



A comparison of exemplary and previous methods of teaching reading  
by Shirley Smith Beck

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree of DOCTOR OF EDUCATION  
Montana State University  
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Abstract:

The purpose of this study was to provide an objective evaluation of the exemplary method of teaching reading used in the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School since 1971. Reading achievement of pupils taught by the exemplary method was compared to reading achievement of pupils taught by the previous method.

Also investigated were factors within the exemplary method. Eight questions were answered.

Approximately 313 pupils and ten first and second grade teachers were used in the study. Data was collected from the cumulative records of all first, second, and fourth grade pupils of both schools. The Stanford Achievement Test, Primary Battery II, the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test, Form J, and the Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis were the tests used in the study. Tape recorded interviews were made with the teachers and slow learning pupils. Coding of the taped interviews to determine the major problems, severity of problems, and extent of reading improvement was done by graduate students of an advanced reading methods course at Montana State University. Dr. Willis Vandiver, recognized teacher training specialist, ranked teachers as able and less able to exhibit consistent patterns of the six critical teaching behaviors.

Analysis of covariance techniques were used with the first five questions. Multiple regression statistical techniques were used in the correlation study of the sixth question. A set of variables common and characteristic was determined for the sample of slow learning pupils.

The major advantages of the exemplary and previous methods of teaching reading was determined by the teachers who had taught using both methods.

Significant differences in spelling achievement were found for pupils taught by the exemplary method. Girls taught by the exemplary method showed a significant difference in paragraph meaning achievement. Teachers judged to practice consistent patterns of the critical teaching behaviors had pupils who showed significant differences in achievement in at least one measure of reading achievement. Teaching experience or inexperience did not have a significant effect on reading achievement of pupils taught by the exemplary method. The Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis was a better predictor of reading achievement than I.Q. scores. The variables found most common and characteristic of the slow learning pupils were male sex, low ability, low motivation-perseverance, personality-emotional problems, physical problems, and dislike of school. Teachers who had taught reading using both the exemplary and previous methods found more advantages for the exemplary method.

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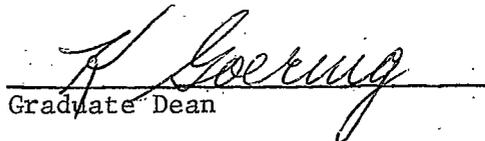
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to provide an objective evaluation of the exemplary method of teaching reading used in the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School since 1971. Reading achievement of pupils taught by the exemplary method was compared to reading achievement of pupils taught by the previous method. Also investigated were factors within the exemplary method. Eight questions were answered.

Approximately 313 pupils and ten first and second grade teachers were used in the study. Data was collected from the cumulative records of all first, second, and fourth grade pupils of both schools. The Stanford Achievement Test, Primary Battery II, the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test, Form J, and the Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis were the tests used in the study. Tape recorded interviews were made with the teachers and slow learning pupils. Coding of the taped interviews to determine the major problems, severity of problems, and extent of reading improvement was done by graduate students of an advanced reading methods course at Montana State University. Dr. Willis Vandiver, recognized teacher training specialist, ranked teachers as able and less able to exhibit consistent patterns of the six critical teaching behaviors.

Analysis of covariance techniques were used with the first five questions. Multiple regression statistical techniques were used in the correlation study of the sixth question. A set of variables common and characteristic was determined for the sample of slow learning pupils. The major advantages of the exemplary and previous methods of teaching reading was determined by the teachers who had taught using both methods.

Significant differences in spelling achievement were found for pupils taught by the exemplary method. Girls taught by the exemplary method showed a significant difference in paragraph meaning achievement. Teachers judged to practice consistent patterns of the critical teaching behaviors had pupils who showed significant differences in achievement in at least one measure of reading achievement. Teaching experience or inexperience did not have a significant effect on reading achievement of pupils taught by the exemplary method. The Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis was a better predictor of reading achievement than I.Q. scores. The variables found most common and characteristic of the slow learning pupils were male sex, low ability, low motivation-perseverance, personality-emotional problems, physical problems, and dislike of school. Teachers who had taught reading using both the exemplary and previous methods found more advantages for the exemplary method.

## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

During the fall of 1971, new methods of teaching reading were initiated in the Belgrade Elementary School, Belgrade, Montana, and the Three Forks Elementary School, Three Forks, Montana. These methods were based on procedures and methods developed by the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Salt Lake City, Utah. The comparative evaluation of reading programs used in that area of Utah began in the fall of 1966. The results of the first year's evaluation showed which reading programs were yielding the greatest end-of-year achievement for three different beginning-of-the-year readiness levels. This study was the Exemplary Center's first step in the development of a model for mastery learning in reading. According to Dr. Ethna R. Reid, Project Director:

No single reading program in use at that time in the Granite District was found to be either significantly better than all others on all variables or to be uniquely effective for students of any given level of pre-instructional readiness. McGraw-Hill Programmed Reading, however, yielded greater achievement than did the basals for pupils in the initially high and middle levels on the Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis but not for pupils in the low level (1971).

Since the evaluators found that pupils taught using the programmed readers scored significantly superior to the pupils in basal readers on oral reading rate and comprehension, it was selected for further evaluation and development. Especially important were efforts to improve its effectiveness with the low-readiness and/or low-ability

pupils. From continuing efforts carried out through succeeding years, the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction discovered those critical teacher behaviors which produced the greatest gains in reading achievement for low-readiness and/or low-ability pupils. For example, the first year it was discovered that the teachers who obtained better than average gains for low-ability pupils deviated more from the teacher's guide than other teachers. These teachers were also spending more time with the low-ability pupils than did the teachers who did not produce as great a gain.

During the next two years, other characteristics of teachers producing greater gains were recognized, i.e., the practice of promising and carrying out specific consequences contingent on the pupil's behavior and the practice of prescribing specific teaching sequences based on the diagnosis of errors.

The fourth and fifth years of research provided insight into a facet of behavior which had not been apparent before. In working with children who had scored below 69 on the Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Test, the researchers discovered that all of the children (almost two hundred) had the necessary visual discrimination, auditory discrimination and blending skills needed to learn to read. While observing in the classroom, it was discovered that these children had low response rates. In other words, they were not responding at all or in limited ways to their teacher's questions. The teacher behavior, therefore,

which was identified as critical for the success of the low achieving child was the ability to elicit responses. The techniques used in eliciting oral and written responses were called "multiple" and "aggressive" responses.

Many other related studies carried out by staff members of the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction and by graduate students in area universities have led to the formulation of the following list of principles by which every normal child can be taught to read:

1. All children must respond; no child is allowed to sit day after day.
2. Positive reinforcement and skillful pupil management practices utilized by the classroom teacher to encourage each pupil to develop to his greatest potential.
3. A spelling, writing, and dictation component has been added to the reading program to strengthen the learning of new letters, sounds, and words.
4. More responses from children per lesson through multiple and aggressive response techniques.
5. Higher levels of mastery (90% to 100%) rather than the usual 75% required by most reading programs.
6. Instant error diagnosis and correction with teaching prescribed to the type of error the child is making.
7. Word analysis skillfully taught and mastered by all pupils.
8. Success orientation for every child. Instruction individually based on each child's learning rate with the end product of task mastery valued rather than the rate of learning (Vandiver, 1973).

The Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School administrators and teachers became interested in the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction's work with reading in the spring of 1971. At the end of that school year, four of the first grade teachers and one administrator from the two schools attended a training workshop

at the Center in Salt Lake City, Utah. The remainder of the teachers involved in this study have attended training workshops conducted by Montana State University, in-service workshops conducted by Dr. Willis Vandiver, and/or visited classrooms in the Salt Lake area where the reading program is in progress. Dr. Willis Vandiver was available for consultation in both schools. The investigator served as a consultant for the Three Forks Elementary School for the years 1971 through 1973.

#### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Primary Grade Departments of the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School have been engaged in an exemplary reading program. The purpose of this study has been to provide an analysis of the results of that program as compared to the previous methods of teaching reading. The extent of the analysis and the procedures used are explained in detail in other sections.

#### NEED FOR THE STUDY

Much time and effort have been spent to develop the reading programs at the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School. Many educators from different areas of the state have visited in the classrooms using the program. The methods used in the program are taught in undergraduate and graduate reading methods courses at Montana State University. This study was an attempt to

provide an objective evaluation which would partially determine the continuance of the program and teacher training procedures.

#### GENERAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

This study attempted to answer several questions. The first question was concerned with a comparison of the exemplary reading method and the previous method used in the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School. Results were compared in the educational areas of (1) word meaning, (2) paragraph meaning, (3) spelling, (4) word study skills, and (5) language.

The second question was concerned with determining which reading method shows greater achievement gains in the five educational areas for different levels of intellectual ability of the pupil population in each elementary school.

The third question was concerned with determining if boys or girls showed the greater achievement gains in reading.

The fourth question was concerned with teacher ability. Does teacher ability as ranked by a teacher training expert have an effect on the results of achievement gains made by pupils engaged in the exemplary reading program?

The fifth question was concerned with determining if the length of teaching experience has a significant effect on achievement of those pupils engaged in the exemplary reading program.

The sixth question was concerned with determining if the Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis is a more effective predictor of reading achievement than intellectual ability.

The seventh question was concerned with a sample of slow learning children from the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School. Was there a set of variables common and characteristic to all of these children?

The eighth question involved personal interviews of those teachers who have taught using both the previous and exemplary methods of teaching reading. Are there major differences in the exemplary method when it is compared to the previous method?

#### GENERAL PROCEDURES

Two procedures were necessary to procure information needed for this study. First a review of literature was made and is presented in Chapter 2. The emphasis of this review was on understanding the underlying factors involved in the teaching of reading.

Secondly, data was collected from the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School. The populations that were used for this study were comprised of all the first, second, and fourth grade pupils of each school. The total number of pupils involved was approximately 313. Information was gathered from the cumulative records of each pupil. Achievement test results were determined by the

Stanford Achievement Test, Primary Battery II. Intelligence quotients were measured by the Otis-Lennon Mental Abilities Test, Form J. Reading readiness was assessed by the Murphy-Durrell Reading Readiness Analysis. The records of the fourth grade pupils involved their second year of school so a comparison could be made with the 1972-73 second grade pupils in each school. No comparisons were made between schools. Data necessary to complete the case studies and the teachers' rating of the exemplary program was gathered from cumulative records, teacher interviews, and/or classroom observations by the investigator.

All ten first and second grade teachers of the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School were involved in the study. The ranking of teachers according to ability was made by Dr. Willis Vandiver, recognized teacher training specialist and reading authority. Length of experience was determined by the investigator after examination of the years of experience of the teachers involved in the study.

#### LIMITATIONS

This study was limited to all the first grade pupils, all the second grade pupils, and all the fourth grade pupils of the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School. The range of ability included low, average, and high levels of intellectual ability. The basic socio-economic groups of lower, middle, and upper limits were

included, although most pupils fell into the middle and lower socio-economic groups.

Only children whose cumulative records indicated they were not enrolled in the Belgrade Elementary School or the Three Forks Elementary School for the first two years of their school experience were eliminated from the study. All children who were classified as emotionally disturbed, learning disabled, or with other disturbing factors were included in the study, as all these children constitute the normal school population.

All first and second grade teachers of the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School were involved in the study. The teachers possessed varying degrees of education, experience, and expertise.

The study is necessarily limited by the fact that many variables are uncontrollable in the normal educational setting. Data available to the investigator was determined by the testing programs found in the cooperating school systems. Because of the need to provide as objective an evaluation of the reading program as possible, the limitations inherent in such a study are acknowledged but deemed an unfortunate aspect of educational research at this point in time.

The research done for the review of literature was confined to research bulletins, periodicals, microfilms, and books obtained from the Library of Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana, and from

the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction, Salt Lake City, Utah.

The more intensive training provided for teachers using the exemplary method as compared to the training for the previous method may have affected the results of the study.

The bias of the investigator towards the exemplary method might have produced a Hawthorne effect favoring the exemplary method.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

Since the exact meaning will be important in understanding the data collected, the following terms are defined as they were used in this study.

Non-responder. A child who does not respond in any manner (oral, written, etc.) to the teacher's question or instruction. For example, "This word is cat. Say cat." If the child does not respond, he is a non-responder.

Multiple response. A response technique developed by the Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction to reduce the time necessary to learn new words, letters, or sounds. The child responds until the teacher gives a signal to stop. The correct response is often identified for the child before he responds.

Aggressive response. A response technique used to check learning of new words, letters, and sounds. The child does not know

which response will be called for until the teacher indicates which word, letter, etc. Usually only one response is made.

#### SUMMARY

An exemplary reading program has been in progress in the Belgrade Elementary School and the Three Forks Elementary School. This study was an attempt to provide an objective evaluation of that reading program. The importance of the study has been reflected in the interest shown by other Montana School Districts in the program.

The review of literature presented in Chapter 2 was a means of becoming familiar with the data which was pertinent to the investigator's study. Attention was given to the factors involved in the teaching of reading.

## Chapter 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### THE TEACHING OF READING

##### What Is Reading?

As knowledge about learning and human development increases, a term such as "reading" becomes increasingly difficult to define. In fact, there is not general agreement among so-called experts on the limitations which should be applied to the definition of the reading process. Karlin points out that it was not too many decades ago that reading was thought to be the ability to recognize what words said. Oral reading was done in basal readers, social studies, and science textbooks. The term "read with expression" was often heard. Any questions asked did not challenge children's thinking (1971:39). In present times, the limits of reading have been expanded beyond the mere calling of words. Heilman states, "Reading is a process of getting meaning from printed word symbols. It is not merely a process of making conventionalized noises associated with these symbols (1967:8)." E. A. Betts expands the meaning of reading when he states:

Reading is a language process rather than a subject. In a psychological sense, reading is a thinking process. In another sense, reading is a social process that relates the reader to his environment, and conditions that relationship. Psychophysiological factors, such as seeing and hearing, also are embraced by an adequate concept of reading as a process (1957:70).

Witty, Freeland, and Grotberg concur with Betts' definition,

when they say:

Reading is a process involving meaningful reaction to printed symbols. We should recognize the fact that reading is both oral and silent, that the pupil's response is determined not only by the printed symbol itself, but also by his own nature and needs, which influence his reaction and color his interpretation (1966:8).

Durkin carries the definition of reading to extended limits when she uses examples of reading that illustrate that (a) successful reading requires the recognition of written words and an understanding of their meaning, but also (b) successful reading, especially of more difficult material, is dependent upon the ability to think like and with the author. She also recognizes that some types of reading go even beyond these two basic requirements (1970:4).

Reading is seen as a language function related to speaking, listening, and writing. Because it involves the manipulation of symbolic material, most educational psychologists, educators, and other experts agree that it is a complicated process. What is particularly frustrating to teachers, educational psychologists, parents, and the children involved is the amount of difficulty some children have in learning the process of reading. A fact which seems to be accepted by all concerned is that the process of learning to read is highly sensitive to pressures. Pressures may come from parents, teachers, other children, or from within the child. Failure to fulfill expectations of success can be a heavy burden (Heilman, 1967:4, 5).

Experts in many fields have turned their attention to the

process of learning to read. One of the most notable is John B. Carroll. Carroll feels that the essential skill in reading is getting meaning from a printed page. He has researched the reading process in adult and child readers for nearly three-quarters of a century. Examining the process of reading in skilled readers has provided the basis for his components of the reading process. The process of learning to read is not simply a slow imitation of the mature reading process in adult skilled readers. Each component has levels of proficiency. Also, a child can be learning a number of skills simultaneously and can reach mastery of each at different times. Each component has to be learned and practiced. According to Carroll, the components of reading skill are:

1. The child must know the language that he is going to learn to read. There are exceptions to this component as in the deaf child who does not know the spoken language or the foreign language child who learns the new language by learning to read it.
2. The child must learn to dissect spoken words into component sounds.
3. The child must learn to recognize and discriminate the letters of the alphabet in the various forms--capitals, lower case, printed, cursive.
4. The child must learn the left-to-right principle by which words are spelled and put in order in continuous text. There are certain aspects of letter-sound correspondences that violate the principle, e.g., wh in representing the sound cluster hw.
5. The child must learn that there are patterns of highly probable correspondence between letters and sounds, and he must learn those patterns of correspondence that will help him recognize words that he already knows in his spoken language or that will help him determine the pronunciation of unfamiliar words.
6. The child must learn to recognize printed words from whatever cues he can use--their total configuration, the letters composing them, the sounds represented by those letters and/or the meanings suggested by the context.

7. The child must learn that printed words are signals for spoken words and that they have meanings analogous to those of spoken words. While decoding a printed message into its spoken equivalent, the child must be able to apprehend the meaning of the total message in the same way he would apprehend the meaning of the corresponding spoken message.

8. The child must learn to reason and think about what he reads, within the limits of his talent and experience.

Carroll believes that adult reading is skilled only because all the eight components are so highly practiced that they merge together, as it were, into one unified performance. The well-coordinated, swift eye movements of the adult reader are a result, not a cause, of good reading; the child does not have to be taught eye movements (Singer and Ruddell, 1971:297-299).

#### Problems in Teaching Reading

Although how to teach reading has continued to be the center of a hot debate for nearly two decades, recent studies have shown that reading deficiencies continue to be a nation-wide problem. In a speech before the National Association of State Boards of Education in 1969, James E. Allen, Jr., then the U. S. Commissioner of Education, set a national priority for the educators and federal government of this country. The central theme of his first and succeeding speeches about the goal was that the scandalous record of reading failure in American schools must be overcome. Allen pointed to shocking statistics gathered by researchers of the U. S. Office of Education. They found that:

One of four students nationwide has significant reading deficiencies; more than three million illiterates are in the nation's

adult population; about one-half of the unemployed youths, ages 16-21, are functionally illiterate; three quarters of the juvenile offenders in New York City are two or more years retarded in reading (Pine and Neill, 1970:1).

Other indicators of the magnitude of the problem include studies made by the U. S. Office of Education that show that: (1) the number of boys who either read poorly or not at all exceeds the number of girls by ten to one; (2) estimates range from 1 to 5 per cent of a school's population that could have severe reading disability; (3) there are large numbers of elementary school teachers who do not know how to teach reading efficiently; and (4) many school administrators have not the slightest idea how serious the reading problem is in their own school systems (Pine and Neill, 1970:1-3).

#### Reading Materials

Dissatisfaction with reading results and reading materials has led to a proliferation of materials and methods since the late 1950's and early 1960's. After the results of two major reading studies were published in the mid 1960's, another flood of materials and material revisions has occurred (Chall, 1967; Bond and Dykstra, 1967).

#### Basal Reading Materials

The most popular materials used through the years to teach reading have been the basal readers. Spache (1972:32) points out that about 90 to 95 per cent of our primary and 80 per cent of our intermediate grades use graded readers. In fact, the basal reader is the

only major instructional program in about seven out of ten of all our elementary classes. Series of integrated readers have been used in this country since its earliest history. Lyman Cobb has been credited with compiling the first carefully graded set of readers (Witty, Freeland, and Grotberg, 1966:26). Several series which appeared between 1840 and 1860 reflected the trend toward school grades. The most popular of these was the McGuffey Readers. McGuffey revolutionized reading series when he introduced the idea of grading readers according to difficulty. He initiated the idea of a controlled vocabulary and the gradual introduction of new words (Spache, 1972:31).

A basal reader series is based on the premise that reading skills should be developed through carefully sequenced lessons. Until the late 1960's and early 1970's, basal reading materials were divided between the meaning-emphasis and the code-emphasis approaches of teaching reading. The primary difference in the two approaches was the different order in which the components set forth by Carroll would be taught. The code-emphasis exponents believed that the skills should be introduced in approximately the order in which Carroll lists them (refer to pages 13 and 14). The meaning-emphasis exponents, on the other hand, believed that the skills should be introduced in the following order: 1, 6, 7, 8, 4, 3, 2, 5 (Singer and Ruddell, 1971:300). However, it would seem that the needs and effective learning styles of the individual learner should have been taken into account. The

current trend is to combine the components so that a child learns words by sight and also how to "attack" words he does not know. The most effective teachers have been using a similar approach for years no matter if the reading materials they were using had a basic code- or meaning-emphasis organization (Chall, 1967:269).

#### Criticisms of Basal Reading Materials

Several forces have been instrumental in bringing about changes in basal reading materials. Where the materials of the 1950's and early 1960's could be generally divided into a code-emphasis or meaning-emphasis approach, newer materials on the market reflect the influence of several critical forces. Chall's exhaustive analysis of reading methods, reading materials, and reading achievement results with the conclusions reached that the code-emphasis approach gained superior reading results certainly had a significant influence on the writers of basal reading materials. The influence of the linguists cannot be overlooked. Most major companies now have linguists on the writing staff (Ginn and Scott, Foresman). In fact, the structure of reading materials has shown considerable influence from many factors normally thought to be outside the realm of the educational field. Three widely read books of the 1950's and early 1960's period which convinced many parents that their children were not being properly taught were Walcutt's Tomorrow's Illiterates (1961), Trace's What Ivan Knows That

Johnny Doesn't (1961), and Flesch's Why Johnny Can't Read and What You Can Do About It (1955).

The concept of vocabulary control in basal readers was one of the first characteristics to come under criticism. Proponents of controlled vocabulary felt that reading materials must be carefully patterned so that the average child would find it simple enough to read. Spache points out the lengths to which the writers of basal readers went to make sure this goal was achieved:

This control is based upon literally hundreds of word counts and other types of analyses of vocabulary and concept loads. As a result of these studies, there has been an almost continuous trend toward vocabulary simplification in basal readers over the last three decades. It seems as though each new series published during this period contained fewer words repeated more often than the last published set (1972:37).

These basal reader enthusiasts felt that it was necessary to teach children a sight vocabulary which should include the most frequently used words already present in most children's oral/aural vocabularies. One of the most influential word lists used in the basals for the past thirty years has been the Dolch Basic Sight Word List published in 1941. The Dolch list was compiled during the 1930's from studies done in the 1920's. Dolch compiled his words from several prominent word lists of the 1920's and then arbitrarily selected twenty-seven words that he felt rounded out his list of two hundred twenty words. Why he chose 220 words does not seem clear. The list contained words common to children or important for children to know

over fifty years ago. In a study published in 1967, Kucera and Francis published results of a computational analysis of present-day American English. They found that 37 per cent of the Dolch list was not among the most frequent words in present-day children's vocabularies or in natural language samples from fifteen different sources (Johnson, 1971: 450). Monroe (1964) has estimated that American pre-school children have a speaking vocabulary of nearly 4,000 words and listening vocabularies that extend from 6,000 to 48,000 words. Johnson states:

Acknowledging the extent of young children's oral/aural vocabularies, is it not more important for primary reading materials to reflect what exists in present-day American English, than for sight word lists to reflect what occurs in beginning reading materials (1971:457)?

Another criticism of the vague vocabulary control methods employed by basal reader authors was voiced by Gates. He found in testing second, third, and fourth graders that the claims for vocabulary control were unfounded. When he tested beginning third grade readers, he discovered that over half recognized almost all of the words for both the third and fourth readers which they had not yet read. When he repeated the study with second graders, he discovered that 75 per cent of the students knew at least 80 per cent of the third grade basal reader vocabulary (1962:443-448).

Spache (1972:38) contends that studies of children halfway through the first grade show that they are ready to move beyond the basal reader vocabularies and are, in reality, teaching themselves

many new words they encounter in recreational and other reading through the use of any word attack skills they may have been taught or figured out for themselves.

Another important criticism of the basal reader method of teaching reading was the delay in the teaching of word attack skills. A careful examination of reading materials of the period reveals that designs for phonics instruction were included in the teacher's manual. However, in most series, it was thought important to establish a basic sight vocabulary before much formal phonics instruction was done. Walcutt, Trace, and Flesch were highly critical of the lack of phonics instruction. Chall found that most changes in methods of teaching reading have been instituted by school people who are seeking to improve faulty existing programs. Innovating schools have generally been found at the two ends of the socioeconomic scale. The early innovators in reading instruction who led the way in a heavier emphasis on phonics instruction were mainly schools with a large proportion of children of professional parents--private, parochial, and suburban schools--or schools with many culturally disadvantaged children. Chall found that these two extremes of schools were the ones who adopted phonic and linguistic approaches early as a kind of revolt against progressive education. At the "elite" end of the continuum could be found the well-known private schools associated with the Reading Reform Foundation. At the other end of the continuum were the urban schools with large

populations of culturally disadvantaged school children who were falling behind in reading skills. Many public school officials held out to the last in adopting a "return to Phonics" program. Chall feels that they may have felt that such an adoption was joining the "camp of the enemy (1967:289-291)." However, in general, the program of word attack skills has been changed dramatically in many popular basal reading series to meet the demands for a stronger phonics and linguistics program. Phonics instruction is begun immediately with the first initial reading programs rather than being delayed until after first grade (Spache, 1972:44).

#### Phonics Materials

Besides the phonics instruction guides found in basal reader materials, numerous supplemental phonics materials have been introduced in the primary reading area through the years. Much of this material was introduced during the period when the basal series had a heavy meaning-emphasis. The extent of use of phonics has been debated by reading experts and others, while the pendulum has swung from more to less use for the past two hundred years. The current swing towards more phonics has triggered the rise of new phonic systems whose authors claim will cure all problems in teaching reading. Generally, these programs teach phonics more directly, earlier, and more extensively. Most are designed to be used as supplemental materials with other reading materials, such as basals.

Caleb Gatterno (1972:60, 62) authored the Words in Color program which uses different colors to identify the forty-seven sounds in our language. Spache points out that studies show no significant differences have been found in reading, spelling, or even in phonic skills for children taught by the Words in Color program in comparison with basal programs or other phonic programs.

Other phonic systems are the Phonovisual Method (Lucille D. Schoolfield and Josephine B. Timberlake), Reading With Phonics (Julie Hay and Charles E. Wingo), Phonetic Keys to Reading (Theodore L. Harris, et. al.), The Writing Road to Reading (Romalda B. Spalding and Walter T. Spalding), Breaking the Sound Barrier (Sister Mary Caroline), and The Carden Method (Mae Carden ) (Chall, 1967:16).

The Lippincott Basic Reading Program is a complete phonics reading program authored by Charles C. Walcutt and Glenn McCracken. This basal reading series introduces over 2,000 words in the first grade. The phonics program is heavy and moves fast. The content of the stories is based on fables, folk tales, and imaginary episodes (Chall, 1967:23). The Lippincott series was used in two of the First Grade Reading studies. Scores for the Lippincott pupils at the end of first grade were significantly higher in vocabulary, spelling, accuracy of oral reading, comprehension, and scores on two word lists. Spache reports another study comparing Lippincott with a basal plan plus phonics and with an initial teaching alphabet (i.t.a.) program. Again,

the Lippincott produced higher scores in word recognition, phonics, and spelling but only for average and bright children. Children taught with the basal plus phonics plan scored better in reading comprehension, attitudes toward reading, and the breadth of reading experiences (1972: 64-65).

#### The Influence of Linguists

Bloomfield (1962) and Fries (1963) were the first linguists to actively recommend and publish procedures for the teaching of reading. Both these linguists proposed systems that placed a heavier emphasis on the decoding process. The reading materials they introduced were systems of phonics based, in their opinions, on sound linguistic principles. The materials developed by Bloomfield and Barnhart were the first major attempt made by linguists to enter the reading field. Spache (1972:72-73) points out that the six published series that are labeled linguistic differ considerably due to the varied approaches the linguists follow. That linguists do vary in ways of looking at the structure of language has led to no clearly defined linguistic approach to reading instruction. Basically, there are generative or transformational linguists and there are structural linguists. The generative linguist attempts to discover what knowledge one has of a language to produce spoken language patterns. The structural linguist studies oral language to identify its sounds, units of meaning, and its syntax (Karlin, 1971:22). Linguists have been highly critical of the traditional basal reader

programs. However, because of the differences in their approaches of studying language, the linguists do not fully agree on what methods should be used to teach beginning reading.

One basic area of agreement is the belief that speech is the primary language function and reading and writing are secondary language functions. Linguistic series reflect the belief that beginning readers should face only words with consistent grapheme-phoneme relationships. Syntax or sentence patterns should be learned to aid comprehension. Also, most linguists are highly critical of the terminology used in teaching phonics, e.g., teaching the children that letters make sounds (Goodman, 1964:355-361). After these areas of agreement comes a disparity of consensus of opinion about any other areas of agreement. Some series have no pictures, as the authors feel pictures give clues that cause children to guess at words. Some series introduce only regularly spelled words, while others introduce regular and irregular words (Spache, 1972:73). Linguists have made worthwhile contributions to the understanding of the reading process, but certainly they have not been totally united in the directions and suggestions they have offered. As a consequence, there is no one linguistic approach to teaching reading.

#### The Modified Alphabet Materials

To avoid the inconsistencies in sound-letter relationships, several primary reading series which introduce different alphabets have

been used in various parts of the United States. The most widely used has been the Initial Teaching Alphabet, commonly called i.t.a. The Initial Teaching Alphabet was introduced in England and later into this country in the early 1960's. Chall (1967:93) points out that the principle of using modified alphabets did not originate with Pitman's i.t.a. The idea was around for many years before he developed his system. I.t.a. utilizes forty-four symbols in an attempt to simplify the sound-symbol relationships in the written language. Research studies done in this country have shown no consistent pattern of significant gains by teaching children to first read and write i.t.a. Questions have been raised in both this country and in England about research methods and results. The British government no longer supports the experimental use of i.t.a. in England. In this country, no improvements of the reading materials have been made by publishers. The approach is basically tied to the language experience idea because of the amount and timing of the writing component (Spache, 1972:57).

Chall questioned whether the research results claimed were due to i.t.a. or the change in method of teaching, i.e., the Hawthorne effect. Many questions about research methods arise, e.g., testing different numbers of children, no information regarding differences in socio-economic backgrounds, age, or sex, leaving confusion in the mind of Chall. She also questions the apparent lack of controls concerning the teaching of phonics and other word attack skills plus the amount of





































































































































































































































































































































































































































































