there has not yet been "discovered a definite series of steps which a teacher may follow with the assurance that all pupils will grow in reading ability in the most efficient manner." Because of various types of mental, physical, and environmental

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<sup>33</sup>Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>34</sup>Gray, Monroe, and Gray, op. cit., p. 8.

differences among pupils, "it is unlikely that research will ever discover a single method which will be the most efficient one for all pupils and all teachers."<sup>35</sup>

Reading should be more than calling words and putting them together in sentences and paragraphs; it should also be thinking, carried on under the stimulus of the printed or written page. The purpose or motive in reading, then, is of considerable significance in developing the child's ability to put thought into reading symbols. To be most effective in the development of accurate and thoughtful readers, the purposes motivating reading should be initiated either by the reader himself or else adopted by him as his very own, should be related to the reader's experiences to enable him to interpret the material readily, should be definite, and should contain an element of newness to present a challenge to the interest.

The same question used day after day as a means of motivating interest in reading becomes stale, loses all meaning, and hence becomes valueless as a motivator of interest. The same type of material used repeatedly is a deterrent to the child's interest and an impeder of his progress. The child should be permitted to discover for himself what is interesting. For this reason the practice of telling the main ideas of a story before the child is allowed

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<sup>35</sup>Donald D. Durrell, Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities, p. 1.

to read it is questionable. Of course, familiarity with the content of material is necessary as an approach to reading, but after a child has acquired a working vocabulary of about fifty words, the telling of stories before he has read them should be minimized; for if he is already familiar with a story, reading it cannot then be such an interesting and thought-provoking experience as would be the case with entirely new material. Even adults are not so interested in reading a book or in seeing a play if someone has already given them a good idea of the plot.<sup>36</sup>

For beginners the reading lesson will keep close to the actual daily life of the pupils. The lesson may take any number of forms, but the immaturity of the children and the practical needs of child life should ever be kept conspicuously in mind. Self-activity should be emphasized, and the teacher should give as large a place to the child's participation as possible.<sup>37</sup> Although methods and techniques may vary widely,

The goal has been reached in learning to read when the child reads voluntarily, extensively, and with evident interests and absorption. It is not enough that a child shall learn to read rapidly and understandingly; he must develop a real love for reading -- one that will prompt him to spend many of his leisure hours in reading for pleasure.

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<sup>36</sup>Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, How to Teach Reading, pp. 38-39.

<sup>37</sup>Patterson, op. cit., p. 125.



Not all persons who read well have the desire to read to any great extent. In the past, all school children learned to read before reaching maturity, but only a small percentage of them ever reached the goal outlined above. Undoubtedly, one of the principal reasons why the majority did not reach the goal was that the process of learning to read was fraught with many unpleasant associations.

It is important that teachers should keep the ultimate goal constantly in mind and that they should follow only such procedures as will help the children to progress toward that goal.

Some children reach the goal in the first grade, some in the second grade, and some infrequently not until the third grade. The time it takes to reach the goal is not important; but it is important that every child shall progress steadily at his own rate of speed, regardless of the grade he is in. He should be neither forced ahead nor held back.

It is fully possible for a teacher to be too ambitious for immediate results and too careless of ultimate results. Teachers should be less concerned with the questions, How many words do my children know? How many books have they read? and should be more concerned with the question, How easily, naturally, and well are my children progressing toward the goal?<sup>38</sup>

Closely akin to the above statement of goals to be set up in reading is the following list of general objectives for reading in the first grade:

1. To create a desire and love for reading.
2. To develop the ability to get thought with accuracy, facility, and reasonable rapidity.
3. To develop the ability to master the mechanics of reading.
4. To enable the child to read at his maximum degree of speed.
5. To help the child use the tools of reading effectively.
6. To develop the power to read well silently.
7. To develop the ability to give pleasure to others through oral reading.

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<sup>38</sup>Marjorie Hardy, First Grade Manual for the Child's Own Way Series, pp. 21-22.

8. To create a desire to possess books.
9. To stimulate an appreciation of good literature.<sup>39</sup>

Another statement of aims for beginning reading is the following:

1. To awaken keen interest in reading and to stimulate a strong desire to learn to read effectively.
2. To provide for the orderly development of good habits of recognition both in oral reading and in silent reading.
3. To develop ability to interpret clearly and accurately the meaning of the passages read.
4. To develop habits of reacting critically to the ideas secured through reading and of reorganizing and applying them to new situations.
5. To cultivate the ability to read aloud effectively.
6. To cultivate strong motives for, and permanent interests in, diversified reading.
7. To elevate standards and tastes in the choice of books and selections read.<sup>40</sup>

The following tabulation of the major aims and desirable attainments during the initial stage in learning to read is worthy of consideration by anyone who is interested in establishing a worthwhile program of beginning reading which will result in desirable outcomes:

Aims	Desirable Attainments
(a) To stimulate keen interest in simple reading activities and in looking at picture books independently.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Shows active interest in labels, notices, bulletins, directions, and posters.</li> <li>2. Asks what sentences or statements on the black-board say.</li> <li>3. Is alert and willing to cooperate in interesting reading activities.</li> </ol>

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<sup>39</sup>Pennell and Cusack, op. cit., pp. 158-159.

<sup>40</sup>Gray, Monroe, and Gray, op. cit., pp. 10-11.

4. Shows keen interest in books and pictures.
- (b) To cultivate a thoughtful attitude in reading and ability to interpret and relate the pictures and words read.
1. Gives attention primarily to the meaning of what is read.
  2. Uses readily the clues to meaning in the pictures that accompany the stories.
  3. Relates the sequential events in the plot of a story.
  4. Thinks about the content while reading, as shown by comments on the factual, humorous, surprising, and satisfying elements of a story.
  5. Contributes supplementary and related ideas from personal experience.
- (c) To develop a reading vocabulary of fifty or more words and the habit of recognizing them readily in thought units.
1. Acquires a vocabulary of fifty or more words which he can recognize quickly and accurately in thought units.
  2. Begins to note significant details of words.
- (d) To develop good habits of recognizing and interpreting thought units of one or more lines in length in both silent and oral reading.
1. Reads silently in sentence units with few or no lip movements.
  2. Avoids pointing to words.
  3. Follows lines readily from left to right.
  4. Understands the meaning of simple sentences before reading them aloud.
  5. Reads short thought units aloud easily, distinctly, and naturally.
- (e) To develop ability to follow oral directions and to engage in activities which apply ideas secured in reading.
1. Gives attention to directions and follows them conscientiously.
  2. Makes effective use of important points and incidents of stories in dramatizations, the drawing of pictures, and other activities.

3. Sees relationships between the incidents in the stories read and his own experiences.
- (f) To cultivate social attitudes desirable in a reading group.
1. Listens thoughtfully and attentively.
  2. Cooperates courteously, with due regard for the rights of others.
  3. Feels pride and satisfaction in the successful accomplishment of group activities.
- (g) To develop proper habits in the care and use of books.
- Handles books easily, opening them and turning the pages carefully, and holding them properly in individual and group situations.<sup>41</sup>

Again, a program of reading in the beginning grade can be said to have the characteristics of effectiveness if it conforms to the following criteria:

1. The teacher is familiar with the individual differences of her pupils. . . .
2. The teacher has specific objectives for each child or each group of children in her class. . . .
3. There is a definite plan for observation of pupils' growth in voluntary reading habits. . . .
4. The teacher knows the books that are available to the children. . . .
5. There is adequate provision for differences in the reading abilities of the pupils. . . .
6. The teacher has definite plans for motivation of reading. . . .
7. There is full attention to growth in vocabulary. . . .
8. Oral-reading instruction is made effective by maintaining interest. . . .
9. The instruction in silent reading is characterized by insight into many problems and needs. . . .
10. There is training in oral and written recall. . . .
11. There is definite instruction for improvement of study skills.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>42</sup>Durrell, op. cit., pp. 4-10.

The following characteristics of an effective reading program are pertinent at this point:

1. It begins with training and experiences that stimulate interest in reading and prepare pupils to learn to read with reasonable ease.

2. It recognizes the fact that children who enter school differ widely in family background, intellectual maturity, and readiness for reading. Materials and methods of teaching are adjusted to their varying needs.

3. It provides for the development of appropriate reading activities, attitudes, and habits needed by each pupil, thus reducing to a minimum the need for corrective and remedial teaching.

4. It recognizes the close relationship between reading, language, and thinking and provides regularly for the stimulation of clear thinking and for the increasing mastery of good language habits.

5. The reading activities provided are based on the belief that pupils can learn to read best by reading to achieve purposes that appeal to them as highly interesting and worthwhile.

6. The materials provided for the pupils to read are prepared in the light of the following guiding principles:

- a) They harmonize closely with the immediate interests of the pupils and aid in developing new interests.
- b) They are organized in terms of units that offer many interest leads.
- c) They are so carefully graded and increase so gradually in difficulty that they present far fewer learning hazards than did the reading materials of former decades.
- d) They provide frequent opportunity to re-teach new words by introducing them repeatedly in different meaningful situations.
- e) They aid the pupil in deriving meanings from the context, thus helping him to enlarge and enrich his meaning vocabulary and to secure new experiences through reading.

7. The methods of teaching used vary with the abilities and needs of the pupils and with the purpose for which they read.

8. Differences in pupil progress and ability are recognized and provided for through flexible grouping,

individual guidance, and variations in the reading materials used.

9. The achievements and needs of the pupils are studied regularly, and continuous effort is made to provide needed help and stimulation.<sup>43</sup>

Among the appreciations, habits, and skills that should be emphasized in first-grade reading are the following:

- I. Appreciations.
  1. To desire to read.
  2. To love to read.
- II. Habits and skills.
  1. To read silently before attempting to read aloud.
  2. To avoid pointing to words while reading.
  3. To avoid head movements.
  4. To read silently without any audible expression and to begin to eliminate lip movements.
  5. To use correct eye-movements.
  6. To know how to attack new or difficult words by:
    - a. Skipping over words and getting them through context.
    - b. Recognizing phonetic elements.
    - c. Asking for the word.
  7. To read to answer a definite question.
  8. To avoid word calling in oral reading.
  9. To be able to enunciate clearly and pronounce correctly.
  10. To handle and care for a book properly.
  11. To stand correctly.<sup>44</sup>

The process and experience of learning to read should be, for every child, a happy, wholesome activity in which definite interests and needs motivate the child to have the desire to read. The reading program should be sufficiently flexible to permit and encourage each child to develop at the rate at which he is capable of attaining his highest degree of success. The material should be easy enough to

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<sup>43</sup>Gray, Monroe, and Gray, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

<sup>44</sup>Pennell and Cusack, op. cit., p. 159.

permit the child to know that he is growing in his ability to read, but it also should be difficult enough to challenge his best efforts.<sup>45</sup>

The primary goal in reading instruction is to enable each child in the class to advance in skill and interest as rapidly as his abilities permit. Only by taking into account the existence of individual differences in reading level, in interest, in learning rate, and in types of difficulties can this goal be realized.<sup>46</sup>

The value of individual instruction is clarified in the following excerpt:

Some teachers believe that reading is taught most economically and effectively through individual instruction and that interest is lost and time wasted when ten to twenty children try to keep the same place. These teachers have demonstrated that it is possible to have only individual reading from the very beginning of the first grade. One teacher begins the reading instruction with a story about a family, in which she uses such expressions as, "This is the father," "This is the mother," and so on. These sentences, with appropriate illustrations, are put up around the room. Each child has a set of the expressions, unillustrated, which he matches with the illustrated ones. When he can read them, the teacher checks his degree of accuracy on a progress card. Pre-primers with similar content are available for the children and many illustrated words are placed on the walls of the room. Not a great deal of experience reading is carried on, but that which is used is put up for individual matching with typed copy. The children are checked individually by the teacher as they read to her what they feel they have mastered. They use each other as audience and frequently a child will decide to read a certain book because he has enjoyed the parts that were read to him. This teacher finds that with the aid of sufficient reading materials and devices each child

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<sup>45</sup>Texas State Department of Education, op. cit., p. 98.

<sup>46</sup>Durrell, op. cit., p. 65.

teaches himself to read and progresses at his own rate. Furthermore, this method prevents the slower children from feeling failure and enables them to achieve results that are impossible with group reading.

Other teachers contend that reading taught in the above fashion tends to develop word recognition at the expense of thought-getting and that, unless the teacher is a person of exceptional skill, the child's interest will be centered in the skill of reading rather than the content, with the result that a little later his attitude toward reading will be negative.<sup>47</sup>

### Phonics

Phonics is the science of word sounds. The use of phonics by the teacher should be optional, since not all children make better progress in reading after learning something of phonics.

When the child has formed the habit of content reading, when he has a relatively large sight word vocabulary at his command, when he begins to feel the need of something to help him comprehend the content more readily and to become more independent in his reading, a certain amount of work in phonics should begin to supply the need that the child is experiencing. No harm is done if all children are exposed to phonics, for each one will develop at least some degree of phonic sense which will naturally carry over into reading if the child needs to use it. Some children do not need to use phonics in their reading, others somehow seem to

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<sup>47</sup>Willy, op. cit., pp. 5-6.



develop their own sense of sounds and their own system of phonics and are helped further by what the teacher gives them, while still others need the help of phonics but have difficulty in using it.<sup>48</sup>

In the past, phonics often was thoughtlessly taught to the extent of producing sheer boredom. This fact and the common practice of subordinating thought content to the development of phonic elements have properly brought serious discredit to the use of phonics. The reaction against the mistakes of the past should not, however, be so strong as completely to cause the utter abolition of a tool which is definitely an asset in the teaching of reading if it is used intelligently. Emphasis on phonics should not occur during the reading period, for then the attention should be focused upon the thought content and should not be shifted to the mechanics of reading. If basic training is given in word analysis at other times during the day, the information thus obtained can be readily applied during reading periods without withdrawing the attention from the content of what is being read.

While the actual value of phonics has not been scientifically determined, many educators feel that "if phonics is taught in a reasonable amount and if the material selected has a direct bearing upon the reading in hand, the

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<sup>48</sup>Hardy, First Grade Manual for the Child's Own Way Series, pp. 40-41.

child will be helped in both reading and speaking."<sup>49</sup> Care must be taken, however, to postpone the introduction of phonics until the subject can logically be expected to have meaning for the child and to be of assistance to him.

All work in phonics should be deferred until children have a clear conception of the function of printed words and sentences. They should be able to use this new skill in really getting thought from blackboard lessons, charts, cards, signs, and the first half of primers, before any step is taken to attract attention to more minute elements.

Any method which does not allow in the beginning an extensive acquaintance with word-wholes encountered in meaningful context, is forced to confront young children with long lists of quite meaningless words for the sole purpose of picking them to pieces.<sup>50</sup>

The modern trend is to employ phonics according to the individual need of the pupils concerned. Some children who possess a keen phonic sense need no training at all, whereas other pupils require definite teaching of phonics and help in making applications of phonics to reading. Phonics seldom is taught before the second semester of the first year.<sup>51</sup>

Work in word analysis should not be practiced for its own sake. Neither words nor techniques should be introduced for the sake of the system, although most phonic practices are characterized by this weakness. If one is willing to

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<sup>49</sup>Pennell and Cusack, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

<sup>50</sup>Moore, op. cit., pp. 212-213.

<sup>51</sup>Willy, op. cit., p. 7.

be moderate and to incur some measure of delay, life in the school, including experiences with books, will provide an abundance of familiar, significant, and meaningful words for necessary analysis and classification.<sup>52</sup>

#### The Teacher's Task

If small homogeneous groups are used in the reading class to accomplish the work in the beginning stage and afterward, the teacher is better enabled to meet the individual needs of the children in the groups. Through reading in groups the child is stimulated by the teacher and by other members of the group. Children who seem not to be interested in reading frequently acquire such an interest when they work intimately with other children who have it.<sup>53</sup>

The conversion of a word reader into a thought reader is probably the most frequent of all reading problems encountered by the teacher. If the reading material is thought to be too difficult, the teacher should try something simpler. Phrases on flash cards may be used to increase the perceptual span, and the children may be asked to interpret them. The amount of silent reading may be increased, and the pupils may be encouraged to tell the class what they have read. Only that reading which sounds like

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<sup>52</sup>Moore, op. cit., p. 213.

<sup>53</sup>Hardy, "Reading," Childcraft, IX, 29.

natural talk should be approved, for that which sounds artificial is likely to be memorized and characterized by little or no thinking. The teacher should utilize many checks on the children's ability to put thought into their reading, and also frequently employ informal tests for comprehension. The teacher should be ever on the alert to discover evidences of lip reading and, when it is discovered, she should immediately take measures to eliminate it. Large amounts of experience reading should be employed for the purpose of causing the children to become familiar with the content and of freeing the content instead of the word. Overemphasis on phonics should be carefully avoided.<sup>54</sup>

If the child can be enabled to recognize in reading an activity that possesses practical and useful functions that enhance the worth of his own experiences, he has discovered the most valuable of all incentives for learning to read.

When a child finds reading necessary to some activity he is carrying on, such as playing store, his interest in reading as a special subject is greatly increased. It becomes a tool he can use and is therefore worthwhile. A desirable attitude toward reading is thus established. As a source of some much-needed information -- be it about airplanes, insects, or Africa -- books and reading become highly desirable. Incidental reading can often be correlated with technical reading lessons. A child who is interested in animals and is making a zoo or a picture book of animals will enjoy a reading lesson about a circus. His vocabulary will be reinforced and the sequence of thought influenced.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>54</sup>Willy, op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid., p. 10.

Although some educators have been instrumental in leading a widespread reaction against mechanics in reading, which in the past certainly was overemphasized, there is no evidence, from tests and surveys, to indicate that attention to drill and mechanics can be entirely dispensed with in the teaching of reading. It seems necessary to have some of this type of training. There is, however, a large body of reliable evidence to the effect that a high level of well-balanced attainment can be reached with a very moderate amount of instruction in mechanics. Moderation, then, appears to be desirable; but a complete abandonment of mechanics is ill-advised.<sup>56</sup>

If the teacher is to be of the maximum assistance to children as they learn the art of reading, she must always remember that she is largely responsible for the amount of interest the children take in reading, for the kind of interest they possess, and for the way they read. If a child is vitally interested, he has taken his first step in the attainment of the reading goal; and the teacher should seize the opportunity to capitalize upon his interest by seeing that his first adventures in reading are pleasant, challenging, and satisfactory ones. The spirit of the teacher produces a considerable influence upon the spirit that motivates and governs the children. The teacher's attitude

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<sup>56</sup>Moore, op. cit., p. 212.

should consist of such component factors as genuine enthusiasm, optimism, patience, the spirit of encouragement, and resourcefulness. Such characteristics will inevitably influence the children and will be reflected in their own attitudes and behavior in their early experiences with reading.<sup>57</sup> It goes without saying that teachers should

become acquainted with the best of children's literature and provide only the best in the classroom. The teaching of reading is but half done unless children can hear fine books read aloud by the teacher, can discuss them informally and share their pleasure in their favorite stories, and thus develop from year to year increasingly finer tastes in books.<sup>58</sup>

Most of the reading systems now in use rest firmly upon the new psychology of childhood, and especially upon those phases of the new psychology which emphasize

(a) the active principle in all learning -- the pupil learning through his own experiences and reactions; (b) the individual differences in pupils' capacities for learning -- no two children being alike and no two progressing at the same rate to the same goal; (c) the powerful influence of a genuine interest in the meaning and purpose of an activity upon the learning process; and (d) the satisfying results of meaningful effort definitely organized toward a specific and and zestfully put forth with confidence and right feeling.<sup>59</sup>

#### Bulletin Board and Charts

Before he is given books to read, the child needs charts which contain not only his own sentences, but also simple

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<sup>57</sup>Hardy, First Grade Manual . . . , pp. 22-24.

<sup>58</sup>Gretchen Wulfin, "Reading in Relation to the Social Living Program," California Journal of Elementary Education, X (August, 1941), 40.

<sup>59</sup>Patterson, op. cit., p. 39.

material which he did not compose. On the first day of school the teacher may post a picture of a child or a group of children engaged in some interesting activity. On the first day, no reading material should be appended. The following procedure may advantageously be engaged in after the picture has been posted:

1. The teacher should call attention to the picture and encourage the children to name the child or children in the picture. The class may be led to discuss the picture, the people in it, what they are doing, what they logically may be saying, etc. The teacher may suggest to the children that they look on the bulletin board the first thing every morning.

2. On the second day the picture will still be posted, but with a sentence printed or written beneath it. The children likely will say: "The same picture is on the board, but there is something under it. What does it say?" This questioning is evidence of the birth of a favorable inquiring attitude which is greatly to be desired. The teacher now should inform the pupils that beneath the picture is a sentence telling what the child in the picture is doing, and should immediately read the sentence slowly and distinctly, pointing out the words as she reads. The children now take turns in reading the sentence with the teacher's help, and in finding certain words that occur in the sentence

by means of placement in oral reading. The teacher should announce that tomorrow a new picture will be posted, together with a new sentence, and suggest that the present picture be removed from the board and hung on a wire with the sentence attached.

3. On the third day the same procedure is repeated, and then it is continued for several days until a number of pictures and sentences are hanging from the wire. The teacher likely will want to suggest taking down one picture each day to make room for the new ones. Even this activity may be fraught with educational possibilities if she will say: "In taking down a picture, let us follow this plan: All except Ruth will close their eyes. Ruth will take down a picture, place it so you cannot see it, and hold up the sentence for you to read." The children, in trying to read the sentence, will attempt to discover which picture is missing from the wire. This curiosity is desirable because the child, when he sees the sentence, at once thinks of the content and tries to recall it in order to unite symbols (words) with it.

4. The sentence strips that have appeared below the pictures may be fastened together with rings and used for purposes of review. In reading them the child cannot rely upon the pictures, for they cannot be seen. Now he is able to read because he has built up an association with the pictures and has acquired a vocabulary from bulletin-board



sentences. Occasionally the cards may be taken from the rings and used for a short, quick drill.

Bulletin-board sentences should always utilize words which will be in the vocabulary of the book the child will read first. After fifteen or twenty sentences and pictures have been used in the manner described, other surprise material should be placed on the bulletin board. Chart work, gradually growing in complexity and challenge, should continue throughout the year.<sup>60</sup>

An intelligent use of the bulletin board stimulates interest in unknown material. It is very important that the first reading experiences be in connection with known material, such as that appropriate for charts; but at the same time the children should be exposed to unknown material in such a way as to appeal to them and to awaken their interests. A plentiful supply of appropriate books is one good way to do this. Another way is to have a bulletin board containing incidental reading material of this type; that is, material relating to some schoolroom interest, written by the teacher for the purpose of attracting the child's attention and interest and causing him to ask, "What does it say?" If something interesting is put on the board each day, the child will form the habit of looking every morning to see that has been posted. A proper use of the

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<sup>60</sup>Hardy, "Reading," Childcraft, IX, 24-25.

bulletin board will cause the child to realize from the beginning that reading is getting thought as well as expressing thought. It is advisable to have a second bulletin board for posting poems that the children discover in their reading, poems that the teacher reads to them, or miscellaneous material contributed by the pupils.<sup>61</sup>

The personal element, which should always be present on the bulletin board of a first-grade room, makes the items particularly interesting to the children, who are curious and eager to find out what new items have been placed on the bulletin board or in the "good-news corner." The posted items provide another means of emphasizing the close relationship existing between reading symbols and the interests and experiences of children; they are, in addition, an excellent means of reinforcing the vocabulary already acquired by the children and of anticipating the vocabulary they soon will have developed.

When the children arrive in the morning, the items should already be placed in the "good-news corner." Although the children should be made curious about the items, they should not be given reading lessons based upon the items. Before school, at recess, or between classes they should be permitted to go to the bulletin board individually or in groups, and at every opportunity should be encouraged

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<sup>61</sup>Hardy, First Grade Manual for the Child's Own Way Series, pp. 35-37.

to do so; and individuals or groups who wish to tell about what they have read should be given a chance to enter into general discussion.<sup>62</sup>

The bulletin board or a corner of the blackboard can be reserved for good news items. The good news items may consist of comments on the children's work, plans for the day, a new picture with a simple story attached, interesting items in regard to nature, some of the best work of the children, personal items about the children, plans for the observance of festivals, a short riddle to be guessed, original poems made by the children and printed by the teacher, weather observations, reading units worked out on the blackboard the day before and now printed by the teacher on tag board.<sup>63</sup>

Most written composition work in the first grade is done by a group working together. When writing an account of a common experience, individual children contribute sentences, while the teacher writes them upon the board. When the composition, containing three or four short sentences, is completed, the teacher reads it for the children's critical consideration, revision, and rearrangement.<sup>64</sup> In the first grade the child's own dictated compositions, printed by the teacher on a chart, on the blackboard, or on any other suitable surface, constitute the chief reading material, especially in the beginning stage of reading. Duplicates of the first charts may profitably be cut up into a puzzle so that the child may assemble the sentences to

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<sup>62</sup>Pennell and Cusack, op. cit., pp. 172-173.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., pp. 171-172.

<sup>64</sup>Eleanor Troxell, Language and Literature in the Kindergarten and Primary Grades, p. 48.

match the uncut chart. The use of charts helps to form desired attitudes on the part of the child toward learning to read, because:

1. The sight of a printed chart at once suggests meanings to the child and he is able to recall the content, since the chart usually records something in which he has actually participated.

2. He feels that he can read it because he has the support and confidence gained from helping to compose the chart. He is drawn to it rather than repelled by it.

3. He derives satisfaction from reading it.

4. He is satisfied that he is learning to read. He reads whole thoughts in sentences and finds words through placement when he is asked to do so.<sup>65</sup>

Chart reading during the first week of school assists the teacher in determining the child's readiness to read and helps her in dividing the class into groups for reading when, later on, the pupils are ready for the use of books.

Almost from the very beginning, three distinct groups are perceptible in the reading class:

1. Those pupils reacting favorably and quickly to stimuli (interested in chart work and bulletin board notices) and having good visual memories ( matching words satisfactorily and easily).

2. Those pupils reacting slowly to stimuli and having good visual memories.

3. Those pupils reacting slowly to stimuli and having poor visual memories.

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<sup>65</sup>Hardy, "Reading," Childcraft, IX, 25-26.

A division of the class into these three groups means that:

1. Children with similar reading capacities, interests, and study requirements will be grouped in the same section.

2. Children who quickly learn to read should be encouraged to read increasingly larger amounts independently.

3. Children who learn slowly should be provided with more simple material and work with phrase cards.

4. Children who are handicapped by a limited English vocabulary should be given more than the ordinary opportunity for conversation and discussion about the subject matter, both before and during the reading of material.<sup>66</sup>

Certain worthwhile outcomes are usually found to result from such a plan of group reading as has been suggested, among which are the following:

1. A favorable and wholesome attitude on the part of the pupils toward reading materials.

2. A favorable attitude on the part of the pupils toward the process of learning to read.

3. The cultivation of the habit of living in the content of what is read.

4. An awakening of sentence sense, composition sense, and word sense.

5. The acquisition of the knowledge that reading is done from left to right and down the page.<sup>67</sup>

Besides aiding the teacher in grouping her pupils according to their abilities, needs, and interests, chart

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<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>67</sup>Ibid., pp. 26-27.

reading is a good means of awakening the child's interest. A child becomes interested in a thing much more readily if he has himself been connected with its initiation. Making a chart is vital to him because it has meaning for him: he has actually done the thing that he is recording. The fact that the child has had the opportunity to have an experience and to talk about it afterward has the advantages that experience-getting and oral language supply as prerequisites to reading.

By the use of charts, the secrets of the written language are revealed to the child from the very beginning, for on the first day of school he hears the word "sentence" used and probably learns what the teacher means when she asks, "Who has a sentence that tells where we went?" or some question of a similar nature. When he sees the teacher write these sentences on the board as the pupils state them, and perhaps experiences the supreme thrill of having his own sentence recorded, the child soon begins to understand that what he does and says can be represented in writing. In this way he comes to understand writing as a means of expression.

The next day, when the child sees the printed forms of the sentences which the teacher wrote on the board the day before, he thinks of the printed chart as something that tells about the experiences he and his fellows have had.

He is at once more interested in content than in words or letters. He remembers the experience and also what he told the teacher to write on the board. Now he experiences a desire to read the chart because it is familiar material. He is confident that he can read it. He soon begins to like the charts because they represent the experiences that are part of himself, and he is in this way beginning to make happy associations with his first reading experiences.

The chart method gives the child the habit of wanting to express himself. When he has an experience, he is likely to say, "Let's make a chart about it." This is a good habit to form, for it is highly beneficial and truly educational. For this reason chart reading should continue throughout the first year of school. This habit soon causes the child to want to do his own composition work later in the year. This new experience of composing his own stories and narratives of experiences will be easy for him after having done so much work in group composition under the teacher's guidance.<sup>68</sup>

There has long been a controversy as to whether cursive or manuscript writing should be used with young children in their first experiences in school situations. Because most teachers write script more acceptably than they can letter

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<sup>68</sup>Hardy, First Grade Manual for the Child's Own Way Series, pp. 28-29.

in manuscript, and much more rapidly, it seems economical and desirable to have all board work done in script. But from the very first, running parallel with this blackboard script, the same material should appear in printed form on cardboard or paper. Chart-printing outfits that provide letter forms as they will appear in the child's books should be used for introducing the child to print, and are to be preferred to the artificial style of printing represented by even the best of manuscript writing.<sup>69</sup>

Chart reading, as has been stated before, is the reading of sentences that children themselves have thought out and asked the teacher to print. Each chart has from a few to several simple sentences that form a story or unit telling of an experience the group or an individual has had or is about to have. The composition of the story is usually a cooperative business; and as it grows, the teacher writes it on the board and the class reads it. Then, after school or during a leisure period, the teacher prints the story on tagboard or heavy paper by means of a printing set, so it will be ready for reading the next day.

By having their first reading based upon their own material, which they have composed and with which they are thoroughly familiar, the children are given an opportunity to see how reading is related to experiences that are vital

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<sup>69</sup>Pennell and Cusack, op. cit., p. 164.



to them. If one child or if the whole group does something special which may or may not be related to school experiences, the teacher or the pupils may suggest that a record be made of the happening. The group talks the matter over together, and the children suggest a number of sentences that describe what occurred. The teacher places all sentences on the board, and they are revised and reorganized with the help of the children, who read them from the board. Next day they read the printed form of the same material.<sup>70</sup>

Charts should vary in kind and form in accordance with the reading ability of the children. The first charts should be short one-line sentences, to be supplied by the pupils with the teacher's guidance. Very soon the amount of guidance from the teacher is lessened, the sentences become longer, and the unit assumes the paragraph form. Among the most common forms of charts used are the following:

1. Group composition about a group experience.
2. Group composition about an experience of an individual within the group.
3. Individual composition about an individual experience; that is, a child's own record of his experience.
4. Group composition of a story, usually based upon a

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<sup>70</sup>Hardy, First Grade Manual for the Child's Own Way Series, pp. 27-28.

picture that has been shown to them or that a child has brought to school.

5. Individual composition of a story.
6. Verses composed by individuals.
7. "Surprise charts," or those composed by the teacher and posted for the children to read.
8. Group composition in summary of discussions about community life, nature, pets, etc.
9. Group composition to record individual duties and responsibilities of members of the group; for example, "John may look after the books. Helen may take care of the bird," etc.<sup>71</sup>

The following suggestions are helpful in developing an effective technique in the use of charts:

The charts should be left hanging in the room several days after their first appearance. Time should be taken daily to have the charts read and to refer to them whenever the occasion suggests it. The children will be observed reading these charts before school. They will refer to them for words; that is, when they come across a word in their books which puzzles them, they will remember the word in the arrangement of material on the charts and make the transfer themselves. When they are writing compositions, they refer to the charts for the words that they wish to use in compositions and that they remember having read on the charts.

Charts organized by the children of previous years should be brought out from time to time for the children to read when, for example, the material relates to things about which the new group is writing.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid., pp. 30-33.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., pp. 33-34.

One method of chart reading which is often employed to advantage is that of reading from flash cards. This system has definite limitations, however, as a teaching adjunct. There is obvious unreality in the reading situation presented by flash cards, and for this reason the transfer of skills from these cards to books is often far from satisfactory. Hence it is recommended that practice with flash cards, if used at all, be alternated with other practice exercises in connection with genuine, normal reading experiences. The main usefulness of flash cards lies in the opportunity they present for the gradual enlarging of the span of recognition and in the encouragement they offer for taking in larger word-groups as meaningful wholes.

Some educators contend that well-prepared flash cards are necessary to the reading of factual matter, that they tend to increase speed of reading, and that they enable the teacher to discover pupils' difficulties. Even devotees of this system, however, stress the fact that flash cards should not be used too frequently, and that words on the cards should be taken from the oral vocabularies of the children, and should be selected from among the words frequently repeated in the reading matter used by the group.<sup>73</sup>

#### Use of Books

Can any procedure be considered good which deliberately limits children and teachers to poor,

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<sup>73</sup>Patterson, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

silly, badly organized material for school purposes and precludes the use of the sort of books to which children eagerly respond? Surely that procedure is best which not only utilizes but requires, for successful operation, a superior type of reading matter -- superior from the standpoint of the literary, informational, and esthetic values which appeal to childish taste and interests.

Not only does a rigid and narrow system of teaching reading employ thin, disjointed material in the beginning; it also stands for a negation of most of the spontaneous and independent effort of young pupils and of all individual variation in procedure. With perfection of detail and self-assurance which leave little for the individual child to contribute, this wordy, attenuated material is dealt out in portions measured by days, and through much drill of one kind or another, determined by the nature of the method, little pupils are carried along a straight and narrow path.<sup>74</sup>

Survey and experimentation have proved that actually a child whose home environment emphasizes reading is almost certain to make better progress in learning to read than is one from a home where books are scarce or where the interest in reading is negligible.<sup>75</sup>

Early in the first grade, children are permitted to choose from a large variety of pre-primers, picture books, and easy books of various kinds. The teacher is careful to spend a few minutes with each child, sometimes reading to him, sometimes encouraging him to read to her, or they talk about pictures or about the experiences that the child has had. Through his interest and through his ability, the child is encouraged to read. During the first three months there is no sudden break between reading readiness and the

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<sup>74</sup>Moore, op. cit., p. 194.

<sup>75</sup>Hardy, "Reading," Childcraft, IX, 7.

beginning stages of reading. In both stages, the teacher spends the same amount of time with each child. As he begins to read, the child is encouraged and sometimes required to limit his reading activities to pre-primers, but he is usually given a wide choice among these books.<sup>76</sup>

On the reading table in the room should be many books for the children's use, including books which the pupils have been encouraged to bring from home. These books should be available at all times as devices to stimulate the children's interest in reading. The beginner should be introduced to books on his first day in school and every day thereafter. The teacher should constantly encourage the children to bring books to school to show to the group and to be left on the library table in the room for the children to look at. At first, the children will bring the book merely to show a picture that they like. By this means the child's interest in the story that goes with the picture is aroused, and he may either tell it, if he knows it, or ask the teacher to read it. Later in the year, books are brought by the children so that they may read a story to the group themselves. At every opportunity the teacher should refer to books and help the children to realize that books are used as sources of information as well as of pleasure. The teacher should do everything

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<sup>76</sup>DeWitt Boney and Edna Leman, "Individuality in Beginning Reading," Education, LIX (September, 1938), 17.

in her power to encourage the children to use books from the library table. The right kind of help from the teacher can easily cause the children to be interested in every book they see. They will want to know the titles of the books, to see their pictures, and to know something about their contents; and often they will make an effort to find out these things. By all means, there should be a table of books in every room.<sup>77</sup>

Something of the function and use of the library table in the beginning reading class is indicated in the following quotation:

The object of the library table is to furnish children additional opportunity to enjoy books through handling and selecting material that appeals to them. This table should be furnished with easy, carefully selected books not to be used in the recitation periods. There should be a wide range of books, not more than one or two copies of each. Besides the books, there could be pictures with simple stories attached, stories cut from old readers and mounted on heavy cardboard, reading units that have been developed in class, picture books, and little reading booklets made by children of the higher grades.

The children should be allowed to use this material before and after school, and at odd times during the day. Sometimes a small group of children can be sent to the library table to find selections suitable for a special occasion. Whenever individuals or groups wish to read material to the class which they have selected and carefully prepared, they should be allowed to do so. No other check-up of the reading of the library material is advocated. The main object of the library table is accomplished if the children begin to love to browse in books.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup>Hardy, First Grade Manual for the Child's Own Way Series, pp. 34-35.

<sup>78</sup>Pennell and Cusack, op. cit., p. 189.

Practically all teachers of beginning groups in reading have -- and should have -- such a library table as has been described above, from which the children are always free to select a book to "read." This method, most teachers believe, satisfies the child's immediate desire for a book,<sup>79</sup> and gradually leads him into an appreciation of the world of books. "The creating of a reading environment means having books about and giving children an opportunity of handling them and of seeing reading function in ways that are vital to the children."<sup>80</sup> The room library, even in the first grade, answers this demand for the creation of a "reading environment" by providing many "opportunities for daily, independent reading of a book of the child's own choice."<sup>81</sup>

During the first days which the children spend with books it is advisable for the teacher to utilize such procedures as the following:

1. Arrange for a variety of material to be read.
2. See that the lessons are varied and short, not more than fifteen minutes at first.
3. Prepare the children for reading the first two or three stories in the book by telling the sequence of events which occur before the child sees the story, not verbatim but in such a way that the child gets the organization of the story, the characters, and what each says and does; and by discussing the illustrations as the children look at them, using the words of the story.

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<sup>79</sup>Willy, op. cit., p. 6.

<sup>80</sup>Hardy, "Reading," Childcraft, IX, 15. <sup>81</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

4. When reading the story, give the children help at the right time and in the right way. For example, give them help in reading the story by such directions as, "Alice, read the part that tells about the boy going away." "John, the next sentence begins with 'The mother' and tells what she did." "Read what happened by and by" (the sentence began with "by and by"). It is important to teach the child to keep the content of the story in mind and also to give him confidence so that he will not give up or become discouraged. Do not slow up the child's thinking by teaching words first and then expecting him to recognize them and get the relationship of the whole sentence at the same time. Let him keep the content in mind and tie the words to it as best he can. It is easier to develop a vocabulary later than it is to build favorable attitudes after unfavorable ones have been formed.

5. Encourage the child to get words through context during the first part of his book-reading experience.

6. Tell the child words which puzzle him when he is reading orally.

7. Make a note of words and phrases which seem difficult to the child.

8. Have a separate period for a drill on those features which the child remembered as difficult.

9. Let each child read a unit of thought whether it is one sentence or several.

10. Always discourage lip movement and pointing.

11. Always discuss the story briefly after it has been read, with some such remarks as, "That was a good story. It will be pleasant to read that again." There is always the danger of reading one book in a hurried and careless manner in order to get to another. Let the child form the habit of wanting to re-read stories and books.

12. After the first three stories have been read, prepare for the others by telling only the setting and the characters.

13. By the middle of the year or later some children should be able to read individually. There comes a time when the child's eyes travel faster than his ability to enunciate what he reads. This is the time to release the child from oral reading; otherwise his reading will be slowed up.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-28.



Since the ultimate purpose of reading is the intelligent, voluntary use of books, the teacher must strive, at an early period, to develop in the children the following elements, which are essential to an intelligent use of books:

1. Interests which will lead to other interests and about which they will want to read.
2. Experiences which provide meanings and concepts that aid in assimilating what is read.
3. Knowledge of the different kinds of books.
4. Right attitude toward books and reading.
5. Taste in reading.

At the same time that these elements are being developed, reading ability must also be developed. Every teacher should know what is involved in the process of learning to read. It is not enough to think of reading as embracing the pre-primer period, the primer period, and so on. The successful teacher of reading understands what to look for as the child learns to read. Children pass through definite stages, which mark the turning points in the teaching procedure. Recognition of these stages makes teaching scientific and lessens the need for remedial measures later on.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid., p. 7.

## CHAPTER III

### A SPECIFIC METHOD OF TEACHING BEGINNING READING

In this chapter the writer proposes to discuss the method of teaching beginning reading that she has found to be effective in her work with first-grade pupils, especially with those of the Valley View School, Valley View, Texas, where this study was conducted. The school site and the schoolroom environment are discussed as a background for the presentation of techniques and activities in beginning reading.

#### School Site

Valley View, Texas, is a small town located midway between a very rich farming area on one side and a very poor, unproductive section of land on the other. The fact that children from both sections attend the school caused the writer to see at once that, in the first grade, she must meet the needs of children from the upper middle class, the average middle class, and the lower middle class. Before assuming her duties in the school, the writer visited each member of the school board, which was

composed of representative men from various sectors of the school community. From these visits, from attending church services in the community, and from driving throughout the district, she came to the conclusion that this is a typical, busy, rural community, possessing the usual jealousies, gossip, and different philosophies and ideas that are found in all cross-roads neighborhoods of rural America. Each family lives very much to itself, and family members have few visits with neighbors. The fact that most of the rural homes are situated at some distance from each other is a retarding influence upon normal social intercourse.

Most of the boys attended school dressed in overalls, whereas the girls, for the most part, wore print dresses or those made of other inexpensive but serviceable materials. Those from the more prosperous section of the district were naturally better dressed than those from the poorer region. Most of the children, in their first experiences with school situations, were shy, demure, bashful, and timid in social relationships.

The Valley View School, located at the southern part of the town, is a beautiful \$90,000 brick structure of light color, equipped with a tile roof and enhanced with attractive architectural stone work. The school is a beautiful edifice that is adequate for meeting the educational needs of the community. Representing the constituency of

seven consolidated schools, the patrons of the school, though coming from various social, economic, and educational environments, are united for the attainment of one common good -- the education of the children.

Hardwood floors are present throughout the building, with the exception of the halls, which have marble floors. A large, well-equipped auditorium constitutes an outstanding asset to the educational program of the school, and is a boon to the community at large. A beautiful stone wall encloses the entire school campus, and well-placed shrubs make a lovely landscape along one of the most-traveled highways from Mexico City to Canada. Immediately back of the school runs a main line of the Santa Fe Railway, extending from Fort Worth to Chicago, to meet the shipping, commercial, and transportation needs of the great Southwest.

#### Schoolroom Environment

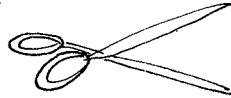
For a week before school began, the writer spent much time in her schoolroom and, with the assistance of the school janitors, carefully arranged a home-like environment to encourage a desirable attitude on the part of each child and to cause him to love school from the first minute he saw his schoolroom. The windows were washed, draperies were installed, the floors were waxed, and excess furniture was removed to provide ample room for freedom of movement. For the opening of school, goldfish bowls filled with

flowers were placed on three large tables in different parts of the room. New blocks of lumber were provided for use in construction activities. Modeling clay was made available, and jumping ropes, balls, jacks, dominoes, and other play equipment were placed here and there in the room to invite social and play activities. A huge library table was placed at one end of the room, abundantly supplied with picture books for the stimulation of interest in and conversation about boats, trains, animals, houses, airplanes, people, and many other things depicted in the picture books. Huge bright-colored pictures of trains, airplanes, boats, flowers, animals, people, and birds were fastened upon the back wall with library tape to give color and additional interest to the room. Bulletin boards were artistically arranged, showing colored pictures of interest to children, with such things depicted as train rides, airplane rides, and bus rides. A large picture of a train with boys and girls getting on it was the center of interest on a large bulletin board. Upon his arrival at school, each child was given a bright-colored balloon and a red pencil, through the courtesy of a local merchant. Before the children arrived, the balloons had been inflated and arranged in a colorful display in one corner of the room, where they at once received the delighted interest of the children as they entered the room.

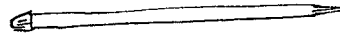
The blackboard was arranged in colorful, artistic drawings of scenes and landscapes showing animals, flowers, children, and other items of interest. A colored-chalk border of autumn leaves lent additional color to the blackboard.

Supplies which the children were requested to bring to school were listed on the blackboard as follows:

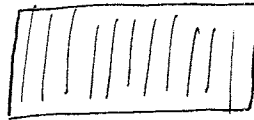
1 pair of scissors



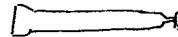
1 pencil



1 large tablet



1 tube of paste



1 ball



1 jumping rope



1 rag rug



The morning school opened, the writer was fortunate in having enlisted the assistance of one of the mothers, who acted as secretary to record all of the data about

each child which were needed for the register. Her help permitted the teacher to have freedom for meeting and visiting with the parents, the children, and visitors who came.

On the second day of school, the first-grade pupils, at the invitation of the teacher, took their balls, jumping ropes, and other play equipment and went into the auditorium, where they spent the morning learning to listen to the piano and learning to skip, run, hop, jump, walk, and gallop to the music. Discovering that the children had no background for participation in these activities, the teacher decided to begin at the kindergarten level in these respects. The new organization of the kindergarten provides for sound physical, intellectual, and emotional growth for every pupil. In order to insure that these phases of growth should proceed concurrently -- as they naturally should -- materials were provided which brought about their desired growth in these respects. To think of a kindergarten is to think of a "child's garden." The kindergarten implants in body, mind, and spirit the seeds of health, happiness, harmony, imagination, ingenuity, and friendliness. In order to bring about correct physical habits and to aid in the intellectual, social, and emotional growth of the children, the writer developed a first-grade program which allowed for and encouraged a proper balance of

active and sedentary occupations and activities. The first period in the day was devoted to free rhythmical expression, then a work period was given over to individual efforts with a free choice of activities and materials. However, only those materials were provided which were educational and which allowed for a maximum growth along all lines. Through wise guidance and the use of suitable materials, idle curiosity was changed into observation, concentration, industry, manual skill, and artistic sense.

The writer provided a reading corner, where the book-loving child could be found the first thing every morning and at every other available time. This corner, as interests grew, became totally inadequate to accommodate the children who gathered there at every opportunity. The corner was made as attractive as possible with books, pictures, and flowers. The purpose of the corner was, of course, to encourage the development of an interest in books and pictures -- an interest which is recognized as a direct and essential preparation for the reading that is to come later in the first grade.

Among the books found on the reading table in the book corner were the following: The Story of a Pumpkin, The Snow Man, Hallowe'en Fun, The Little Fir Tree, A First Grade Bunny, Send in the Alarm, Bobby and Jane at the Park, A Day with Old Joe, A Valentine Surprise, and Three Guesses, all



written by Louise Kruger and Arensa Snodergrand and published by the Gazette Press, Yonkers, New York. Among the animal books which proved most popular were the following by Edith Osswald: My Dog Laddie, Biddy and the Ducks, Frisky the Goat, Little White Rabbit, Peanuts the Pony, Hundreds of Turkeys, Fuzzytail, Sniff, Pets and Friends, The Pet Club, On Charlie Clark's Farm, Our Town and City Animals, and Paths to Conservation. Miscellaneous books which were favorites included Fun for Tom and Jip, Dick and Jane, Here and There, Sally and Billy in Autumn, Sally and Billy in Spring, Toots, The Terry Book, Valentine Day, Ride and Slide, Happy Days, and Easter Time.

From the beginning, the first-grade children were encouraged to handle and look at the books available in the reading corner. Since all of these books were attractively illustrated, many were the exclamations of delight which came from the children as they turned the pages and hurried to show each other what they had discovered. Later, when they could read the text which accompanied the pictures, the books became invaluable to them, and supplied the motivation for many interesting and worthwhile discussions. Every day each child was allowed some time to spend in the book corner, and at other times the children were encouraged to go to the library table for books and to bring them back to their seats. On these occasions the teacher supervised

the seatwork, passing freely among the pupils to give help wherever it was needed or requested. Many composition and chart-reading experiences grew out of the pupils' examination of the books in the room. Almost every picture suggested a story to one or more of the children, who were encouraged to relate their interpretation of the picture. The reading corner with its supply of attractive books provided a natural setting for the development of reading readiness among these first-grade pupils.

Still another means was used to give the children initial reading experiences. Various objects in the room were, at different times, labeled with cardboard strips on which the names of the articles had been printed. Also, the children's names were placed on their lockers. These procedures developed within the children a consciousness of a relationship between objects and their printed symbols. In their questions about the labels, the children opened ways for the teacher to satisfy their curiosity and to motivate their further interest.

#### The Child

By means of careful observation in rhythmical classes, especially relating to abilities in listening, walking, hopping, skipping, and galloping, the teacher was enabled to develop such objectives as joy in response, the ability to listen, motor skills, muscular-coordination patterns,

coordination of body and mind, and the ability to appreciate. Guiding principles utilized in the attainment of these objectives included the following:

1. Know the group. Start with what they have. Help children to learn to listen. Play music several times with quiet listening by the group. Then let the children clap, shake hands, or tap feet before they suggest a way of playing to the music.

2. Accept children's interpretations. Commend the best responses. Do not label responses as right or wrong.

3. Watch reactions. Note joy in responses.

4. Use short periods, repeated often.

5. Know your music so that you may watch the children as you play.

6. Know possibilities in music and their use in developing appreciations in the child.

After three fourths of the children had mastered listening, walking, running, hopping, skipping, and galloping to music, through such procedures as those suggested by Shafer and Mosher,<sup>1</sup> experiences in reading were concentrated upon. Such simple charts as the following grew out of the child's concrete experiences:

Good morning, boys.  
Good morning, girls.  
We will go to the auditorium today.

---

<sup>1</sup>Mary S. Shafer and Mary Morgan Mosher, Rhythms for Children.

At first, the chart would be one among several visible in the room. The teacher would relate the message and encourage the children to point out the chart on which the statements occurred. In the beginning, of course, much guessing occurred before the children were able to discover the correct chart. The children were particularly happy when the above chart was read to them, for to go to the auditorium was the joy of the day, because there they had action, fun, laughter, and group experiences that called for outstanding and pleasant individual and cooperative activity. Out of these experiences grew the following charts, which were composed by the children and printed by the teacher:

#### At School

We walk at school.  
 We run at school.  
 We skip at school.  
 We hop at school.  
 We gallop at school.

Many charts were made to relate action for certain children, such as the following:

Mary, skip to me.  
 Mary, skip to John.  
 Run, run, run, Jack.  
 Hop, hop, hop, Cue.  
 Walk, walk, walk, Sarah.

Through the repetition of such experiences for two or three weeks, with music and phrase cards, much speed was

gained in the introductory steps to beginning reading.

One day the first-grade group had a picnic on the school campus. No special preparation was necessary, as each child brought his own lunch until renovations could be completed in the school cafeteria and it could be opened for business. The following chart was an outcome of the picnic experience:

#### Our Picnic

We had a picnic.  
We brought our lunches.  
We ate under a tree.  
We had milk and cookies.  
We played games.  
We had fun.

Some specific excursion or experience was created each week, whose purpose was to present directly or indirectly some new interest in reading. The children found these experiences to be "fun" and "easy," and they looked forward to them with keen anticipations of pleasure. The teacher was always careful to give praise for every effort that each child put forth in these experiences and activities. Each drawing that the child made at any time in any unit of work was held up before the class while the teacher pointed out some commendable point. Ways of improvement were often tactfully suggested by teacher and pupils. Every occasion on which the child was successful or made a commendable effort in reading experiences elicited a word of encouragement or an expression of praise.

## Activities

Hallowe'en unit. -- One day in the autumn a boy in the class brought a pumpkin to school. It was a round one, and some of the children immediately saw its possibilities as a jack-o'-lantern. The group set to work to prepare the pumpkin and to make it into a jack-o'-lantern. Out of the wish expressed by one of the children that "Mother might see our jack-o'-lantern," grew the idea of inviting all of the mothers to see it. Someone suggested that some of the mothers might be disappointed if they came to school and found nothing but a jack-o'-lantern; so ideas came readily for additional entertainment that might be provided for the mothers. Since Hallowe'en was several days in the future, the children decided to have a "regular" Hallowe'en program. Some of the activities engaged in were the following:

1. Planning and making costumes of witches, owls, cats, and pumpkins.
2. Bringing pictures from home relating to Hallowe'en and to jack-o'-lanterns. Planning to invite the mothers.
3. Deciding the kinds of decorations that should be used in the room, and making them: flowers, paper, etc.
4. Making a booklet telling about the activity.
5. Dictating sentences for the booklet.
6. Learning to read the booklet.
7. Hearing poems and stories read by the teacher.

8. Discussing how to invite guests, how to receive them, how to make guests enjoy themselves and be comfortable, etc.

The reading experiences related to this activity included the following:

1. Reading chart stories and riddles composed by the group.
2. Reading phrases and words as drill measures.
3. Composing complete sentences for the charts.
4. Reading the booklets after making them.
5. Reading directions for related independent activities.
6. Reading sentences offered by the teacher interpreting related pictures brought to school or found in the books at school.

Among the valuable outcomes of these reading activities were the following:

1. Development of a growing interest in reading.
2. Mastery of words and phrases.
3. Increase of individual vocabulary.
4. Increased ability to use books.
5. Gain in ability to read the calendar (derived from checking on how many days until Hallowe'en, planning on the date for the entertainment, etc.).
6. Gain in ability to make complete sentences.

7. Gain in ability to recognize a complete sentence.

A number of reading charts grew out of the activities connected with this Hallowe'en project, a few of which are reproduced here:

#### How We Made a Jack-o'-Lantern

1. We got a big round pumpkin.
2. We got a big knife.
3. We got a little knife.
4. We got a big spoon.
5. We cut off the top of the pumpkin.
6. We took out the seeds.
7. We cut out the eyes.
8. We cut out the nose.
9. We cut out the mouth.
10. Then we put a light in the pumpkin.

#### A Story

Malcolm got a round pumpkin.  
 We made a Jack-o'-Lantern.  
 We made his funny eyes.  
 We made his funny nose.  
 We made his funny mouth.  
 We put him in the window.  
 We think he is funny.

#### Riddles

I am big.  
 I am yellow.  
 I grew on a vine.  
 I am going to be a Jack-o'-Lantern.  
 What am I?

I am big and yellow.  
 I have two eyes.  
 I have one nose.  
 I have one big mouth.  
 I am for Hallowe'en.  
 What am I?



In connection with the activity, the children studied how pumpkins go through the process of growth and thus carried out an interesting and worthwhile phase of nature study. They made a booklet entitled "The Jack-o'-Lantern" in which they recounted what they had learned about the growth of pumpkins. The text of this booklet is given below:

## Page 1

I am a seed.  
I am a big seed.  
I am a white seed.  
I am a pumpkin seed.

## Page 2

I am a vine.  
I am a green vine.  
I am a pumpkin vine.  
I was a seed.  
I was a big seed.  
I was a white seed.  
I was a pumpkin seed.  
I was planted.  
I grew and grew.  
Now I am a pumpkin vine.

## Page 3

I am a flower.  
I am a big flower.  
I am a yellow flower.  
I am a pumpkin flower.  
I was a pumpkin seed.  
I was planted.  
I grew and grew.  
Then I was a pumpkin vine.  
Now I am a pumpkin flower.

## Page 4

I am a big yellow pumpkin.  
I was a big white seed.  
Then I was a green vine.  
Then I was a yellow flower.  
Now I am a yellow pumpkin.

I am a Jack-o'-Lantern.  
The children made me.  
I have two big eyes.  
I have one big nose.  
I have one big mouth.  
I was a white seed.  
Then I was a green vine.  
Then I was a yellow flower.  
Then I was a yellow pumpkin.  
Now I am a Jack-o'-Lantern.

Train unit. -- Outside the schoolroom windows passed many trains on the Santa Fe Railroad. Passenger, freight, streamlined, wrecked, troop, mechanized, and oil trains were called to the children's attention. Questioning revealed the fact that few of the children had ever ridden on a train. An inventory of the pre-primers and primers available to the group led to the discovery that these books contained stories about trains which held no meaning for the children because of their lack of experience in connection with trains. The group eagerly adopted the idea of paying careful attention to all of the trains they saw, and they even worked out a plan, with the teacher's assistance, of playing train in their rhythm work. A natural outgrowth of this interest was the suggestion that the group make a train in the room. The pupils cooperated in building a train from chairs and boxes, and participated in the selection of a conductor, an engineer, and a brakeman; whereas the remainder of the class constituted the passengers. Later came the most thrilling experience of all. Through

the courtesy of the Santa Fe Railroad, the class was given a ride to the city of Gainesville, Texas, a distance of about fourteen miles. Before the group found their seats at the beginning of the trip, they walked through the observation, dining, Pullman, and chair cars. Upon their arrival in Gainesville, they were met by a welcoming committee from the Chamber of Commerce and also by some of the school busses from Valley View, which provided transportation over the city. The children were shown through the railroad station, the turntable, and the welding shop, thus gaining much first-hand information about trains and railroads. From this point, they visited a fire station, and each detail of equipment and of fire-fighting procedure was explained to the children. From here they went to the city park for their lunch, drove over the city for awhile, inspected several other places of interest, and then went back to Valley View on the school busses. This train excursion was the culminating activity of the unit on trains, out of which developed a number of reading charts, two of which are included at this point:

#### Our Trip

We had a train trip.  
Our mothers went with us.  
We saw the conductor.  
We saw the engineer.  
We liked the train ride.

### The Fire Engine

We saw the fire engine.  
 It was big and red.  
 It had hose and ladders on it.  
 It could run fast.  
 It made a loud noise.  
 We saw it run fast.

The zoo and the circus unit. -- Shortly after the train trip, the first-grade group went to the Fort Worth zoo by bus in order to gain as many wide and varied experiences as possible before weather conditions made it impossible to travel. The group was shown through the zoo by the keeper, who provided the children with interesting information about each of the animals, its habits, and its food.

Interest in animals was aroused to such an extent that the class decided to have a circus in the first-grade room. Many reading charts were developed throughout the course of the unit, one of the earliest and most detailed being in connection with plans for the circus:

### At the Circus

We will have a band.  
 We will have three clowns.  
 We will have four elephants.  
 We will have three dogs.  
 We will have three ponies.  
 We will have two seals.  
 We will have two acrobats.  
 We will have a ring master.  
 We will have an animal trainer.  
 We will have two bears.  
 We will have one ticket man.  
 We will have a balloon man.  
 Two people will sell peanuts.

Much creative work was done in art and construction activities. Drawings based upon the trip to the zoo were made and arranged in the form of a frieze around the room. An evidence of the detailed planning that was done in preparation for the circus is present in the following chart, entitled "Things We Need for Our Circus":

The clowns will need suits and hats.  
The children in the band will need hats.  
The elephants will need boxes.  
The dogs will need collars, caps, and a box.  
The bears will need poles.

Construction work involved in the circus unit offered opportunities for initiative in such activities as the making of a ticket window, boxes for the elephants to stand on, pom-poms for the ponies, dog collars, a ring-master's hat, boxes for peanuts and popcorn, money and tickets, and band hats. Creative expression in art involved making pictures of animals, modeling animals of clay, and making animals of paper, cloth, and wood. Reading activities included the compilation and reading of sentences and names under circus pictures; of charts, riddles, and original poems; of signs and posters; of announcements printed on the board by the teacher; and the reading of special stories in readers.

At Christmas time the class was able to present a musical pantomime of circus animals as their contribution

to the all-school Christmas program presented before the entire student body and many visitors. In this program the pupils gave evidence of growth and efficiency in reading, skills, habits, and attitudes that had evolved out of the natural procedures of the classroom situations; and it was not necessary for them to engage in intensive practice for the occasion, as is usually the case when a group of children prepare for a special program.

Valentine unit. -- During the Valentine season the first-grade class had a very gay party, to which they invited their mothers and small children who were to enter school the next year. Phases of activity which were engaged in included the following: making Valentines; making envelopes; addressing Valentines; making postage stamps; making a room directory; having a visit by a postman; playing postman; visiting the mailbox; collecting pictures for Valentines; making booklets, charts, and poems; having a party; inviting mothers and smaller children; reading charts, booklets, and poems; making heart-shaped cookies; playing heart and puzzle games; learning the duties of hosts and hostesses; visiting a Valentine store; delivering Valentines to the kindergarten; playing postman to sick children; and visiting homes, ringing the doorbell, and leaving Valentines.

A few of the charts that developed out of the activity are reproduced below:

This is \_\_\_\_\_.  
 She has a Valentine.  
 It is for her mother.  
 It says, "I love you."

Please come to our party  
 on Valentine's Day, Tuesday,  
 Feb. 14, at 1:00 o'clock.  
 Low First Grade

We will have a party.  
 It will be a Valentine party.  
 Our mothers will come.  
 We will have fun.

We will read.  
 We will sing.  
 We will dance.  
 We will give Valentines.  
 We will be happy.

This is (day).  
 This is (date).  
 This is (kind of day).  
 10 days till our party.

I am round.  
 I am little.  
 I am good to eat.  
 You made me.  
 What am I?  
 A cookie.

You made me.  
 You sent me to your friend.  
 I say, "I love you."  
 What am I?  
 A Valentine.

I am little.  
 I go through the mail.  
 I am a Valentine.

The postman visited us today.  
 We saw his bag.  
 We saw his letters.  
 We saw his cap.  
 We saw his keys.

#### Cookies

1  $\cup$  of butter.  
 2  $\cup\cup$  of sugar.  
 3  $\cup\cup\cup$  of flour.  
 1 ounce of cinnamon.  
 1  $\infty$  nutmeg.  
 2  $\cup\cup$  eggs.

Mix, roll, and cut in  
 heart shapes.

Post office unit. -- In connection with the Valentine unit, a post office unit was carried on by the first-grade children. They visited the local post office, where they witnessed such procedures as the mailing of letters, the canceling of stamps, the sorting of mail, and the distribution of mail into the post-office boxes. On the same trip they gained information as to the kinds of stamps used in mailing letters and parcels in this country, the various services provided by the United States mail service in addition to the transportation and delivery of mail (money orders, postal savings service, C. O. D. service, special delivery, general delivery, registry, insurance, etc.), A trip to the railroad station gave the children information as to how efficiently and expertly the mail is handled on the train.

For their classroom the pupils wanted to construct a post office of their own. Orange crates and miscellaneous



boxes were used in building the enclosure for the post office. Small, uniform-sized boxes were obtained for post-boxes, each being labeled with the name of a child in the group. Signs were made to designate slots for air mail, special delivery, local mail, and out-of-town mail. Special windows, designated by signs, provided stamp, parcel-post, and general-delivery service. Postmen were selected and given definite delivery routes throughout the room and in other parts of the school building, for other grades in the school were invited to participate in the post office project. Additional thrills were provided when the children brought real letters from home or when townspeople came to mail letters at the school post office. At these times, a special committee of postmen was selected to carry the mail to the local post office for cancellation and mailing. The children wrote and mailed letters and notes to each other, in addition to the Valentines, which were distributed for several days because of the widespread interest in the post office project.

Many worthwhile experiences in reading and writing were had in connection with this unit. So interesting and educational was the project that the children were reluctant to demolish their post office to make room for something else which demanded the floor space.

Vacation activities. -- Near the close of the school

year the children became interested in what they would do during the long summer vacation. The children adopted various suggestions offered by pupils in the group, among which were the following:

1. Growing and caring for a vegetable and flower garden, keeping a record of the kinds of products, making drawings of flowers and vegetables, writing stories about how the vegetables and flowers grew, etc.

2. Since many of the children were interested in pets, the suggestion was made that each child, during the summer, make a scrapbook containing snapshots of his pets and little stories about them.

3. Several children, who were interested in birds, decided to make individual scrapbooks containing pictures of the birds seen during their summer vacation. Under each picture was to be a note of interest about the bird shown.

4. The children all decided to keep a diary during their summer vacation, consisting of records of interesting trips, exciting incidents in the home, play activities, the books read or looked at, activities at the farm, life in camp, etc.

With such a plan as this outlined for the summer vacation, these children should return to school in September with a wealth of interesting material and with a new enthusiasm for reading and for sharing experiences with others.

## CHAPTER IV

### SELECTED CASE STUDIES THAT POINT OUT TYPICAL PROBLEMS IN BEGINNING READING AND THEIR SOLUTION BY MEANS OF THE METHOD UNDER CONSIDERATION

#### Introduction

At the beginning of the school year the pupils who cooperated in this study were given the "Park-Franzen Test of Readiness of Pupils to Do First Grade Work" (mimeographed). Later, near the close of the year's work, they were given the Harlow Achievement Tests for First Grade. The purpose which motivated the submission of these tests was the desire to have at hand some data as to the children's ability to accomplish the work that would be required of them in the first grade and their degree of attainment during the year's work. Special interest, of course, centered upon the pupils' readiness to do satisfactory work in reading.

The present chapter consists of a series of case studies which present data relating to the family background of the children, to the children's personal traits and habits, and to their reading problems in the first grade.

Scores on the two tests mentioned above will be mentioned in each instance.

#### Pupil A

This first-grade boy was a member of a family of six persons, including the parents, two older brothers both of whom were sergeants in the United States Army, a younger brother, and the child in the study. The father was a farmer, and the mother had formerly been, for a number of years, a school teacher. She was able to give valuable assistance to Pupil A by giving him instruction which was supplementary to that which he received in the schoolroom.

This child, for his age, was alert, capable, rhythmical, dependable, and possessed of a wide range of interests. He readily developed into an excellent reader, and had pronounced artistic tastes and abilities. His social environment and family background were somewhat above the average for the community being studied, in so far as their exertion of wholesome influence was concerned. Before his birth the family had lived in Kansas, and the boy himself had, with his family, resided in California, Arkansas, and New Mexico before coming to Texas. He had visited the Carlsbad Caverns, and he often entertained the class with his accounts of what he had seen there.

At the beginning of his school experience, he was extremely shy and reserved and held himself aloof from his

companions; but he readily became adjusted to the school situation and exhibited self-reliance in practically all activities. He soon developed effective learning habits, a good vocabulary, and readiness to learn; and he was capable of carrying on excellent conversation.

For the first month his progress in reading and in all of his school work was extremely slow. He seemed to possess no initiative whatever, although he was able to make a score of twenty-three on the Park-Franzen test and, at the end of year, a score of 135 on the Harlow test. All this time, at the beginning of the year, he was more interested in the children and in what they might be doing than in listening to the teacher or in participating in what might be going on in the group. In these early weeks the thing that appealed to him most was the work in rhythms, of which he was very fond and in which he showed exceptional capability.

Through encouragement on the part of the teacher and of some of the other pupils, he soon became conscious of the fact that it was pleasant to participate in group activities and to carry his share of the responsibility. The spirit of group work presented a challenge to him, and he put forth an honest effort to do his part in the co-operative undertakings of the class.

He became so enthusiastic over his progress that he

could not be given enough personal attention and help to satisfy him. Each day was a day of new challenges and of new opportunities to do something interesting and worthwhile. Frequently, after school, as he waited for the bus, he insisted that the teacher listen as he tried to read a story and that she help him to improve his ability. These informal conferences were very profitable to him, and he rapidly developed self-assurance, poise, and ability. Almost every day he carried one or more books from the class library to read to his family at night. At home his mother helped him in much the same way as his teacher did at school. Realizing that he possessed inherent dramatic ability, the teacher, in their afternoon conferences, often read him stories with as much expression and dramatic effect as she could produce, and was happy to note that her efforts carried over into the child's oral reading and caused his dramatic abilities to become more pronounced.

When the class held its Valentine party, Pupil A was able to read aloud, with great effectiveness, a very difficult part in a story. By the close of the school term he could print a fifty-word letter or story independently, and his production was invariably artistic and correctly spelled. By this time he had a working vocabulary of at least 250 words and had read fifty easy books. He was no longer a problem in so far as reading was concerned. Or

perhaps it should be said that the nature of his problem had changed: now the difficulty became one of preventing him from reading too much.

This child's inherent ability and his eagerness to learn thoroughly all that there was to know about the things with which he came in contact, brought him success in reading as soon as he had become adjusted to the school situation.

#### Pupil B

This boy, who made a score of nineteen on the Park-Franzen test and of 109 on the Harlow test, came from a family which consisted of the parents and one other child. The father was a successful farmer who had been able to attain a secure financial status for his family. The only blight upon the happiness of the home was that frequent illness of the mother produced suffering and disrupted the regular routine of affairs.

This child, who had a rather nervous disposition, was a young chatterbox who was intelligent and enthusiastic about many things. In addition to possessing a wide range of interests, Pupil B had had extensive travel experiences, among which were California, Tennessee, and various distant points in Texas.

He was impatient to show more progress than his ability permitted, and he sometimes went at tasks so impetuously

that he was forced to realize, with pangs of disappointment, that he did not actually know how to do the thing that he was attempting -- he simply had not taken time to find out how to go about it. Since he was the only child in the family -- his brother being in the middle teens -- Pupil B was somewhat spoiled and believed that he should be accorded undivided attention every time he demanded it, which was indeed frequently. In very shrill tones of voice he would exclaim and protest in an effort to gain this attention. He was socially maladjusted, dominating and dictatorial, and he was not readily accepted by the group of children at school, who did not like his non-cooperative, selfish attitude and behavior. At home he was unruly and disobedient, and did not "mind" at all unless he happened to feel in the mood to do so.

In reading he was, for the first four months of school, an utter failure and, in the words of the teacher, "positively did nothing." Individual help from the teacher and group effort on the part of his classmates were to no avail; he remained obstinately unresponsive and seemed reluctant even to make an effort to read for fear that he might by accident be able to do so. However, just before Christmas, when the children all about him were reading aloud their simple little Christmas stories and appeared so happy in their ability to read, his attitude suddenly changed as though he had abruptly awakened to the realization that he



had been missing something worthwhile. One day he astounded the teacher by asking her for the first time for an audience for oral reading. With mingled feelings of pleasure and apprehension, she readily agreed and listened attentively as he faltered through a simple story which his classmates had learned to read effectively months before. She helped him with his difficulties and offered encouragement. In succeeding weeks Pupil B asked for many reading audiences, and at every available opportunity asked his classmates to listen as he read to them informally in small groups during free periods, recesses, and after school. He welcomed their suggestions for the improvement of his ability and became more cooperative in group efforts. At home, he also asked for and received help.

Now that he had become conscious of a desire to want to learn to read, time seemed to take care of his difficulties. He brought to school many interesting objects and told his travel experiences. Because of a striking change in his general attitude, he was now accepted by the group and invited to participate in group activities. On the occasion of his seventh birthday, his mother came to school with an elaborate birthday party planned, on which no expense had been spared. The class derived much joy from the occasion and accepted it most graciously.

Largely through his own stubborn efforts, rather

tardily awakened, together with help and encouragement from the teacher, from his school fellows, and from his family, Pupil B had, by the time he passed on into the second grade, attained a reading ability that was practically average.

#### Pupil C

With a Park-Franzen score of twenty and a Harlow score of 122, this boy was a member of a farm family of four persons, including, besides himself, his parents and a year-old brother. The father and mother, who were of German descent, were highly intelligent and capable, and the boy seemed to have inherited these traits. He was capable, dependable, and artistic. Although for his age he was small in physical stature and very young in his mannerisms, he had acquired the habit of smoking, which was rather inconsistent with his other habits, which were babyish and immature.

At first he was very slow in learning to read. By a planned program of casual coaxing and of frequent encouragement, the teacher was enabled to lead him slowly forward in progress. Long after Christmas he was still far behind what he should have been in reading ability. A series of conferences with the boy's mother resulted in a cooperative effort between the school and the home and cleared up a number of problems relating to the child's difficulties in

school, the solution to which helped the teacher to understand the situation and to reconstruct her procedures and techniques to suit the peculiarities of the individual pupil. With methods adapted to his needs, he was able to show much more rapid progress than had previously been possible, not only in reading but in every phase of his work in the school. By the end of the school year Pupil C was doing satisfactory work in reading and seemed to be on the road to greater improvement.

#### Pupil D

The first-grade boy known in this study as Pupil D was a member of a family of four individuals, including the parents and a four-year-old brother. Pupil D made a score of twenty-five on the Park-Franzen test and of 135 on the Harlow test. His family was a substantial, happy one. The father operated a farm. The boy was artistic in temperament and ability; he was dependable, alert, capable, independent, and neat. He had a keen rhythmical sense, and it was through this approach that he was most effectively reached at first. His mother was an understanding, appreciative woman who was grateful for every effort made by the teacher and by the school for the welfare of her son. His mother, however, was exceedingly nervous and irritable at times, and had never permitted the boy to play in the typical loud, boyish way; instead, he had had to be quiet at all

times and had never been able to enjoy the companionship of playmates as he would have wished to do, because of the noise they made and the irritation they caused his mother. This situation caused him to be shy, timid, and bashful.

His timidity was reflected in his school work, for it was only after months of constant encouragement and effort on the part of the teacher that he ever allowed himself to speak above a whisper or to participate orally in the class work without a shy, timid blush or whisper. Finally the child, after much encouragement and praise from the teacher and from his fellows, was able to participate more freely in the work of the group and to carry his portion of the group responsibility in activity and project enterprises. After his first real experience with a feeling of success in what he had done, he showed rapid improvement and became capable and alert. For a child of his age, he possessed unusual dramatic ability and was invited frequently to read aloud before groups of pupils in other classrooms. This he did with commendable poise and with vivid expression. He became deeply interested in reading, and became efficient in this activity to a degree above the average. His sense of achievement enabled him to overcome his timidity, and he developed considerable versatility and initiative in most of the group activities. Even his mother, in a series of conferences with the teacher, was given a new perspective on her attitude, and she discovered that greater

freedom and independence on the part of her son did not increase her nervousness or cause her any discomfort whatsoever, as she had long feared and imagined would be the case. The mother was most appreciative of all that had been done for the boy, and of the new concepts which she had herself gained.

#### Pupil E

Pupil E made a score of twenty on the Park-Franzen test and of 135 on the Harlow test. His father was a farmer, a school-bus driver, and a janitor at the school. His mother was an officer in the parent-teacher association of the school, and was also active in church work. There was one other child in the family, a girl four years of age.

Pupil E had had an appendectomy at the age of four, and had always had a rather delicate constitution. Except for nervousness, however, he appeared to have fairly good health throughout his first year in school. Brilliant, capable, and ambitious, he possessed a wide range of interests. He had traveled to a number of cities in north and central Texas, and has been as far away as Atlanta, Georgia.

He had an unusually well-developed speaking vocabulary, and was impatient to speed ahead of his class in every phase of the work. To excel was his dominant motive, but for a time his childish, pettish attitude often defeated his own purpose. Not until he had been helped to see that

his attitude was an undesirable one did he show much progress. Then his advancement was little short of phenomenal. By leaps and bounds he became highly proficient in reading and in his other fields of study. He constantly added new words to his vocabulary and became efficient in their use in speech situations. He developed a high degree of self-reliance. He frequently read aloud from the Bible at Sunday school and church, and did so with understanding and vividness of expression.

The deepest concern of the teacher was to develop his physical ability so that it would balance with his mental capacity. He was given special physical attention, and was provided with periods for rest and relaxation; care was constantly taken to see that he avoided over-exertion.

Reading became a very valuable source of information, even to his young mind, and was highly appropriate as a leisure-time activity in keeping with his physical condition. He read an average of two books a week.

He was definitely a gifted child, and his parents were appreciative of the teacher's efforts to challenge his unusual abilities and to care for his physical needs. The teacher cooperated with the home in providing for him a multitude of outside interests to safeguard him from social maladjustment.

## Pupil F

In a family consisting of the parents and two girls and two boys, Pupil F was the youngest. Having made a score of twenty-eight on the Park-Franzen test and of 135 on the Harlow test, he was found to possess approximately third-grade ability by the end of his first year's work in school. He was intelligent, capable, and artistic, and was a good citizen in the school. He was cheerful, alert, affectionate, and did unusually fine work in arithmetic. He was an outstanding child who possessed a pleasant and attractive personality.

Books of third-grade level were easily at his command by the end of his first year. Dominoes and "forty-two" were his prize hobbies, at which he spent much of his spare time. He played often with adults and frequently made higher scores in the game than they. He was proud of his six sets of dominoes, and on long rainy days he was a patient and constant instructor in the game for the other children. Even in the afternoons while waiting for the school bus to come, he always had around him a group of children who were absorbed in dominoes and "forty-two."

Following the initial stage of learning to read, he had had command of reading almost from the beginning. Although he never experienced much difficulty in learning to read, individual lessons in phonics helped him to become

more independent. The most difficult material in the social-studies work of the class was always given to him to read and to report on to the group, since he was the only one who could read it with any degree of competence. At the end of the school year he was double-promoted to the third grade, with every indication that he would be wholly at home there. The Gates Reading Test and Thorndike's Vocabulary Test assisted greatly in placing him at his own level of ability.

#### Pupil G

Pupil G made a score of nineteen on the Park-Franzen test and of ninety-six on the Harlow test. He was the son of a tenant farmer, and came from a family which consisted of the parents, himself, and a brother nine years old. The family was congenial, and possessed ample means for a simple but comfortable standard of living. He was capable and artistic. Shy in the schoolroom, he was a bully on the school yard. He was the idol of the boys of his class because of his ability as a boxer and fighter and because of his splendid physique. He was easily controlled in group situations, despite his tendency to be overbearing.

He had a wide range of interests on the farm, and voluntarily shared these interests with the members of the group. He was pugnacious, sly, clever, teasing, and tormenting.



With a slow process of help and encouragement from the teacher he gained self-confidence and became more adjusted to the social group of which he was a member in the school. He even began to show signs of overcoming the effects of a serious "mother complex" brought about by a constant manifestation of solicitude on the part of his mother. In the first grade he never became more than a fair reader, although he seemed to be interested in reading. He was naturally lazy, though, and his interest lay in people and in things rather than in books.

#### Pupil H

This member of a farm family was one of three children, all boys. He was artistic, capable, dependable, alert, and rhythmical. An excellent reader, he made a score of twenty-five on the Park-Franzen test and of 135 on the Harlow test. Even before he entered school, he had mastered the beginnings of reading. In fact, six books of pre-primer level were at his command when he enrolled in the first grade. He was a gifted child who had to have outside interests to consume his surplus time and energy. He possessed an exceptionally high intelligence, and precautions had to be exercised to prevent his going too far beyond his group's level of accomplishment. When, about mid-term in the school year, he moved with his family to a neighboring

city, he was immediately enrolled in the second grade.

#### Pupil I

Pupil I was a member of a family of seven persons. Her father was a farmer. Her score on the Park-Franzen test was twenty; on the Harlow test, eighty-six. Although she had a lovely personality, she was far more interested in motor skills than in mental pursuits. She was slow, artistic, and lazy. Her proficiency in motor activities excelled the average for the group. Her ability to jump a rope, to play jacks and various kinds of ball, to do clay modeling, to use crayolas and scissors, and to go through various types of bodily manipulations was excellent indeed, and showed complete physical coordination. She could cook, sew, and keep her room clean and beautiful; she derived great pleasure from being hostess and in entertaining others.

Throughout her stay in the first grade, she remained somewhat indifferent toward reading; she was slow and seemed not to be at all interested. She was a good conversationalist, however, and often visited in the homes of her friends and had them in her home. She went through the various reading stages with only a mediocre grasp of what was going on in the class. The teacher worked with her constantly in an effort to awaken her interest and to challenge her enthusiasm; but little change was noted. Pupil I

had to do much repetitive work in order to gain a basic foundation in reading which would enable her to keep up with even the average reading achievement of her group.

#### Pupil J

This first-grade girl was a twin to Pupil K, and was a member of a family of eight. Her father was a day laborer on the Works Progress Administration program, and the family was a charity case characterized by poverty and malnutrition. This pupil made a score of sixteen on the Park-Franzen test and of 104 on the Harlow test.

Although the girl was lovable and attractive, social adjustment and malnutrition were her handicaps. After the teacher had given her some clothes and had made arrangements for her to eat breakfast and lunch at the school through the courtesy of the school-lunch program of the Works Progress Administration, she blossomed like a flower and exhibited poise, grace, and charm in her mannerisms.

Reading was definitely beyond her ability and alien to her interests until she had been given proper nourishment for some time. She and her twin brother were the most emaciated children the teacher had ever had in any of her classes throughout several years of teaching experience; but through affection, friendship, and patience -- for all of which the girl was starved -- the teacher was able to

perceive notable improvement in her personality and in her degree of social adjustment. Now that she was physically able to meet the challenge of books, she awoke with enthusiasm when she at length realized the pleasant possibilities inherent in reading; and before long she was seldom seen without a book in her hands. She took many books home to read, although the lack of adequate lighting facilities in the home caused the teacher to discourage this practice.

Before the school year had closed, the family moved to a nearby city, and the two children transferred to another school. It was learned that they were unhappy there and cried much of the time because of their desire to return to their first school. In time, however, they became better adjusted. At the close of school Pupil J sang like a bird to a large audience of enthusiastic listeners, and was able to read at the group level.

#### Pupil K

Pupil K was the twin brother of Pupil J, and was even more shy than his sister. He was starved physically and was smaller in stature than she. When he first began having Works Progress Administration lunches at school, he could not eat the food on his plate because he did not like it; and the teacher assumed the task of patiently encouraging him each day until he became educated to enjoy a well-balanced meal. Before long he ate the lunches without

persuasion, and enjoyed them. He and his sister had been brought up principally on goats' milk, which was good for them, of course, but was not within itself an adequate diet.

His experiences were pitifully limited; he was shy and nervous, and cried at the least provocation. His weight was much below normal at first, but the school lunches remedied this deficiency. Reading was not mentioned to him until he had gained friendships, calmness, and happiness in the school situation and felt free to participate in group enterprises. Both he and his sister had entered school somewhat after the beginning of the term, and it was the desire of the teacher to make reading a definite part of their limited life experiences. When the two seemed to be physically, socially, and emotionally ready to begin reading, the teacher gently and cautiously introduced them to the study of reading, and devoted to them all the time she could spare from her other activities. After school she often read with them and encouraged them to read to her so that she might better assist them with their difficulties. By the end of the year, due to pleasant associations with good readers in the class and to encouragement and assistance from the teacher, both of these children were reading at the level of the group, and were exceedingly happy in the contemplation of their new-found ability. The boy

was especially pleased. According to the teacher, there was a perceptible light of joy on his face when he realized that he at last could read as well as any member of his group.

#### Pupil L

With a score of twenty-five on the Park-Franzen test and of 122 on the Harlow test, Pupil L had had no desire to go to school. She was physically large for her age, but was very well adjusted to her social environment. Her family contained five persons; the father was a farmer. The child's happiness and efficiency were somewhat impaired by the fact that her tonsils were badly infected and needed to be removed. Of the "clinging-vine" type, she was very spoiled when she was around her mother. She was very well mannered, however, when she was away from her mother. She was cheerful and happy, and had much to contribute to classroom situations to make them more pleasant and meaningful.

She was one of the best readers in the group, and learned to read by means of a very natural, normal process. She might have been much better in her work except for many absences caused by the condition of her throat and for severe stubborn spells, both of which caused her to lag behind the class at times. She could cook and sew; she cleaned house beautifully, made candy, and had a garden and

chickens all her own for which she was responsible. Reading was only one of her many hobbies or interests.

#### Pupil M

Pupil M, with a score of twenty-two on the Park-Franzen test and of 135 on the Harlow test, showed outstanding improvement during her first-grade experience -- perhaps more improvement than any other child in the group, judged by the distance she had to go. She was genuinely alert and ready and eager for progress. She became an excellent reader. She had a great love for books, for school, for her friends, and for the teacher. She had been totally isolated in a field six miles from town, where she lived in a two-room house. School to her was an adventure each day, and from the very beginning the teacher could see how much she was gaining by associations, contacts, and different environments. She always paid for her lunches, and dressed attractively. She had a lovely mother. Reading was her love, her joy, and her happiness. She worked earnestly, diligently, and sincerely. Neither her mother nor her teacher could ever keep a book out of her hands.

#### Pupil N

Pupil N made a score of twenty-eight on the Park-Franzen test and of 135 on the Harlow test. She was the only child in her family. Her father was a produce buyer.

She had higher physical and mental qualities than most children, and possessed a distinctive desire to read. She was capable, alert, dependable, clever, honest, artistic by nature, and a little lazy. Even before she came to school, she was able to read. She was strong physically, mentally, and morally; and was a socially well-rounded child. She was deeply interested in elementary science.

With her, reading was an art. Each day found her with an interesting story for class discussion. School was an outlet for her pent-up energy. Although she was one of the most popular children in the room, this fact did not seem to spoil her in any way. She loved the pupils with whom she associated, and thoroughly enjoyed all phases of her school work. Her goal at the time was to work hard so that she would soon be in the third grade. Her mother was a German who spoke with a slight accent, which Pupil N had acquired. It was only with the most diligent phonic training that the teacher was able to succeed in developing free and distinct oral expression.

#### Pupil O

This pupil made a score of twenty-eight on the Park-Franzen test and of 135 on the Harlow test. The fact that her father and mother were over-interested in both of their children was not altogether a commendable thing. This child could read before going to school, and soon became a most



excellent reader for the first-grade level. She was artistic, shy, capable, dependable, and pleasant. She was the most beautiful child in the room and the most popular with the opposite sex. She was a diligent worker, to whom reading came as a natural, normal process. Soon she had developed a reading ability of third-grade level. Encountering no serious difficulties in her reading experiences, she had only a harmonious experience to be shared at home with her enthusiastic mother and little brother, because "Sister" read aloud to the family each night. She was the pride and joy of both of her parents -- a couple who had had children late in life after having been married for twenty years. She sang, played the piano, danced, entertained, and entered into every activity with a graciousness which no other child in the first grade possessed.

#### Pupil P

Pupil P made a score of eighteen on the Park-Franzen test and of 120 on the Harlow test. Her father was a farmer. She was one of six children in the family. She was subject to severe temper tantrums, and was timid and shy. Possessing a pronounced inferiority complex, she was reticent with the group and was not at ease in cooperative situations. But in individual tasks such as art work, reading, tests, etc., she had complete control and soon made her way ahead

of the group on her own initiative. She read much better than her sister in the third grade. Although she did not excel in the group, she had mastered situations calling for self-control. Reading brought about a joy she had not experienced before, and she was determined to conquer all things that tended to dim this enjoyment. She always chose easy books and stories because of a fear that she would find something that was beyond her ability. For this reason she did not forge ahead of the group very often; but with affection, patience, and understanding from the teacher and from her classmates, she was able to proceed steadily with the group.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Conclusions

In view of the data considered in this study, the writer believes the following conclusions to be warranted:

1. There is no one method of teaching beginning reading which is invariably the best one to be used. All of the modern methods now in use possess some commendable and valuable techniques, but no one method possesses enough of them to make it superior to all other methods.

2. Every teacher of beginning reading may utilize a number of different methods and, taking concepts and procedures from each one, formulate her own personal method, which will be most suitable for the situation with which she is working.

3. Proper guidance and assistance from the teacher in the beginning will insure that the child forms correct reading habits instead of ineffective or harmful ones.

4. Most systems of teaching beginning reading can be classified under one or the other of two general headings, synthetic method or analytic method. The synthetic method

begins with the elements of words -- letters or sounds -- and then proceeds to build these up into syllables, syllables into words, words into phrases, and phrases into sentences. Emphasis upon the alphabet is one characteristic of the synthetic method of teaching beginning reading. The analytic method of teaching reading to beginners differs from the synthetic in that it emphasizes taking larger language units apart instead of putting smaller units together. It differs even more radically in its concept of reading as a thought-getting process. Chief emphasis in modern procedure is with the analytic method.

5. Reading should not be forced upon a child until he is physically, mentally, and emotionally ready for it.

6. The modern concept of phonics is that it should be used only to meet the specific needs of individual pupils in their efforts to learn to read. This means that some pupils will require much drill in phonics, whereas others will need little or no emphasis upon this factor.

7. One of the best ways of motivating the child to want to learn to read is to surround him at home and at school with an abundance of easy, attractive, and beautifully illustrated books and to encourage him to spend his leisure moments browsing through these books. The stories that go with the pictures may be read or told to

the child, and he will thereafter be eager to acquire the ability to read the stories for himself.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations may prove to be of interest and worth to teachers of beginning reading:

1. This study indicates that each teacher will need to develop the ability and the initiative to develop her own method of teaching reading to beginners. She may combine various phases of standard methods for the purpose of developing a procedure that will be most valuable in her own teaching situation.

2. Every child must be considered as an individual personality whose reading difficulties will be different from those of every other child in the group, and must be approached from this point of view. The procedures that are effective in dealing with the problem of one child will not be applicable to that of another. Patience, understanding, and a knowledge of the child's social, mental, and cultural environment are indispensable to teachers if they would make an intelligent approach to the individual child's problems in reading.

3. Teachers of beginning reading should ever keep in mind the fact that the way in which they approach the subject of reading will likely influence, for life, the child's attitude toward reading. If the method of approach is unsound,

uninteresting, or lacking in challenge, the child may become biased in his attitudes and never develop into an effective reader. If, on the other hand, the teacher's attitudes and methods are wholesome, challenging, and meaningful, the child will usually, under her tutelage, become firmly launched upon the road to effective and happy reading experiences.

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