

A PROPOSED INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM FOR
THE PRIMARY GRADES OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
IN JEFFERSON COUNTY, COLORADO

by

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INTRODUCTION

Teaching the child to read is one of the major responsibilities of our schools. "Today's teachers assume that they must guide children in such a way that 'little black marks' laid out neatly, line after line on pages become meaningful signs, signals and symbols."¹

There is an awareness that the traditional ways of teaching are not always best. Many people today question the effectiveness of our elementary reading programs. It is the responsibility of educators to continuously search for new and improved ways of teaching reading. As knowledge about the learning process, about child growth and development, evaluation, and the art of reading has increased, the methods, techniques, and materials of reading have changed. New ways of teaching reading must be experimented with and if they are successful they should be introduced into the classroom.

Large numbers of professional books, national committee reports, curriculum guides and magazine articles are regularly concerned with the teaching of reading. In addition more than four thousand individual research studies on reading have been conducted during the last century.² Although

¹Jeanette Veatch, Individualizing Your Reading (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), p. vii.

²William S. Gray, "Research in Reading Marches On," The Reading Teacher, XII (December, 1958), p. 74.

the research studies have greatly increased the fund of knowledge regarding the total reading process, numerous unsolved problems still remain. Gates states:

...we are far more conscious today than formerly of the complexity of reading problems and are far less certain of the answers to many of them. The fact is also recognized that research in reading must continue on a broad scale if reading is to serve ultimately its broadest function as an aid to personal development, scholastic progress, and social betterment.³

Every elementary teacher faces the problem of meeting the individual needs of the child in reading instruction. It is especially of prime concern for the primary teacher whose job it is to introduce the process and to teach the initial stages of reading.

The importance of beginning reading has been pointed out by Hildreth. She stated:

This is the most critical period in the child's school career because his subsequent progress depends so largely on the skills learned and the habits formed during the first three or four years. If reading gets off to a good start in Grades 1 and 2, the child's future growth in literacy is fairly well assured.⁴

The problem faced by primary teachers is that of providing reading instruction which takes into account individual differences in learning rate. The question asked by primary teachers is: What type of reading instruction will

³William S. Gray, "Reading," Encyclopedia of Educational Research, Chester W. Harris, editor (Third edition; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 1087.

⁴Gertrude Hildreth, Teaching Reading (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958), p. 187.

foster the maximum development of each child?

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purposes of this study were: (1) to review the present practice of reading instruction; (2) to survey current findings in the use of individualized reading; (3) to survey literature of procedures to be used in individualized reading; and (4) to propose specific guidelines to be used in an individualized reading program.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

The primary reading program in the Jefferson County Schools is taught by the basal reader group approach. Each class is sub-grouped into three or four groups for the purpose of reading instruction. The slow, average, high and gifted groups are all taught by the same method and with the same basal reader. This approach has not taken into account the wide range of individual differences that are found within the classroom.

The high ability and gifted groups are not challenged to the full extent of their ability. The slowest are pushed beyond their abilities in order to cover the graded readers.

Graded basic reading texts are used in each classroom. These books have been graded to the average child. Upon completion of the basic readers the high ability and gifted groups are given supplementary readers for enrichment purposes; however, these supplementary texts are of the same

graded level which gives little more than the same type of instruction as the previous basic readers. It is difficult for the teacher to create opportunities for the slow learner to achieve a measure of personal success. Pressures are placed upon the child to get him through the basic reading text in order for him to be reading on grade level.

Both materials and instruction are not differentiated to keep pace with the different growth patterns of the children. Effort needs to be made to improve the instructional approaches which respect individual differences.

Educators throughout the country express concern that the present day reading programs do not allow the child maximum growth. Harris stated:

Although all teachers know that there are important differences in reading ability among children, few are aware of how great these differences really are. A look at the magnitude of the problem will show vividly why it is essential that continuing efforts be made to improve our methods of adapting to individual abilities.⁵

A number of plans for individualized reading have been suggested for adjusting instruction in the teaching of reading to the wide range of individual differences and needs found in the classroom.

⁵Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (Third edition; New York: Longmans, Green and Company, Inc., 1960), p. 99.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Basal Reading Program. A basal reading program is an approach to the teaching of reading aimed at the systematic development of reading ability through use of one or more basal readers or co-basal readers and its accompanying materials. The children are sub-grouped within the classroom for instruction on the basis of reading ability.

Basal Reader. A basal reader is a textbook which is part of a graded series designed to provide systematic instruction in reading.

Supplementary Reader. A supplementary reader is a reading book designed to be used for reading instruction but only to supplement basic instruction and to give additional reading and practice. The teacher's guide of a supplementary reader is not as elaborate as that of a basal reader.

Trade Book. This term refers to a book designed for the general bookstore and library market rather than text use.

Pre-Primer. Pre-primers are the first books to present words in a graded series of readers. The books are paper-covered and have a small vocabulary and usually have single lined sentences. Graded reading series usually provide three pre-primers each increasing in difficulty.

Primer. The primer is the first hard-covered book in a graded series to follow the pre-primers. A primer repeats the vocabulary used in the pre-primers and gradually introduces new words. There is usually only one primer in a

graded reading series.

Reading Readiness. This term applies to that stage of growth, when reached, which allows a child to learn to read without excess difficulty. The reading activities include those which prepare the child for reading, that is, reading pictures, telling stories, training eye movement, visual discrimination and auditory discrimination.

Initial Stage in Learning to Read. This term implies the beginning stage of learning to read which is found in the first grade. This period builds a sight vocabulary and initial consonant sounds are taught. Much of the reading is oral, but silent reading is introduced and stress is placed on getting meanings rather than just calling words. Experience stories, pre-primers, primers and first readers are the main materials. Fostering a desire and an interest for reading is a major goal.

Rapid Development of Reading Skills. This stage is normally found in the second and third grades. In these grades a thorough grounding in basic skills is provided. Comprehension is emphasized. Training in the techniques of word recognition and word analysis receives much attention. Fostering interest in reading and encouraging children to read widely in varied sources are important aims.

Individualized Reading Program. An individualized reading program is an approach to the teaching of reading

characterized by these features:

1. Many different trade books as well as single copies of supplementary readers and basal readers are used for instruction.
2. Each pupil selects, with teacher guidance, the material which he will read during the time scheduled for reading.
3. Individual pupil-teacher conferences are held to provide instruction and to give guidance in developing reading skills, vocabulary, interests, and attitudes.
4. Grouping is employed only as needed and for a specific purpose; the structure of groups changes as needs and purposes change.
5. It includes the basic elements of self-selection, self-seeking and self-pacing.

Self-Selection. This term implies that the child has the opportunity in his regular school reading time to choose his reading materials according to his interests and drives.

Self-Seeking. The child has the opportunity to explore his reading environment and to seek from it those experiences that are in tune with his maturity. He seeks to find the help he needs to be a more effective reader with the material he can handle.

Self-Pacing. This term implies that the child has the opportunity to read at his own pace the materials he has chosen independently.

Sight-Vocabulary. The words memorized or recognized as a whole, rather than by their parts blended together to form the whole.

Primary Grades. The primary grades are defined as first, second and third grades.

METHOD OF PROCEDURE

The procedure followed in acquiring data to answer the problems in this study was to survey literature in the field of reading. The literature in the field of reading concerning present day practices was reviewed. The theory of individualized reading as well as review of actual practices was investigated. The selected literature was both published and unpublished.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Objectives of Reading Instruction

Historical Reading Objectives

The religious factor was the directing force in the early colonial schools. The fundamental aim for teaching reading from 1607 to approximately 1776 was to equip pupils to read Bible material.⁶ Oral reading was stressed since literate members of families read the Scriptures aloud to relatives and friends.

After the revolt of the Colonies a new period of reading instruction began. During this era, 1776 to 1840, dual

⁶Rudolph R. Reeder, The Historical Development of School Readers and Method in Teaching Reading (New York: Columbia University, 1900), pp. 9-12.

aims, a nationalistic aim and a moralistic aim were reflected in the content of the reading books.⁷ Although the religious materials of the colonial period were still used, with a slightly watered down moralism the reading content emphasized patriotism. Instruction was focused on eloquent oral reading.⁸

Horace Mann made an important contribution to improved reading instruction when he condemned the excessive devotion to oral reading practices in schools of his time. Mann's criticism in 1838 has become famous.

Discussing what a meaningless performance reading round the class has become--minus thinking and feeling--he said that oral reading as conducted was 'a barren action of the organs of speech upon the atmosphere.' He found that eleven out of twelve of all children in the reading classes did not understand the words they read aloud so glibly.⁹

Horace Mann stimulated educators of his time to object to a style of reading that sacrificed meaning. A complaint in 1845 by a Grammar School Committee in Boston reported that, "Some of the pupils read extremely well; but in too many instances the reading was affected and theatrical."¹⁰ At a later date the same committee reported that "the

⁷Paul Witty, Reading in Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1949), p. 2.

⁸Lillian Gray, Teaching Children to Read (Second Edition; New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1957), p. 33.

⁹Gray, op. cit., p. 37.

¹⁰Ibid.

children's chattering...shows only the power of their memories to retain names of things they do not understand."¹¹

The general goals of the period 1840 to 1880 were not clearly defined, although there was still emphasis upon the nationalistic and moralistic aims. The specific objectives of oral reading and elocution continued to be stressed.

A new era evolved about 1890. Many of the readers which came into use at this time used story material as a basis for developing habits and skills. Emphasis was on thought-getting rather than word mastery, but oral reading still was being stressed.¹²

During the period between the years 1880 and 1920, the aim of reading was to promote a permanent interest in literature. Criticism from Europeans, who claimed that the big growing country across the Atlantic was as crude and uncouth as some of the frontiersmen along its expanding borders, stimulated the desire for culture and motivated interest in reading as a cultural asset.¹³

Silent reading was the primary objective of instruction from the period of 1880 to 1920. A few proponents of silent reading advocated complete abandonment of oral reading; however, most educators advocated both.¹⁴

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Witty, op. cit., p. 5.

¹³Gray, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁴Witty, op. cit., p. 6.

During the period from 1920 to 1925 reading instruction was characterized by the absence of the oral reading objectives. It was at this time that teaching efficient silent reading in order to meet the practical needs of life became the major goal. This tendency to go to the opposite extreme, was brought about by the Army Alpha tests administered to service men in World War I to test their silent reading ability. These tests revealed that overwhelming numbers of Americans had inferior silent reading habits. Oral reading was blamed for the poor results and educators began to emphasize silent reading.¹⁵

Another era of reading instruction began in 1925. Several objectives for teaching reading were recognized. The major objectives of this period were set forth in the Twenty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1. The first objective was that of providing rich and varied experiences through reading. The second objective emphasized the development of permanent interests in reading. The third objective of the committee dealt with the development of desirable attitudes and effective habits and skills.¹⁶

¹⁵Gray, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

¹⁶Guy M. Whipple (ed.), Report of the National Committee on Reading, Twenty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part 1 (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1925), pp. 9-12.

Present-Day Reading Objectives

Present-day reading objectives have not changed to a great extent from that of the National Committee on Reading in 1925. Reading authorities of today describe the goals of reading instruction in similar terms. Betts advanced these goals:

1. Reading is only one learning aid and, therefore, should be buttressed with the use of other means, such as visual and auditory aids, direct observation, experimentation, and discussion.
2. Guidance in both silent and oral reading is required in a well-balanced instructional program.
3. Guidance in reading should promote the use of skills, abilities, attitudes, and information for obtaining worth-while recreation and valid information.¹⁷

Four major objectives of the instruction of reading were given by Gray:

1. To promote a growing understanding and deep appreciation of the distinctive role and value of reading in an age of mass media.
2. To extend and enrich experiences through reading and to promote increasing participation in the thought-life of the world in harmony with the background, learning capacity, and level of maturity of the pupils taught.
3. To cultivate interest in personal reading that will illuminate, direct, and inspire the present and future life of all readers.

¹⁷Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: American Book Company, 1950), p. 98.

4. To promote continuous progress toward the high level of competence in reading that current life demands.¹⁸

Paul Witty wrote that the chief aim of the reading program is "...to help pupils become skillful, self-reliant, and independent readers, who will continue to enrich their understandings and satisfactions throughout their lives by reading."¹⁹

Eight major objectives of the reading program were given by Russell:

1. To make provisions for determining and developing reading readiness at all levels
2. To encourage strong motives for and permanent interest in reading as an activity of value in both work and recreational situations
3. To acquaint children with ideas that will extend and enrich their experiences of life in modern America and an interdependent world
4. To present ideas and develop attitudes associated with good citizenship and worthy character
5. To cultivate tastes and interests in a wide variety of good literature in books, other current publications, songs, recordings, and radio and television programs
6. To provide the gradual increase in skills and acquisition of valuable habits in silent and oral reading

¹⁸William S. Gray, "Objectives for the New Reading Program," Evaluation in Reading, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 88 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 12-13.

¹⁹Paul Witty, "Reading Instruction--A Forward Look," Elementary English, XXXVIII (March, 1961), pp. 156-7.

7. To develop abilities associated with the use of books and other study activities
8. To provide a basis for successful reading of printed materials in the various subject-matter areas of the curriculum, with special stress on the contribution of reading to other language-arts activities²⁰

Reading instruction. Albert Harris briefly summarizes the five stages of reading instruction as put forth by the National Committee on Reading in the Twenty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. He stated: (1) development of reading readiness; (2) initial stage in learning to read; (3) rapid development of reading skills; (4) stage of wide reading; and (5) refinement of reading.²¹

Each reading stage has specific objectives which are consistent with the broad general objectives of the reading program. Since this investigation was concerned with the primary reading program, only specific objectives of the reading readiness stage, initial stage in learning to read, and the stage of rapid development of reading skills were considered.

Development of reading readiness. The reading readiness stage starts from birth and usually continues into the

²⁰David H. Russell, Children Learn to Read (New York: Ginn and Company, 1961), p. 144.

²¹Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (Third edition; New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1960), pp. 14-16.

early part of first grade. Harris states that it may be defined as a state of general maturity which when reached, allows a child to learn to read without excess difficulty.²²

Reading readiness is not a single trait but a state of all-around development or maturity; it is best developed in a class atmosphere which provides conditions for physical, intellectual, and social development. There should be a variety of stimulating and informative experiences which encourage children to look and listen attentively, and to express their thoughts and feelings in many different forms of creative and expressive activity. A program that provides for child development will include both group and individual activities. Eyes and hands are trained through work with blocks, clay, crayons, paint, scissors and weaving. Language growth is stimulated in many ways, including listening to stories, discussing experiences, conversation, poetry and dramatizations. New ideas and concepts are introduced through many kinds of experiences including trips and visits. Learning to live in a group is a major goal.²³

Some of the specific goals by Betts were outlined as follows:

1. To stimulate a desire for and an interest in reading
2. To broaden interests

²²Harris, op. cit., p. 26.

²³Harris, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

3. To develop independent work habits
4. To develop an awareness of pupil responsibility to the group
5. To promote social adequacy
6. To develop courteous responses in social situations²⁴

The initial stage in learning to read. The initial stage in learning to read is found in the first grade and is an extension of the reading readiness stage. Reading is first introduced by labeling the objects in the classroom. Children's names are printed on cards and the cards are used to identify their desk and their clothes hanger. Pictures are displayed with brief titles below each. Bulletin boards are made with weather reports, special events and messages to children. Children compose stories based on their experiences and the teacher prints these on a chart. Gradually the children begin to recognize some common phrases and words.²⁵

Systematic instruction is started with a preprimer that presents a small and simple vocabulary with a great deal of repetition. Seatwork is used which correlates with the words in the child's sight vocabulary.

Russell made a specific listing of objectives for the initial stage in learning to read, which are as follows:

²⁴Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: American Book Company, 1950), pp. 153-155.

²⁵Harris, op. cit., p. 66.

1. The ability to read one-line and two-line sentences with understanding and good oral expression.
2. Ready participation in the reading activities of the group, both as leader and as follower.
3. Increased ability to use picture clues, special features of words, context clues, and phonetic and structural components in word recognition.
4. The development of the ability to read, with ease and satisfaction, the preprimers, primer, and first reader of the basic-reading series.
5. Enjoyment and ease in reading the preprimers and primers of other series.
6. The ability to read without undue vocalization and without finger-pointing or a marker.
7. Increasing ability to make adjustments in reading method and rate for such purposes as recalling details, comprehending the main idea, and following an orderly sequence.
8. The development of skills in noting similarities and differences in known words.
9. The desire to read on many occasions when the class program permits freely chosen activities.²⁶

Russell concluded by saying: "These general aims of the beginning reading period can, of course, be modified, expanded, or otherwise changed to meet the needs of a particular child or group of children."²⁷

Rapid development of reading skills. When children have progressed in most of the specific reading skills mentioned above they enter a period of rapid learning of

²⁶Russell, op. cit., pp. 207-208.

²⁷Ibid.

specific reading attitudes and abilities. The stages gradually merge together. The stage of rapid development of reading skills are normally found in the second and third grades. Russell states that by the end of this period children should be able to recognize at sight a large number of words, should be able to work out successfully the pronunciation of many unfamiliar words, should read orally with fluency, should read silently with good comprehension and at a rate faster than oral reading, should be able to do factual reading at a simple level in textbooks and references, and should be well started on reading for pleasure.²⁸

Russell states that the characteristics of the rapid progress stage are the same as listed for the initial period of learning to read, with a broadening of many activities. Specific aims given by Russell in addition to those of the initial stage of learning to read are summarized as:

1. A lively interest in reading for pleasure and information as shown by voluntary borrowing of books, bringing books to school, etc.
2. An attitude that will lead to a permanent interest in reading.
3. A desire to share some special story with others.
4. The habit of locating material by use of the table of contents.
5. The habit of self-helpfulness in using materials to gain information on class interests.
6. The habit of reading independently for information and pleasure.

²⁸Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

7. The ability to read, with ease and understanding, an average (second) (third) reader.
8. The ability to recognize, accurately and independently, new words in such readers by context, by known parts, by more detailed analysis.
9. The ability to read more rapidly silently than orally.
10. Ability to select and group ideas, answer questions, and follow directions.
11. In the third grade, the ability to master a word phonetically.
12. In third grade, knowledge of physical make-up of a book: (1) title page, (2) table of contents, (3) list of illustrations, (4) index.²⁹

Summary

Reading has in the past been taught to achieve such broad goals as eloquent oral reading, equipping individuals to read biblical material, building loyalty to the United States, providing moral lessons, developing interest and appreciation for literature, and building effective silent reading skills and habits.

Since the year 1925, there has been an agreement, among the recognized people in the field of reading, that reading should foster and develop permanent interests in reading and acquire those habits, skills and attitudes that enable children to read efficiently and that broaden and enrich each individual's experiences.

²⁹Russell, op. cit., pp. 208-209.

In general, in the primary grades, children are going through three phases of their development in reading ability. These are: (1) the development of reading readiness; (2) initial success in the first skills of reading; (3) rapid progress in the learning of basic habits, skills and attitudes connected with reading. There is no break between the different stages. The stages gradually merge into the next stage where they are continued. The initial period in learning to read is continuous with both the readiness period and the succeeding stage of rapid development.

The first part of the first grade is usually devoted to preparing for reading by carrying on a program of activities designed to promote readiness. The readiness period includes activities that will meet the needs of the child in emotional, social, physical and mental growth. The teacher plans to promote reading readiness through firsthand experiences and provides a stimulating atmosphere to develop readiness for reading instruction.

During the initial stages of reading the teacher seeks to provide experiences which help the child build a sight vocabulary, develop oral and silent reading skills, acquire means of attacking unknown words and to develop a desire to read. This period is usually found during the first grade.

The objectives of the rapid reading stage are to expand and broaden the aims of the previous stages. It is a period of rapid growth in which the child is becoming a

relatively independent reader. It is found in the second and third grades.

Instructional Patterns of Organization

Historical Instructional Patterns

The history of education shows that both individual and group instruction have had a long history. The art of reading has been taught individually to members of royal families and to people of wealth. Group instruction has been used since the days of early Greece. By 3000 B.C. it had evolved into a well graded sequence of studies with definite aims and works.³⁰

Individual instruction predominated as long as the number to be taught was small. As the need to educate the masses spread, group instruction was adopted.

One of the first group instruction practices originated in the Reformation and evolved into the highly organized German Volksschule of the nineteenth century. The leaders of the Protestant Revolt believed that everyone should be able to read and interpret the scriptures. They asserted that: "...it was the inherent right of each child to be

³⁰William S. Gray, "The Evolution of Patterns of Instructional Organization," Reading Instruction in Various Patterns of Grouping, Helen M. Robinson (ed.), Supplementary Educational Monographs, Number 89, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 14.

educated, and the State must not only see that the means are provided, but also require attendance at the schools."³¹

During the next two centuries, German leaders developed the Volksschule into one of the most highly organized, graded systems of elementary education in the world.³² All pupils in a grade were engaged in the same learning activities, and it was assumed that they would advance at the same rate. Failure to do so resulted in non-promotion.

A second pattern of instructional organization developed in England about this time. The leaders of England did not adopt the German pattern of education as the demand for popular education spread to their country. The ruling class believed that the state was not responsible for mass education. The English proponents for education freed the teachers from the control of bishops through licensing and encouraged the organization of schools by individuals and groups. As a result private schools, dame schools, charity schools, and ragged schools sprang up in England.³³ However, the proponents of popular education persisted for free schools which soon developed due to public opinion.

Andrew Bell, a clergyman, in 1797 set up a plan which provided for instruction of a hundred children under one

³¹Ibid.

³²Gray, op. cit., p. 15.

³³Ibid.

trained teacher with the help of many monitors. Following instructions given by the teacher, the pupils worked in groups of ten under the direction of the monitors who had been trained by the teacher to give the pupils help.

Historical Instructional Patterns in America

When schools were organized in the thirteen colonies they were largely under church-state control. Because a teacher taught pupils of various ages and who were at different stages of advancement the individual pattern of instruction predominated. As cities and the country grew, a need for the importance of education grew. The first response was to develop charity schools. This was supplemented by an effort to establish free public schools by such groups as the Free School Society of New York City.

The demand for mass education brought about the monitorial pattern of group instruction about 1806. This plan presented an organized scheme of classification and promotion. The plan was not successful due to the large number of students assembled in one room.

Education sank to a low efficiency between the years 1825 and 1840 due to the fact that both group and individual instruction had meager content, lacked sequence and were poorly organized. These conditions led Horace Mann to recommend the adoption of graded elementary schools. The

concept of the graded school spread during the decades that followed.

Preston W. Search, Superintendent of Schools, at Pueblo, Colorado, in 1888 to 1894, is credited with having fathered the first plan for returning to individualized instruction.³⁴ The Pueblo Plan, as devised by Search maintained the regular class organization but substituted individual activity, guided by the teacher, for group recitations outside regular class periods. One feature of the plan was the adjustment of time needed for completing a course of study to the capacity of the learner. It permitted the pupil to progress as rapidly as he could.

The Batavia Plan was developed by Superintendent John Kennedy of Batavia, New York. Even before the days of accurate measurement in education, it was obvious to Kennedy that the schools were failing to adapt themselves to some individuals. Kennedy devised a plan for coaching "laggards" in 1898. This plan was a method of coaching and encouraging the laggards; of keeping them up with the class. Usually two teachers were assigned in each room, one to conduct class activities and the other to supervise study activities.³⁵

³⁴Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: American Book Company, 1950), p. 37.

³⁵Guy M. Whipple (ed.) Adapting the Schools to Individual Differences. Twenty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Bloomington, Illinois: Public School Publishing Company, 1925), p. 32.

The Platoon School, also known as the Gary Plan, was developed in Bluffton, Indiana, by Superintendent William A. Wirt in 1900. It became more widely known and used after Wirt assumed the leadership of the Gary, Indiana, Schools. The plan was not originally conceived as a means of differentiating instruction but to make it possible for children who were slow in a subject to increase the time spent on that subject. The schools were open on Saturdays for individual instruction and pupils elected the work they wished to do.³⁶

By 1910 various patterns of grouping had been tried. Paul Monroe's A Cyclopedia of Education made the following statement:

An adequate scheme of grouping is essential if schools are to provide for increasing numbers of children and for maximum thought stimulation; that an ideal graded system is one in which all the pupils in a specific group are about the same age, level of advancement, and capacity to learn; and that homogeneous grouping can be approximate only, due to the variety of individual differences.³⁷

Various efforts to overcome such difficulties continued at this time. Special classes for the over-age pupils, the mentally retarded and hard of hearing were tried. Another plan was to place normal pupils who did not progress

³⁶Whipple, op. cit., p. 39.

³⁷William S. Gray, "The Evolution of Patterns of Instructional Organizations," Reading Instruction in Various Patterns of Grouping, Supplementary Educational Monographs, Number 89 (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1959), p. 17.

at the same rate as their classmates in separate homogeneous classes.

Following the review of these various efforts to meet the needs of all pupils, Monroe continued to say:

All the systems described '...are yet more or less in the experimental stage, and some of them involve administrative difficulties which can be met only in exceptional situations. It is evident, however, that all of them constitute important attempts to produce a system, which, while utilizing the economies and efficiency that result from a training of children in homogeneous groups, shall nevertheless have due regard to the individual in respect to those points at which his interest demands some variation from the standards imposed upon the group.'³⁸

Present Day Instructional Patterns

Organization of instruction on an individual basis was introduced by Frederic Burk at the San Francisco Normal School in 1913. This is generally conceded to be the first carefully organized effort to individualize instruction.³⁹ Burk's plans were based on individual progress and promotion. The features of the program included self-instructive textbooks organized by specific goals, individual progress cards permitting an accurate record of pupil achievement, self-instruction bulletins, and testing and promoting pupils when work on a subject on one grade was completed.

One of the limitations of Burk's plan was that the basic principles had not been developed in a public school

³⁸Gray, op. cit., p. 18.

³⁹Betts, op. cit., p. 39.

situation. Carleton Washburne, a former faculty member of Burk's, undertook Burk's work and developed it in Winnetka, Illinois.

William S. Gray clearly defined five basic principles underlying the Winnetka Plan. They were:

(1) a clear definition of the essentials of the fundamental subjects in terms of units of achievement; (2) self-instructive, self-corrective practice materials in these subjects; (3) diagnostic tests to measure achievement; (4) individual subject promotions, within certain limits, on the basis of achievement in the fundamental subjects; (5) and large emphasis on group and creative activities during certain periods of the day.⁴⁰

According to the plan, all children were required to master the common essentials; however, the time taken to master a skill or knowledge was adjusted to meet each child's needs and abilities. Each child worked individually on his own assignments and progressed at his own rate.

A plan for differentiating instruction was developed by Helen Parkhurst in Dalton, Massachusetts. The chief value of the plan lay in the freedom of the child to proceed at his own rate. The essential elements of the plan included: first, a type of individualization which permitted children to work in terms of their own capacity; second, carefully prepared assignments and sets of directions; third, elimination of a time schedule; fourth, freedom for the pupil to pursue his

⁴⁰Betts, op. cit., p. 40

own interest; and fifth, opportunity for the pupil to learn co-operation.⁴¹

During the last thirty years efforts to improve patterns of instruction have continued at an accelerated pace. Experiments have been carried on with sub-class and inter-grade grouping. The phrase "individualized teaching and self-selection" has been adopted to distinguish an instructional pattern from provisions for individual differences within a group.⁴²

The Thirty-fifth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, entitled The Grouping of Pupils, makes a distinction between the two types of grouping. Grouping denotes a classification of individuals, such as grade groups or ability groups which is based on the ability to achieve and learn. The second type of grouping is based on sociological factors. The groups are held together by common interests and objectives. It is with this latter type of grouping, heterogeneous, that this investigation was concerned.

Summary

Continuous effort for centuries to improve instructional patterns has been carried out by educators throughout the world. Throughout this period both group and individual

⁴¹Betts, op. cit., p. 41.

⁴²Gray, op. cit., p. 19.

instruction have played significant roles. The conclusion reached during the last century is that efficient teaching is not inherent in any single pattern of instructional organization. However, it can be achieved through the use of different types of class organization, an organization that is designed to meet the needs of each individual child.

Each generation has built upon the experiences and research of the past and has sought to improve existing instructional patterns or to develop new patterns. Further effort is necessary to find new types of class organization and patterns of teaching to achieve the goals of a good education.

Basal Readers and Their Use

Historical Development of Basal Readers

During the colonial period, 1607 to 1776, the most famous reading book was the New England Primer. The New England Primer was a Church book, but included much more than the earlier Catechism books. The book was a combination of religious manual, catechism, and speller and for over a hundred years was the chief school book. Reeder stated that it was a short step in the direction of a secularization of the course of study.⁴³

⁴³Rudolph R. Reeder, The Historical Development of School Readers and Method in Teaching Reading (New York: Columbia University, 1900), pp. 9-12.

Noah Webster constructed a series of readers under the title Grammatical Institute. This first appeared as a single book and in 1790 it was offered as three separate texts; one of these, The American Spelling Book, commonly known as "Webster's Blue Back Speller" became one of the most influential books America has ever known. These books had a moralistic tone but revealed the influence of a nationalistic spirit.⁴⁴

The first school reader in the modern sense of the term published in America was An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and Speaking. This was the third book of the series of Noah Webster. In the preface the author says: "In the choice pieces, I have been attentive to the political interest of America."⁴⁵ The book contained many selections by American statesmen and patriots.

Lyman Cobb was probably the first to compile a graded set of readers in America. Cobb's North American Reader stressed the objective of oral reading that belonged to the period 1776 to 1840. In the preface to the 1835 edition, Cobb states: "...give due attention to accent, emphasis, pauses, and the whole accompanied with expressive looks and significant gestures."⁴⁶

⁴⁴Paul Witty, Reading in Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath, 1949), pp. 2-3.

⁴⁵Reeder, op. cit., p. 36.

⁴⁶Lillian Gray, Teaching Children to Read (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1957), p. 33.

The series formed a progressive set of three books. Two others were later added, making a five book series. The books aimed more at instruction and the immediate interest of the child than at literature. They comprised stories, information lessons about animals, and a great many definitions, forming a sort of child's dictionary. All the words in each lesson not contained in preceding lessons were placed before it with the division, pronunciation, accentuation and definition noted.⁴⁷

After 1840, reading books were produced almost entirely in graded series. The great publishing success in the school-text field was the famous McGuffey Readers, the first complete set of which appeared between 1836 and 1844. McGuffey's books were successful partly because they were the first attempt to present a graded series consisting of one reader for each grade of the elementary school.⁴⁸

In range of subject matter it swept almost the entire field of human interest; morals, economics, politics, literature, history, science and philosophy. McGuffey departed from the religious, moralistic, and adult content characteristic of previous authors and introduced materials that were realistic situations from the child's own background. The

⁴⁷Reeder, op. cit., p. 48.

⁴⁸Russell, op. cit., p. 62.

traits were lessons of industry, thrift, economy, kindness, generosity, honesty, courage and duty.⁴⁹

Although McGuffey graded his readers only by a feeling for what children could do, modern educators bear out the fact that they increased gradually in difficulty. It was the beginning of controlled vocabulary.

From 1860 to 1880 little change took place in the character of school readers. Several new series were compiled during this period but the McGuffey Readers held the forefront.

Supplementary readers were ushered in about 1880 and showed two trends of development. In many schools the use of supplementary readers resulted in a duplication of series in order to 'freshen the student's interest' and to master the process to read by repetition of words in new combinations. In other schools supplementary reading supplied compressed classics and literary wholes.⁵⁰

In the years between 1880 and 1925 many different sets of graded readers were produced. These textbooks evidenced improvement in terms of better mechanical make-up, including the use of colored pictures, in the number of different words used, and inclusion of more variety in story content.⁵¹

⁴⁹Reeder, op. cit., pp. 50-51.

⁵⁰Reeder, op. cit., p. 58.

⁵¹Witty, op. cit., p. 4.

Reeder summed up the historical development of school readers to the period of 1900 with the following:

1. The era of one book, the church primer or bible.
2. The era of transition from the Bible to secular material, using one or two books between the primer and the Bible.
3. The era of one series.
4. The era of supplementary readers.
5. The era of classic literature.⁵²

Around 1927, preprimers for use in the first grade reading program were added to the basal reader series.⁵³ Supplementary materials to accompany the basal readers, such as flash cards, teacher's manuals, tests, and practice exercises also entered the scene.

Present-day Use of Basal Readers

In some schools of former days reading was done only from readers. The modern program consists of much more than reading from one book; but here as in other school practices, tradition dies hard.⁵⁴ Within recent years basic readers have changed and have improved in content, format, and mechanics of writing perhaps more than any other school texts. In general the modern basic reading series is constructed on four main principles, mainly: (1) it provides continuity of growth; (2) it provides for a wide variety of reading

⁵²Reeder, op. cit., p. 60.

⁵³Gertrude Hildreth, Teaching Reading (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958), p. 225.

⁵⁴Russell, op. cit., p. 147.

activities; (3) it provides a complete organization of reading experiences; and (4) it provides for a worth-while content of ideas.⁵⁵

Modern basic readers have been carefully written for gradation, variety, organization and content; however, these are only a part of the whole reading program; other materials have considerable value. "The modern teacher gives considerable place to a basic series in the program (reports indicate that about 95 per cent of teachers use basic series) but they never hesitate to use other materials as well."⁵⁶

Russell states that a typical modern series of readers may include the following:

- A reading readiness book
- Two or three preprimers
- A primer and first reader
- Two second readers
- Two third readers
- One or two each of fourth, fifth, and sixth readers
- Pupil workbooks to accompany the above
- Supplementary or enrichment books related to the basic books
- Supplementary materials such as word cards, charts, and tests of related content⁵⁷

In most American elementary schools the current practice is to choose a set of basal readers and to follow fairly closely the methods recommended by the authors, as explained in the manuals for teachers which accompany the

⁵⁵Russell, op cit., pp. 148-149.

⁵⁶Russell, op. cit., p. 149.

⁵⁷Russell, op. cit., p. 151.

readers. A plan for the use of basic readers that can be found in different manuals looks essentially as that found in Children Learn to Read by David Russell.

- A. Developing readiness for reading
 - 1. Through a check on adequate background experiences
 - 2. Through developing a meaningful vocabulary or concepts
 - 3. Through stimulating interest and setting up worthy reading purposes
- B. Guiding the first silent reading
 - 1. To stimulate interest in the selection
 - 2. To develop understanding of the whole
 - 3. To develop the habit of reading for a purpose
 - 4. To promote versatility in approaching lessons with different purposes
 - 5. To foster understanding of sequence and organization
 - 6. To discover words, concepts, and larger ideas which require further study
- C. Rereading for specific purposes
 - 1. To prepare for some worth-while activity based on the selection, such as story telling, dramatization, finding an interesting word, discovering a well-liked character, and answering questions
- D. Building essential habits and skills
 - 1. To develop word-recognition abilities through the use of picture clues, context clues, phonetic analysis and structural analysis and related techniques
 - 2. To increase comprehension of important ideas in words, sentences, paragraphs or complete selections
 - 3. To give practice in oral, silent, or audience reading
 - 4. Use of charts, blackboards, workbooks, and teacher-prepared materials related to the content of the selection
 - 5. Evaluation of pupils' progress by means of observations, informal tests, word games, and the reading of related materials
 - 6. To help the individual child as time allows

E. Enrichment activities

1. Encouraging discussion, organization of ideas, critical thinking about the materials, further reading of an independent and research nature and other art activities
2. Using reading in planning excursions, dramatic play, construction and other art activities⁵⁸

The most common practice for carrying on basic instruction in reading is the use of the three group organization. After a reading survey test has been given the class is divided into three groups on the basis of ability; the fast-moving, the average-moving and the slow-moving. The composition of these reading groups is flexible.

Experiments have shown that at least an hour should be devoted to reading in the morning and half an hour in the afternoon. Some schools devote an hour in the afternoon to reading also. The teacher divides her time among the three groups spending twenty minutes with each group in the morning and from ten to twenty minutes with each group in the afternoon. Children are working on reading activities when the teacher is with the other groups. This provides from ninety to one hundred twenty minutes per day of reading during class time for each child.

The typical lesson for each group follows the plan found on page 55 as stated by Russell. A fast-moving group may need very little of the extensive lesson plan; a slow

⁵⁸Russell, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

group may require a much slower pace and more detailed activities.

In 1953 Anderson surveyed current trends in the teaching of reading. He found that some schools were placing more reliance on several sets of basal readers and supplementary readers than upon strict adherence to a single basal reading series.⁵⁹

In 1957 Stewart made a survey of the instructional practices in reading in 107 cities of over 25,000 population in forty states. The responding schools indicated that a single basal, a co-basal or a tri-basal series was used in 90 per cent of the schools. More than half of those responding indicated the use of a single basal reader series.⁶⁰

Staiger surveyed 48 states and Hawaii and had a return of 77.07 per cent. The responding schools indicated that 69 per cent of them used one series of readers. Twenty per cent indicated two series, and 5.7 per cent used three series co-basally and 5.1 per cent used more than three series.⁶¹

⁵⁹Irving H. Anderson, "Current Trends in the Teaching of Reading," University of Michigan School of Education Bulletin, XXIV (January, 1953), 51.

⁶⁰David K. Stewart, "Values and Limitations of Basal Readers," Materials for Reading, Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 86 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 52.

⁶¹Ralph C. Staiger, "How are Basal Readers Used," Elementary English, XXXV (January, 1958), 46.

Gates made a two year study from 1956 to 1958 and found that basal reading systems were universally used; about 99 per cent of all schools used basal readers. He found that many used one series for basal work exclusively in grades one and two; others used two series co-basally, and others used more than two. The mean numbers of basal series used were: grade two, 1.5; grade three, 1.7. Gates concluded:

It may therefore be said that the use of one or two sets of basal reading books and materials, and a teaching procedure embodying the main features outlined in basal manuals is the prevailing form of reading instruction in today's schools.⁶²

He continued to say that basal readers do tempt the teacher to pursue a good deal of mass instruction. The books are so easily managed and skillfully arranged sequentially that they make it easy to put whole classes or large groups together for instruction.⁶³

These studies all support the conclusion that there is a trend to move away from the single series basic reader. However, it is evident that at least 95 per cent of the schools use basic reading texts. Research has been non-existent at the primary grade level to show the superiority of the approach of a single series text to that of multiple series texts.

⁶²Arthur I. Gates, "Improvements in Reading Possible in the Near Future," The Reading Teacher, XII (December, 1958), 84.

⁶³Ibid.

The traditional core of the elementary reading program has been the basic reader. Witham states:

Within the past decade however, educational research has pointed out the fallacy and ineffectiveness of the "one for all" approach in meeting the individual needs of each pupil--particularly with respect to the slow and talented readers. The movement away from a dependence on a single reader has continued...No basic reader can hope to understand the particular culture of each school and community and present stories which hold appeal and meaning to all of the various socio-economic backgrounds of children.⁶⁴

O'Leary stated:

...despite the increasing use of multi-level reading kits, this basic reading series program still continues to maintain its status as the most widely used and the most popularly known equipment for one important part of an effective reading program--namely, the developmental phase wherein sequential aspects are analyzed, recognized, planned for and carefully paced through a series of graded readers arranged in levels of reading difficulty.⁶⁵

Many of the authors of reading series and leading textbooks do not recommend a program of reading instruction based on a single basic reading series. Following are statements from reading authorities to support this fact.

Ruth Strang states that the single basic reading text does not meet individual differences in reading abilities and interest. The recognition of these abilities in every

⁶⁴A. D. Witham, "Basal and Co-Basal Reading Series," Elementary English, XL (February, 1963), 194.

⁶⁵H. F. O'Leary, "Preserve the Basic Reading Program," Education, LXXXIV (September, 1963), 12.

grade has given impetus to the individualizing of reading instruction. It was first thought that the problem of individual differences could be solved through intra-class grouping, into three groups, slow, average and superior. "Although grouping of this kind was in the right direction it did not provide for the individual differences that still existed in a group."⁶⁶

David Russell states, "Although modern basic readers have been carefully written for gradation, variety, organization and content the good teacher uses them as only part of her whole reading program."⁶⁷ Russell further stated:

The modern teacher, then, gives considerable place to a basic series in her program (reports indicate that over 95 per cent of teachers use basic series), but she never hesitates to use other materials as well. With the concept of "reading for use," materials from other curricular fields will naturally take their place alongside the basic series as part of the materials of the reading program.⁶⁸

Durrell stated: "Basal readers become in most schools, the course of study in reading skills for most grades--but for the average pupil only."⁶⁹ Durrell stated the belief that slower learners and faster learners must be provided with separate reading programs and materials if they are to develop their reading powers effectively. He said that no

⁶⁶Ruth Strang, The Improvement of Reading (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1961), pp. 39-40.

⁶⁷Russell, op. cit., p. 106.

⁶⁸Russell, op. cit., pp. 106-107.

⁶⁹Durrell, op. cit., p. 23.

basal reader can provide enough material to assure every child mastery of each phase of reading instruction nor does a child learn to read by the use of a basal reader alone.⁷⁰

Dolch made this point: "The fundamental problem in use of a basic reader is that the reader is one-grade reading level and the class in any room is at anywhere from 3 to 7 grade reading levels."⁷¹ He further concluded that

...the children still need practice in reading at their true reading level. That is they need a free reading period when each child gets a book at his true level and reads it with interest and understanding.⁷²

He contends that this is a necessity under any plan of using a basic reader because no single basic reader can be at five levels.

Paul Witty felt that teachers in the past have depended almost entirely upon the use of a single textbook for instruction in reading. Today teachers recognize the need for a broader approach in reading. A balanced reading program by offering wide reading experiences from a wide variety of materials will care for individual differences.⁷³

Ruth Strickland stated: "Some teachers and educational leaders stay close to textbooks because these are

⁷⁰Durrell, op. cit., p. 29.

⁷¹Edward William Dolch, Teaching Primary Reading (Champaign Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1950), p. 326.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Paul Witty, Reading in Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1949), p. 136.

carefully written (especially the so-called "readers") with a controlled vocabulary and simple structure."⁷⁴ However, Strickland contends that children, in their own speech, do not confine themselves to simple sentences and their speaking vocabulary goes beyond that of the reading textbooks.

Hildreth's viewpoint is that a criterion for a successful program is the extent to which varied reading instruction provisions are made for children of similar age and grade level. She felt that today's lockstep can be broken because of the extensive experimentation in grouping and personalized instruction. She stated:

With a supply of information books and recreational reading at hand it is no longer necessary to limit reading lessons to standard lesson books. Today readers have ceased to be the only resource for instruction even in the primary grades.⁷⁵

Hildreth further stated:

The better plan for the primary grades is to purchase multiple of copies of each of the leading series, from five hundred to a thousand books in all, and to maintain the collection in a central depository in the building from which the teacher makes selection in any needed level, and quantity.⁷⁶

Harris contended that materials for a rich, well-rounded reading program should include: "Several sets of basal readers, in numbers appropriate for the groups using

⁷⁴Ruth G. Strickland, The Language Arts (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1951), p. 313.

⁷⁵Gertrude Hildreth, Teaching Reading (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1958), p. 24.

⁷⁶Hildreth, op. cit., p. 273.

them, ranging in difficulty from readers appropriate for the lowest group to difficult readers intended for the grade."⁷⁷

Summary

During the colonial period, 1607 to 1776 the most famous reading book was the New England Primer. The New England Primer was followed by the American Spelling Book which held the field during the period of 1790 to 1820. The first graded series of readers, books with vocabulary control, were the McGuffey Readers which appeared around 1830. From that time to the present graded basic series have been produced.

Basal readers are used today in as many as 95 per cent of the elementary schools. There has been a trend to move away from the single basal reading series to multiple basal reading series. However, there has been no research in the primary grades which proves the superiority of multiple basal readers over a single basal reading series.

Many authors of reading series and textbooks emphasize that the reading instructional program should not be based upon a single basal reading series. These authors recommend a reading program based upon several basal reader series, supplementary materials and library materials.

⁷⁷Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (third edition; New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1960), p. 129.

Individualized Reading Programs

Dissatisfaction with present outcomes of reading instruction, meeting individual needs and interest, has led to a search for new instructional patterns in the classroom. Generally, most schools have been following the basal reader group approach in the teaching of reading.

Under such a program most children have learned to read. However, the slow child and gifted child have not had a program commensurate with their abilities. It is for these reasons that educators have been seeking a new approach to the teaching of reading. One new development has been the individualized reading approach.

Historical Development of Individualized Reading

When reading instruction was first provided for children, it was taught on the individualized basis. The child was taught as an individual by a scribe, a priest, a tutor or some member of his family. In the early Dame Schools in America each child was taught individually and progressed at his own rate. A small group of children would gather in the Dame's kitchen and each one would recite to her from his own place in the Bible or primer.⁷⁸ Finally mass education was extended to all children and with the publishing of the McGuffey Readers, mass instruction followed.

⁷⁸Nila B. Smith, "Classroom Organization: An Age-Old Problem with New Slants," The Reading Teacher, XI (December, 1957), p. 73.

In the 1920's intelligence testing was advanced and its results pointed out individual differences in ability. With this, experiments in individualized instruction were being carried out in a few places.

Various attempts in the past have been initiated due to the recognition of the differences in children in capacity and achievement. A number of plans for adjusting instruction to individual differences was presented in the Twenty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. The plans were discussed in a previous section of this report. Of particular significance to individualized reading was the Winnetka Plan as reported by Washburne. According to Washburne's plan, all children were required to master the common essentials but each child worked individually on his own assignments and progressed at his own rate.

Washburne stated that reading, "the cornerstone of the entire school edifice above the first grade, fortunately is the most easily individualized."⁷⁹ Washburne presented two plans for individualizing basal reading instruction. One plan made use of materials prepared for use in the Winnetka Schools for use in an individualized plan. The other plan involved the differentiated use of well-known basal reading materials.

⁷⁹Emmett A. Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: American Book Company, 1950), p. 41.

Washburne indicated that there were difficulties of individualizing instruction for beginning readers. He stated:

The most difficult part of the entire curriculum to individualize is beginning reading. The children come to school with no study habits and with none of the tools for learning that can be relied upon in later grades. We rely upon the pupil's skill in reading to make self-instruction possible in grades above the first.⁸⁰

Present-day Individualized Reading

Individualized reading recognizes, accepts and respects the fact that children differ and that each child is an individual in his own right, with his own thoughts, secrets, drives, motivations, will, wishes, desires and learning make-up. It also recognizes that for each child, reading is a personal, individual experience and often a private affair. It attempts to meet individual differences by dealing with them individually. Reading guidance and teaching are tailored to the child. Each child is taught the reading skills when he needs them. Therefore, he sees the need for these skills as important and worth achieving.

Individualized reading recognizes that a child's interest is a great motivating and sustaining factor in learning. Interest is that inner drive that impels a child to stay with the experience he is having and helps him to learn and master any necessary skill to complete the experience. Interest encourages the child to want to share the

⁸⁰Ibid.

reading and it further helps him to organize his motivations and his thinking.

Individualized reading has a greater awareness of the child's role in his own learning process. It recognizes that to be a reader a child has to know how to manage himself; he must at times initiate, organize and construct his own reading experiences and reactions. It not only allows, but encourages the basic elements or drives of self-selection, self-seeking and self-pacing.

Olsen states that these concepts are consistent with a child's maturity and his needs. As applied to the reading program a child explores his classroom environment seeking reading materials; he then selects books which are appropriate for him at the time. The child has the opportunity to read at his own pace in which the teacher is responsible to furnish the experiences to each child at a rate which will assure success at the child's maturity level.⁸¹

Lazar states that in considering the basic elements of self-seeking, self-selection and self-pacing, it can be seen that individualized reading helps the child to help himself. In self-selection the child has the opportunity in his regular school reading time to choose his reading materials according to his interests and drives. In order to allow the principle of self-selection to operate at its

⁸¹Jeannette Veatch, Individualizing Your Reading Program (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), pp. 89-95.

optimum a wide array of books are needed. Self-selection gives the child the opportunity to explore the world of books.⁸²

In self-seeking the child has the opportunity to explore his reading environment and seek from it those experiences that are in tune with his maturity. He is encouraged to seek the help he needs to be a better reader with the materials he can handle.⁸³

In self-pacing the child has the opportunity to read at his own pace the materials he has chosen independently and learns how to fit his pacing into his maturity.⁸⁴

Veatch stated that in actual practice variations and confusions exist in individualized reading. The term individualized reading seems to imply that grouping never occurs. This is not the case as there is need for grouping in individualized reading; grouping is employed as needed and for specific purposes. The term self-selection implies the denial of the instructional role of the teacher. This also is not the case; each pupil selects, with teacher guidance, the material he will read.

⁸² May Lazar, "A Practical Guide to Individualized Reading" (New York: Board of Education, City of New York Bureau of Educational Research, Publication No. 40, October, 1960), p. 7.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Although some variation exists among the different individualized reading programs, it has certain prime characteristics that occur regardless of the variations in practice that are found throughout the country. The characteristics of individualized reading are: (1) self-selection of materials by pupils; (2) individual conferences between each pupil and teacher, and (3) groups organized for other than reason of ability or proficiency in reading.⁸⁵

Elements that are essential in carrying out an individualized reading program are unanimously agreed upon by proponents of individualized reading. Lazar,⁸⁶ Veatch,⁸⁷ Groff⁸⁸ and Dietrich⁸⁹ agree that the following elements are necessary in carrying out an individualized program:

1. A large classroom library made up of basal and supplementary readers, trade books brought from home by the children or borrowed from libraries.
2. A free choice by the children of the reading materials depending upon interest or reading ability.

⁸⁵Veatch, op. cit., p. ix.

⁸⁶Lazar, op. cit., pp. 27-55.

⁸⁷Veatch, op. cit., pp. 38-58.

⁸⁸Patrick J. Groff, "Getting Started with Individualized Reading," Elementary English, XXXVII (February, 1960), pp. 105-111.

⁸⁹Dorothy M. Dietrich, "Today's Research: Tomorrow's Readers," Reading in a Changing Society, International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, Vol. IV (New York: Scholastic Magazine, 1959), p. 233.

3. A follow-up activity which may be a series of questions devised by the teacher pertaining to each book, a general report of the book read, a visual presentation of the highlights of the book, or a discussion of the book with other children, etc.
4. A conference between each child and the classroom teacher, the number of conferences to be determined by need, with accurate records kept by the teacher.
5. A reading skill program which may be taught individually, to a small flexible group, or the whole class depending upon the needs.

Recent Studies of Individualized Reading Programs

Gates studied the merits of a modern systematic method of teaching reading and an "opportunistic" method of teaching reading which was highly individualized in Horace Mann School, Teachers College, in 1923 to 1924. Twenty-five pairs of matched first graders were used in the experiment. The purpose of the investigation was to determine which method was superior. The systematic method followed a definite course of study with a period for daily lessons prescribed, while the opportunistic method utilized a less definite program of studies, activities were designed more in accordance with the interests of the pupils, and reading instruction was highly individualized. The findings in respect to achievement in oral and silent reading were favorable to systematic teaching. The evidence indicated that the opportunistic method was advantageous in respect to the development of interest,

initiative, determination and other personal and social traits.⁹⁰

Zirbes, Keller and Miner studied the merits of an intensive systematic approach in reading with independent, individualized reading in the second grade in 1925. The results showed that the average growth in reading ability was the same for each group. The brighter children profited more from independent reading and the slower children from intensive instruction.⁹¹

In 1938, children in the primary grades at the Nassau School in East Orange, New Jersey, selected their own reading materials from a large number of easy books. Boney and Leman conducted a study to determine whether or not the children who received reading instruction from a wide variety of books with an uncontrolled vocabulary did as well as children who used preprimers, and primers of a basal reading program with a controlled vocabulary. The conclusions reached from the findings of the study were:

Our study shows that when one is working with children of average and above average intelligence, there can be far greater choice in the use of materials in the beginning phase of first grade reading than modern reading programs permit. There is no real evidence that the common practice of selecting the reading materials for children of this level on the basis of the intelligence quotient is good.⁹²

⁹⁰William S. Gray, "Reading," Encyclopedia of Educational Research (third edition; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 1121.

⁹¹ibid.

⁹²C. Dewitt Boney and Edna Leman, "Individuality in Beginning Reading," Education LIX (September, 1938), pp. 17-20.

They reached the conclusion that reading can be taught individually in classes of approximately thirty children; the teacher is in a position to deal with the intellectual, emotional and physical side of each child, and the most significant was that the teacher was able to give the needed help to each child.⁹³

Karlin reported the results of an experiment in Pittsburg, California, in 1954. Third grade classes were used in a sixteen month study. The control group used the basal reader approach and the experimental group used an individualized reading approach. The results of testing showed that the children who participated in the control basal reader group made slightly greater gains in vocabulary and comprehension than the children in the individualized reading group.⁹⁴

Cyrog reported on a three year study conducted during the years 1954 to 1957. Individualized reading was used continuously throughout the study. Although no control group was used the test results showed that: (1) individualized reading can be successfully used in first grade; and (2) when individualized reading is used as the basic

⁹³Boney, op. cit., p. 20

⁹⁴Robert Karlin, "Some Reactions to Individualized Reading," The Reading Teacher, XI (December, 1957), pp. 95-98.

reading method for a period of two or three years, better than average results occur.⁹⁵

In 1956 Anderson reported a study which included laboratory and public school children. The laboratory school children were introduced to reading when ready for it by highly individualized methods. The use made of basal readers in the experimental group was limited and not systematic. The children were allowed to choose their own books and read at their own rates. The public school children used a systematic approach. A comparative study was made of the two during their first year. The investigation concluded that "the basic systematic approach employed by the public school enables the children to learn to read early and reduces the individual variation in age of learning to read."⁹⁶ Conversely, the practice used by the laboratory school delayed the age of beginning reading and maximized the individual variation which occurred in this connection.

In 1956 Gray reviewed all the studies he could secure in an international survey of individualized reading. More than four-fifths of the studies were conducted in English speaking countries. The conclusions of his studies were:

⁹⁵Francis Cryog, "The Principal and His Staff Move Forward in Developing New Ways of Thinking About Reading," California Journal of Elementary Education, XXVII (February, 1959), pp. 178-87.

⁹⁶William S. Gray, "Reading," Encyclopedia of Educational Research (third edition; New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 1121.

(1) the results in research do not indicate conclusively which of the various methods in use is best; (2) specific methods of teaching reading secure equally good results among all members of the group. This fact was revealed in practically every experiment which reported the distribution of scores made; (3) contrasting methods of teaching produced different results; and (4) good initial progress in reading resulted from emphasis on both meaning and word recognition.⁹⁷

The Los Angeles County Schools conducted a two year study in the years 1955 to 1957. A comparative study was used to see if self-selection (individualized reading) in reading could be successfully carried out in the second grade. The control and experimental groups consisted of four classes each. The children were comparable in mental age, intelligence and socio-economic background. The teachers were matched in educational training and experience. In the control group conventional reading using the basic reader was used and the experimental group used self-selection. The results of standardized tests showed that the self-selection procedure produced significantly greater gains in the areas of reading vocabulary, reading comprehension and total reading over the conventional basic text group. Twenty-five per cent of the control group had a total reading gain of more than 1.6 years, while 46 per cent of the experimental

⁹⁷Gray, op. cit., p. 1122.

group scored within this range. The conclusion reached was that self-selection (individualized reading) can be successfully used in the second grade.⁹⁸ A principal of one of the involved schools stated:

For the first time I believe I am teaching reading in accordance with my knowledge of the way children grow and develop. This is a reading program which has no quarrel with what we know about how children learn. For any teacher truly interested in meeting individual needs self-selection in reading is the answer.⁹⁹

During the period from September 1956 through June 1959, the New York City Schools conducted a survey of approximately 80 schools and 200 classes engaged in developing individualized reading. The study involved all grades from the first to the sixth. The purpose of the study was to find practices and approaches which would meet specifically the needs, interests, and the ranges of ability of the children. These studies and an evaluation of the findings seemed to point to the fact that the solution lay in a truly individual approach to reading.

A questionnaire dealing with teacher's evaluations of individualized reading was submitted to a number of teachers who had been working with this approach. In summing up the responses it was evident that these teachers felt that individualized reading with its emphasis on wide reading revealed

⁹⁸Marian Jenkins, "Self-Selection in Reading," The Reading Teacher, XI (December, 1957), pp. 84-90.

⁹⁹Jenkins, op. cit., p. 85.

that children were reading more, learning more, and making reading an intimate and integral part of their daily living and thinking.¹⁰⁰

The evidence gathered in the study by standardized tests indicated that pupils tended to make larger gains on standardized reading tests with individualized reading than with the program that was more commonly used for a commensurate amount of school time.¹⁰¹

Bohnhorst and Sellars reported a study undertaken by one first-grade, two second-grade, and two third-grade teachers to ascertain the merits of an individualized reading program versus a basal reading program. The last half of the school year was divided into two periods of eight weeks each. Each of the five teachers proceeded with a basal program during one of the periods; during the other period she pursued an individualized reading program with the top reading group. In conclusion the authors stated:

The net result from these exploratory findings is only a suggestion which might be used in guiding further more rigorously controlled investigations... the suggestion is that in the longer haul individualized instruction may enhance the development of abler readers.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰May Lazar, "A Practical Guide to Individualized Reading," (New York: Board of Education, City of New York Bureau of Educational Research, Publication No. 40, October, 1960), p. 121.

¹⁰¹Lazar, op. cit., p. 135.

¹⁰²Ben A. Bohnhorst and Sophi Sellars, "Individualized Reading Instruction vs. Basal Textbook Instruction: Some Tentative Explorations," Elementary English, XXVI (March, 1959), p. 190.

Sartain made a study at Roseville, Minnesota, during the school year 1958-1959. The study was to determine whether second graders would make greater progress in reading skills when taught by the individual self-seeking approach or when taught by the basal reader approach. Ten classes were used in the experiment. Five classes began in the individualized reading approach and five classes began in the basic reader approach. The basic reading approach grouped the children according to ability. At the end of a three month period the classes were switched and the five classes of individualized reading were grouped by ability and taught by the basic reader approach. The basic reader group at the end of the three month period were then taught by the individualized approach. At the end of the six month study, Sartain concluded from the statistical results that: (1) second graders make more progress during the first three months of school than during the second three months regardless of methods; (2) capable students make the same gains in reading under both methods; (3) slower pupils make a greater gain following the basic reader program in vocabulary; and (4) individual conferences provide strong motivation.¹⁰³

¹⁰³Harr W. Sartain, "The Roseville Experiment with Individualized Reading," The Reading Teacher, XIII (April, 1960), pp. 277-81.

Sartain stated:

In summary, because this study and others that have been carefully controlled show that the individualized method does not produce better reading gains than a strong basal program, there is no reason to forfeit the advantages of a well-planned basic system. Instead the individual conferences should be obtained by their addition to the basic reader plan.¹⁰⁴

Karlin reported on a doctoral investigation of Claire Walker in Michigan. Walker used 456 children which were matched in reading ability, intelligence quotient and socio-economic background in an experiment using individualized reading group and the basic reading group in reading gains. The children in individualized reading did however, show greater interest in reading and read more books than the basic reading group.¹⁰⁵

In 1960, Izzo compared the word identification achievement of pupils taught by the individualized method with that of pupils taught by the group method in beginning reading in the first grade. Izzo found that: (1) no significant differences existed in the effectiveness of the two teaching methods, individual and group, in the teaching of word identification in beginning reading to selected first graders; (2) the children in group instruction tended to perform more effectively in the use of phonetic analysis;

¹⁰⁴Sartain, op. cit., p. 281.

¹⁰⁵Robert Karlin, "Some Reactions to Individualized Reading," The Reading Teacher, XI (December, 1957), pp. 97-98.

(3) children in the experimental group performed as effectively as the control group in the use of word form, meaning of opposites and pictures association; (4) the girls who were taught by the individualized method performed as effectively in the use of word identification as the girls taught by the group method, the same fact was true for the boys; and (5) regardless of the teaching method, the youngest and oldest first grade pupils made effective use of word identification.¹⁰⁶

Two groups of first graders were used for the study. The teachers of the groups were equal in training and experience. The children were equivalent in age, reading readiness, and mental ability.

In Braidford's study, in 1960, using the same subjects that Izzo had used, the reading comprehension achievement of two groups of first grade children, one group taught by an individual method and the other taught by a group method, was compared. Based upon standardized test results the study revealed the following conclusions: (1) there was no significant difference in the reading comprehension achievement of pupils taught by the individual method as compared to those taught by the group method; (2) there was no significant difference for various age groups taught by the

¹⁰⁶Ruth Kelley Izzo, "A Comparison of Teaching Methods," New York University, New York, 1960, Dissertation Abstracts, XXI (November, 1960), pp. 1138-39.

group method or individualized method; (3) the range of achievement in reading comprehension was similar in both groups; and (5) for both teaching methods, a significant relationship existed between reading readiness and reading comprehension achievement; however, only those children taught by the group method showed a significant relationship between mental ability and comprehension achievement.¹⁰⁷

An action research project was undertaken in the Alachua County Schools, Florida, in 1960. Two second grade classes participated in the study. One class used an individualized reading program and the other class served as a control group using reading groups and a reading series. There were no differences between the two classes in I.Q. scores. In four months, the control group gained an average of 3.04 months; the experimental group gained an average of 7.32 months. Gordon concluded that the individualized reading program was demonstrably superior to the standard reading program. "Not only did pupils achieve better on a standardized test but they read more and increased in self-confidence."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁷ Margret Braidford, "A Comparison of Two Teaching-Methods, Individual and Group, In the Teaching of Comprehension in Beginning Reading to Selected First Grade Children in the Public Schools of Great Neck, New York," New York University, New York, 1960. Dissertation Abstracts, XX (October, 1960), pp. 4600-01.

¹⁰⁸ Ira J. Gordon, "An Experiment in Individualized Reading," Childhood Education XXXVIII (November, 1961), p. 113.

In 1961 Sperry made a study of three reading instructional patterns; the basal, the individualized, and a pattern termed unclassified. The reading instructional patterns were used by 145 teachers in grades one, two, and three and were identified by means of a questionnaire; relationships were then determined between reading achievement of pupils as measured by standardized tests. Sperry concluded that the individualized instructional pattern was significantly superior to the basal and the unclassified patterns in promoting reading achievement.¹⁰⁹

Adams concluded an experiment in 1962 in the Englewood, Colorado Schools with first grade children. Adam's study was undertaken to determine the strengths and weaknesses of two reading programs, the individualized reading program and a modified basal program. Based upon standardized tests the study revealed the following conclusions: (1) both reading programs were effective in teaching reading to first grade children; (2) the individualized reading group had a larger sight vocabulary than the modified reading group; (3) no significant differences existed between the two groups in word discrimination; (4) the two groups did not differ widely in silent and oral reading habits; (5) the individualized reading group was superior in work-study habits; (6) an

¹⁰⁹Florence Boyd Sperry, "The Relationship Between Patterns of Reading Achievement in the Primary Grades," University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 1961. Dissertation Abstracts XXII (July, 1961), p. 129.

individualized reading program was valuable for developing positive reading attitudes and high interest among pupils, including those making slow progress. A modified basal reading program was weak in this respect; (7) basal readers are not essential for developing sight vocabularies among first grade pupils; and (8) materials at many difficulty levels should be utilized in reading programs in order to meet the wide range of ability among first grade children.¹¹⁰

Summary

During the past decade individualized reading has become widely publicized. However, the literature revealed that individualized instruction is not new. When reading instruction was first provided for children, it was taught on the individualized basis. The advent of the graded elementary school led to mass instruction and group approaches. In the 1920's intelligence testing was advanced and its results pointed out individual differences in ability. Once again the pendulum began to swing and individualized reading made a reappearance in the 1920's. Several studies of individualized reading were reported in the years following.

Much of the literature surveyed described classroom procedures and methods to follow in an individualized

¹¹⁰Phylliss Stevens Adams, "An Investigation of an Individualized Reading Program and a Modified Basal Reading Program in First Grade," University of Denver, 1962. Dissertation Abstracts, XXIII (September, 1962), p. 945.

reading program. Studies at the primary grade level of individualized reading programs have been limited in number. The studies that have been done are conflicting in their findings. Some of the recent researchers have concluded that individualized reading programs are superior to basal reading programs; other studies have yielded evidence to the contrary.

Most studies indicated that there were no significant differences between groups of children who were taught by individualized reading or those who were taught by basic reading. The one element that most of the researchers were in agreement with was that individualized reading is far superior in promoting reading interests, attitudes and a desire to read more books.

In the light of these findings, it is apparent that there is a great need for further research on individualized reading programs at the primary level. A major objective of reading is to cultivate interest in personal reading that will illuminate, direct, and inspire the future lives of all readers. In view of this individualized reading should continue to be used in classrooms.

PROPOSED INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM

Guidelines for Individualized Reading

Administration of the Program

Setting. The place to start individualized reading is in the teacher's mind. A teacher must do only as much as she feels secure in doing. The usual pattern of a ten pupil reading group will be absent. The teacher will be teaching children to read in many books rather than in the same ones over and over again. The teacher will be working with one child. That child will be reading a book that he has chosen and will read this to the teacher during the conference time. The teacher and the student will have a private lesson. When that child finishes, another will come up for his conference. The teacher will be able to work with from six to twelve children a day.

In addition the teacher will be working with a series of small groups. These groups will be of short duration and constantly changing. Once the purpose of the group is accomplished it is disbanded and another one is formed for another purpose.

The second step is deciding when to start the program. In the first grade, children are ready to start when they have gained enough skill in word recognition and word analysis to read independently. First graders will have the usual reading readiness program and during this time the teacher can get them ready to work on an individual plan.

There will be no problem as to when second and third grade can begin.

It will be necessary in the second and third grade to determine reading level. The reading achievement level can be checked by means of tests or by having a child read in a succession of books in a basic reader series. The teacher must know her children. Teachers are aware that knowing the child is basic to any good teaching and is imperative to any learning. The teacher must take time to determine the child's comfortable reading level, his strengths and weaknesses and the skills he needs. This is not done to pinpoint the exact grade level of reading at which the child must perform at all times but to ascertain the different levels of books that must be acquired for the room.

Information can be gathered from available test records and other school records. Some teachers administer an informal oral book test to help determine level and skill needs. Other teachers administer standardized silent reading tests or tests found in a number of children's magazines and other sources. Notes should be made of these findings and used as a reference when working with children.

It is most desirable to begin individualized reading after about the third week of school. During this time the teacher can prepare herself and the children for an individualized approach. Through the use of reading groups during this period the teacher is better equipped to know her

children and to give them guidance in self-selection and self-pacing.

Equipment. Reading is taught with those materials that children choose to read. There is a free choice of materials. This means that materials of many types, many subjects, and on many levels of difficulty are needed. The range of reading is usually found to be within two grade levels lower and two grade levels higher than the actual grade placement.

1. Books. Basal reading books, supplementary reading books, and trade books are all used in an individualized program. When using basal readers it is advisable to have only a few copies of many different series than many copies from one or two series. Some trade books are a must and the demand is great for certain copies; in that event the classroom should have two or three copies of the book. But in most instances, one copy of the book is sufficient.

Many books are provided during the year; they are constantly being rotated. It is advisable to change the books about every three weeks. Estimates made by teachers carrying out individualized reading programs indicate a wide range of minimums. Some say that a minimum of three different titles per child is needed, therefore, in a class of thirty pupils, at least ninety books are required. Others say that a minimum of seven books per child is needed,

therefore, in a class of thirty pupils, at least 200 books must be available. The minimum number of books will be determined by how often the teacher changes the books.

The books should represent a wide range of difficulty, format, theme and style. Such a wide range and variety is necessary for self-selection to operate at its optimum. At the first grade level, books ranging in difficulty from the easiest picture books on a pre-reading level to books of at least third grade difficulty are provided. Continually throughout the year the range of reading ability within the classroom is assessed and the difficulty of materials adjusted accordingly. In the second and third grade the range of books should be ranging in difficulty from a pre-primer to fourth and fifth grade reading level.

Teachers who are starting an individualized reading program need to tap many sources. Books are available from the following places:

- a. Individual class libraries
- b. School libraries
- c. Local libraries
- d. Curriculum libraries
- e. Order trade books from regular book order
- f. Order one or two copies of supplementary readers that the school does not have
- g. The P.T.A. could have a book fair
- h. Trade some of the classroom books with another teacher for those which the classroom does not have

- i. Take the class to the library and see that each child has a card
- j. Write to the county or state libraries and request loans
- k. Encourage children to bring books from home
- l. Hunt through second hand book stores or service organizations
- m. Thoroughly explore the school's storeroom
- n. Ask for book samples which principals and administrators frequently receive
- o. Join a paperback book club
- p. Subscribe to a children's book club

2. Teacher-pupil prepared materials. A type of reading material that is important in the primary grades is the experience story that has been dictated by the children to the teacher. These stories, written on the chalkboard by the teacher and later transferred to charts, may center around any number of experiences shared by the group. Experience charts include:

- a. Accounts of trips taken by the class
- b. Accounts of activities in the classroom
- c. Records of experiments
- d. Accounts of "Things We Want to Find Out" in relation to units of work
- e. Records of plans
- f. Diaries of things happening each day at school
- g. News reports

In addition, experience charts may be developed following discussion of such topics as how to be a good worker in the classroom, playground rules to observe, and directions for fire drills. The teacher will find many experiences in the classroom which can be used for this purpose.

A second type of experience record of use in an individualized reading program is the story dictated to the teacher by an individual child. This type of reading material is often produced in connection with a picture drawn by the child. Booklets can be made from the individual stories and placed on a book table where all of the children in the room can select them for reading.

3. Teacher prepared materials. There are times when the teacher prepares a chart story without benefit of class dictation. Such stories are often developed for the purposes of introducing specific sight words in the primary grades or for providing additional repetition of previously introduced sight words. In the second and third grades this can be in the form of announcements of coming events in the classroom and in the school, poetry charts, daily news and written directions.

4. Other reading materials. Magazines in abundance should be found in the classrooms. Examples of magazines are

Humpty Dumpty, Jack and Jill, Wee Wisdom and Highlights for Children.

There are sets of self-testing graded reading materials that can be used. Examples of these types of materials are: SRA Reading Laboratory: Elementary Edition and The Reader's Digest Reading Skill Builders.

Paperbacks should be found in abundance. The Arrow Book Club provides paperback editions of children's books.

Newspapers such as My Weekly Reader and Weekly Surprise are good sources to use. Old editions of newspapers can be cut up and mounted on tagboard and compiled into books.

The Children's Reading Service Audio-Visual Catalog lists the audio-visual materials that can be used in primary grades. Filmstrips which are designed especially for use in reading programs make a valuable contribution.

Reading workbooks are used. It is desirable to have a few copies of many different workbooks. These can be cut up and mounted on tagboard. The pages should be filed according to the reading skill involved. When children need practice on a specific skill they can be referred to the file. It is desirable to use the workbook sheets as non-consumable.

Room arrangement. A place needs to be found for the books where a number of children can come to make their choice without crowding each other. A large table will

serve this purpose. The books should be so arranged that the subject is easily identified.

The teacher will need to find a quiet corner for the conferences. The chairs should be placed side by side due to the fact that children do better when they are beside the teacher rather than in front of her. The conference period needs a certain degree of privacy. The teacher should check the arrangement to see if children can move freely around the room without disturbing the conference.

Independent activity centers should be placed throughout the room where children can work independently when their reading work has been completed. Types of independent activity centers to be used are found in a later section of this study.

Routines. Routines must be established so that the whole reading program runs smoothly. The teacher and the children will need to establish the routines together and the more complex routines need to be carefully supervised by the teacher.

Two routines that must be given special consideration by the teacher in an individualized reading program are: (1) developing a procedure for children to follow when selecting and returning books; and (2) planning for ways to help children with unknown words which they encounter.

Children keep the books they are currently reading in their desks; however, a procedure for returning the books

after they have been read must be worked out with the children. The procedure followed depends to some extent upon the procedure for selecting books. One or more of the following ways can be used:

1. Pupils return all books to the teacher at the time of the individual reading conference
2. A few minutes are taken at the end of each reading period to return books to the proper place
3. Pupils return books to the tables or shelves anytime during the reading period
4. One shelf in the room is labeled "returned books", monitors are then selected to place the books on the appropriate shelf or table

Children will be finding unknown words in their reading. If the teacher is busy in a conference arrangements need to be made to assist the children. In the primary grades this most likely will happen. Some procedures for giving assistance are:

1. For primary children, keep experience charts around the room where children may go to them for remembered phrases
2. Have dictionaries conveniently placed around the room
3. Encourage children to help each other in recognizing an unfamiliar word
4. Use random grouping, planning the seating arrangement of children in such a way that a more able child is seated by a less able child
5. Teachers themselves can instruct children to come to them quietly and point out the difficult word

The teacher and the child must develop these routines that are necessary for smooth classroom management. The teacher must help the child to develop self-management, with respect to these routines. The children must know where the books are kept, how they are organized, what library routines are necessary to keep track of books, what records are to be kept of books read, what is their way of reporting on books, and when and how often these records are to be utilized.

Orientation of children. The teacher may wish to start individualized reading by explaining just how individualized reading is going to be done and why. Or the teacher may wish to begin just by "selling" the books to the children. The teacher may show a number of books to the children and tell them enough of their contents to whet their appetites. The teacher needs to tell them that they can choose a book and that she will be available to help them. She then should explain to them that this will be the way they are going to go about reading. Discussion should follow with the children being permitted to ask questions.

Role-playing can help the understanding of individualized reading and the operation of the conference. Situations should be set up between the teacher and the individual reader. Discuss the role-playing with the children. It is imperative that the children understand what is to be expected of them.

1. Process of self-selection. Children need time and guidance in order to make adequate choices. The teacher should spend some time with the children in the beginning just getting acquainted with the books.

If the previous year's class has participated in an individualized reading program, invite them to the classroom and have them explain the program and tell about the books they have enjoyed. In the beginning, the teacher should not place as much stress on skills but on books, ideas, reactions, and getting the books and the children to become alive.

In the beginning it will be discovered that many children go the extremes of book selection. The bright child will pick very easy books and some of the slow readers will choose books too difficult for them. Self-selection will be poorly executed by some children in the early stages, but for the slow child this is necessary sometimes to restore his badly needed self-confidence with which to approach the act of reading anew. These extreme choices will have good mental hygiene overtones and will correct themselves.

The children should be encouraged to choose a book they can read and one they like. Finding out if it is a book one is able to read, means skimming a page or two to see whether there are too many hard words. The guide of "three unknown words to a page", barring nouns can be used by the children to determine if the book is too difficult.

Preventing damage to interest is the key to the whole matter. The sequence of motivation begins with self-selection

and self-seeking and that selection ends with its enjoyment and sharing. If individualized reading is to be successful, this sequence must be preserved.

2. Interest inventory. When children read to their teacher in an individualized conference they are at the peak of a sequence of motivation, for they have selected this material because of their personal interest. If the teacher is to guide her children in choosing books wisely, which meet their interests she must know what those interests are. An interest inventory should be given to children during the orientation period and this inventory should be placed in the record book for each child. A sample interest inventory is given on the following page.

Orientation of parents. Parents need to have some idea of whatever is to be tried on their children. Teachers would do well to include parents in the initial planning if individualized reading is new to them. Most parents will eagerly support a new plan if it is to promise greater benefits for their children. There can be tangible effects in increased supplies from homes.

The children themselves will become "ambassadors" of good will and public relation people. A child can help a parent accept a program if the child feels that the program is right.

INTEREST INVENTORY

Name:

1. What kind of stories do you like best? Make three choices.

Adventure

Airplanes

Animals

Farm Wild Prehistoric Pets Other

Foreign

Fairy Tales

Science

True

Can you think of anything else?

2. Do you have a hobby?

If so, what is it?

If not, what would you like to be?

3. If your parents have a hobby, tell what it is.

A sample letter is found on the following page informing the parents of the program. Once a program is on the way parents should be invited to the classroom to see it in operation and to see the results.

Teacher orientation. The success of an individualized reading program is dependent upon essential conditions relating to the teacher. Essential features are that:

1. the teacher has a favorable and enthusiastic attitude toward an individualized reading program
2. the teacher possesses a thorough knowledge of the reading process and is well informed about the skills and abilities involved in reading
3. the teacher knows content and level of difficulty of books used in the program

It is necessary that the teacher wishes and desires to teach by the individualized method. She must be secure in what she is doing if the program is to be a success. A checklist is provided on page 79 for the teacher.

The teacher needs to understand what individualized reading really means. Individualized reading is teaching by insight rather than by prescription. It is an insight into a child's learning by the teacher, and by the self-insight on the part of the child. Here is reading not by compulsion but by choice. Here is reading not for the sake of getting to the next reader but for purpose and understanding. It is reading which not only helps the child to realize

SAMPLE LETTER TO PARENTS

Dear Parents:

The Jefferson School is trying a new method of reading instruction known as individualized reading. We feel that the method has many advantages. Some of the advantages are listed below:

1. Each child will have the opportunity to read a book in which he is interested. This will tend to increase his desire to read.
2. Each child will read in a book which is most comfortable to him. It will be a book commensurate with his ability. This will eliminate the frustration of too hard a book.
3. Each child will be able to progress at his own rate.
4. Each child will receive individual guidance.

If your child does not have a library card, we hope you will help him obtain one. If he needs your assistance in selection of a book the following suggestions may be helpful:

1. Encourage your child to choose a book in which he is interested.
2. Help him select a book that he can read easily. He should not miss more than one word out of every ten. It is usually better to select a book that is too easy than one that is too hard.

Each child uses the book he has selected during the school reading period. He and the teacher keep a record of the books he has read and a list of the skills in which he needs help. Each child reads individually to the teacher which enables better individual guidance.

This individualized reading is, of course, only part of the reading program because reading skills such as word recognition (including phonics), location of information, and summarizing are taught to groups of children. Textbooks for this skill-drill type of reading are provided.

We need your cooperation in providing opportunities for each child to extend his individual interests and deepen his appreciation through individualized reading.

Sincerely,

Principal

Teacher

CHECK LIST FOR TEACHERS PREPARING TO USE
INDIVIDUALIZED READING IN THE CLASSROOM

1. Is my own mind made up?
2. Do I know the reading level of my pupils?
3. Have I decided who will participate?
4. Do I have enough books?
 - a. Are there 3 to 7 books per child?
 - b. Are there no more than three of the same title?
 - c. Is there a wide enough range of difficulty for all needs at all times?
 - d. Are there enough subjects to interest everyone?
5. Is my room ready?
 - a. Are the books easily available?
 - b. Do I have a good place for individual conferences?
 - c. Can pupils sit beside me?
 - d. Is there a place for small groups to meet?
 - e. Can traffic move reasonably freely?
6. Have I planned enough for readers and non-readers to do while I work with individuals and groups?
7. Have I established adequate routines?
 - a. Do I have a plan for getting and returning books?
 - b. Do I have a plan for keeping records?
 - c. Have I planned a way to help with unknown words?
 - d. Have I planned other routines for my room?
8. Have I consulted with school authorities and parents?¹¹¹

¹¹¹Jeannette Veatch, Individualizing Your Reading Program (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1959), p. 48.

his potential but which helps him to realize that reading is worthwhile.

Procedures of the Program

How to Begin

There are two ways to begin: the one-group-at-a-time change over or the whole class-at-a-time change over. First grade children will probably respond to changing one-group-at-a-time to greater advantage after each group has completed the preprimers.

If a teacher decides to do it one-group-at-a-time she will begin during the regular reading period of the group. The rest of the class will still continue within their groups as before. Their seatwork will be carried on as usual.

The teacher should first begin by increasing the amount of silent reading and decreasing oral reading. The children should be encouraged to read on ahead at their own pace. At the end of the period, work on skills that the children had difficulty with should be taught. Notes should be taken on each child. Each day's session should be geared to the individual child until the day is reached when each child is on the individual plan. The group is then disbanded and are on an individualized plan. The teacher should continue with the other reading groups in the same manner.

The children's names should be scheduled on the chalkboard in the order that they will be received for conferences. As the rest of the children are reading silently, the

individual that the teacher is working with may read the part of the story he has selected; the "best" part, the "funniest" part or the "saddest" part. The story should be discussed with the child and enjoyed with him.

When the teacher changes the entire class from a three group plan to an individualized plan she must be sure that the whole class has been properly oriented. After the first initiation of self-selection the teacher will probably have another orientation period, for many problems in book selections will arise. Conferencing is now ready to begin. It may be necessary for the teacher and one or two children to walk through the whole procedure again to see what is expected of them. When the teacher is satisfied that everyone understands she is ready to begin her program.

During the first few days of individualized reading the teacher may find it desirable to conduct the conferences on a volunteer basis. The advantages to this approach lie with the shy and hesitant child. These children will have the opportunity to observe and become more comfortable in the program. During this early change over, no independent work should be given. The teacher should have the responsibility of outlining the seatwork and jobs until everything is working smoothly.

After the class has gradually worked into a complete program individual work will be done by the children. The following activities give a general outline of what should take place during the reading period:

1. Pupil-teacher planning
2. Independent reading
3. Related reading activities
4. Work at activity centers
5. Small group instruction on skills
6. Total class group work
7. Sharing of books
8. Evaluation

All of these activities are not included in every reading period every day and neither would every period be conducted the same way. Time schedules will vary according to grade level. Two sample programs are shown below:

1. First grade. In the Jefferson County Schools two hours are scheduled for reading in the first grade. The time is divided into a morning and an afternoon period.

Morning Session:

Teacher-pupil planning
 Giving directions for independent work
 Small group instruction
 Individual pupil-teacher conferences
 Teacher-pupil evaluation of independent work

Afternoon Session:

Teacher-pupil planning
 Giving directions for independent work
 Total class group work; sharing of books
 or composing a chart story
 Individual pupil-teacher conferences
 Teacher-pupil evaluation of independent work
 Group evaluation of the reading period

2. Third grade. In the Jefferson County Schools 90 minutes are scheduled for reading in the third grade. The time is divided into a 60 minute morning session and a 30 minute afternoon session.

Morning Session:

Teacher-pupil planning
 Giving directions for independent work
 Small group instruction on skills
 Individual pupil-teacher conferences
 Teacher-pupil evaluation of independent work

Afternoon Session:

Teacher-pupil planning
 Total class group work
 Group sharing of books
 Group evaluation of the reading period

The day's schedule should be so planned that children rotate from one activity to another. The scheduling should be flexible so that no child is actively involved in a pupil-teacher conference, small group instruction, and class sharing all in the same period.

Reading period. Through individualized reading, teachers organize their classes, the reading experiences, and the materials in such a way as to meet the real objectives and values concerned with learning. The teacher's time will be devoted to three major types of experiences; (1) individual conferences; (2) group activities; and, (3) whole class activities. These will be interrelated depending on the purposes and the urgency of the needs. The reading period will be flexible and vary in degrees but the following long range

procedures will probably be utilized:

1. The children will be given an opportunity and time in the regular class reading period to make their own selection of reading materials.
2. The children will be given class time to read their materials independently. After they finish a particular selection, they will keep simple records and will utilize a number of ways to report on their reading.
3. The children will be given time during the reading period to prepare and work on the project which they wish to share and discuss with the teacher.
4. The teacher will make plans to have brief individual conferences with the children as often as she can arrange for them in terms of what the children need or want. This is the time a child can tell about what he is reading and can discuss his activities. Through this conference the teacher will gain a better insight into the child.

Conferences. Through the conference the teacher will gain a picture of the child's knowledge of the book's general content, check the child's understanding of the exact meaning of specific passages or chapters, single out some words in order to check upon the child's independent use of word attack skills, and single out a number of words for discussion, perhaps with the whole class, to develop deeper meaning or for joy of sharing interesting words. During the conference the teacher will help the child with his particular problems. During the conference the teacher may develop a specific skill, plan for developing another skill, or make provisions for practice assignments. During the conference

many specifics are fused: diagnosing, teaching, listening, sharing, discussing, planning, learning and evaluating.

The importance of the conference is record keeping. When a child arrives at the conference the teaching of reading begins. There are three aspects that need to be investigated. The record book should be open and on the teacher's lap ready to record. The three aspects to be investigated can lead to productive group work later. They are:

1. The pupil's understanding of and reaction to his chosen piece of work. (Comprehension)
2. The pupil's ability to deal with the mechanics of reading. (Word recognition and word analysis)
3. The pupil's ability to read orally.

These are best explored by (1) the teacher's use of open-ended questions, and (2) the teacher being interested and a good listener. Demand should be made for more than a yes or no answer. Open-ended questions make it difficult for a child to merely answer yes or no. However, the teacher should be very careful that she does not make a child feel that he must guess what is in the teacher's mind in order to please her. The child should be allowed to form his own judgments without necessarily reflecting those of others.

Records. The simplest method of keeping records is with a loose-leaf notebook. Notebooks seem to work best for they can lie open and flat on a teacher's lap. Each child will have several pages of information that he keeps himself in addition to the teacher's records. On the following pages

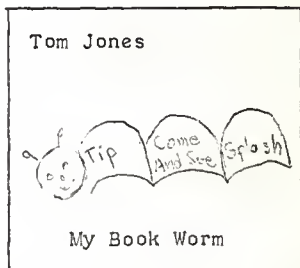
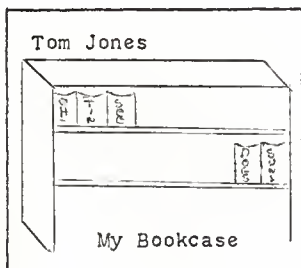
and below are samples of records that children can keep individually.

1. Children's records. Cumulative book lists can be kept by each child. The teacher may keep a notebook in a designated spot and the children can turn to their page and record the book that they have read.

CUMULATIVE BOOK LIST

Tom Jones
1. The Big Show
2. Splash
3. Come and Play
4. Cowboy Sam at the Rodeo

Primary children may enjoy keeping a pictorial list of the books they have read. Two samples are given below in which this can be done.



RECORD OF SHARING ACTIVITIES

Name: Tom Jones		
Book and author	Dates	Sharing activity
Millions of Cats by Wanda Gag	11/20	Painted a picture of all the cats and shared it with the class.

RECORD OF OPINION AND BOOKS READ

Name: Tom Jones			
Book title	Author	Dates	Opinion of book
Chow Dog	James Smith	11/29	I didn't like it, the book had too many hard words.

2. Teacher's records. During the conference the teacher will record the weaknesses of the child. The notations will be made in the record book. The teacher will need a record of name, age, reading achievement, test scores, and other information that she deems necessary. As each child comes to the conference a record will be kept of the individual conference with the date. The teacher should keep a record of what ever she considers important; individual or group assignments, books or pages read, difficulties revealed, and reactions. On the following pages are several samples of records. The samples include a running log record, individual reading conference record, oral reading evaluation check list, reading readiness check list, a silent reading evaluation list and a reading progress profile.

a. Running Log Record. During the reading period it is desirable to record comments made by the child, reactions to the story read, reading interests expressed, and behavior exhibited in reading situations. The record book should have a page in it for each child and when the child does or says something which the teacher feels to be important in relation to reading, this information should then be recorded. It is not necessary that comments be recorded daily. A sample of a Running Log Record is given on the following page.

b. Individual Reading Conference Record. A record of the progress of each individual child is recorded during the pupil-teacher conference. The record for the Individual Reading Conference covers a double page spread, on the right

RUNNING LOG RECORD

Tom Jones

10/21 After Bill shared his book with the class, Tom asked if he could read it. He knew all the words.

11/2 During the conference, Tom shared My Weekly Reader with me. He pointed out all the words he knew.

11/8 Tom asked if he could have the book, Millions of Cats, and commented: "I just love stories about animals."

INDIVIDUAL READING CONFERENCE RECORD

Page 1

Name _____

Reading Achievement _____

Age _____

Date	Book level and pages	Comprehension skills		Word attack skills		Oral reading
		Strengths	Weaknesses	Strengths	Weaknesses	

Interests	Special work needed	Group or individual assignment	Sharing	Page 2
				Comments

and left sides of the notebook. There is a record for each child. The preceding page includes a sample of an Individual Reading Conference Record.

c. Oral reading records. During the conference the child will do oral reading from both material that he has read silently and new material to read ahead at sight. The child should read for a long enough time to give the teacher a good picture of his oral reading; one to three minutes is usually sufficient. A written record of mispronunciation, nonrecognitions and enuciation should be recorded. The teacher's first problem is to make a list of the major kinds of faults children show in their oral reading. A sample Oral Reading Checklist is given on the following page. There needs to be a check list for each child.

d. Reading Readiness Check List. It is usually easy to form a general over-all picture of a child but it is more difficult to analyze a child's weak and strong points. A form that provides a convenient way to record a child's readiness is found on page 93. By looking down a vertical column the children who are in need of special attention can quickly be selected. By looking across one line, a comprehensive picture of one pupil is obtained.

e. Silent Reading Evaluation List. The most important use of comprehension testing is in connection with daily work in silent reading. This is done by the teacher with oral questions which will disclose whether the selection has

READING READINESS CHECK LIST¹¹²

Name	Age			
Bill	9/6	9/4	98	General mental maturity (M.A.)
Pat	9/8	9/8	100	Brightness (I.Q.)
Mike				Visual perception
				Auditory perception
				Vision
				Hearing
				General health
				Physical maturity
				Lateral dominance
				Cultural level of home
				Richness of experience
				Vocabulary
				Use of language
				Clearness of speech
				Family relationships
				Emotional stability
				Self-help
				Group participation
				Interest in books
				Over-all rating
				Comments

¹¹²Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability, (third edition; New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1960), p. 48.

been understood. A sample of a Silent Reading Evaluation List for third grade is given on page 95.

f. Reading Progress Profile. In order to be sure all aspects of oral and silent reading are being evaluated, the Reading Progress Profile should be completed at least once each month. This gives at a glance an indication of the child's present weaknesses as well as showing his progress throughout the year.

Duration of the conference. Guidance is given as each child comes to the teacher for a conference. The conferences will run about seven minutes each in length on the average. Each conference lasts from five to ten minutes per child. The conference schedule is planned in such a way that each child meets individually with the teacher at least every three days and possibly every two days. On the days when pupils are not scheduled to meet individually with the teacher, they engage in some type of teacher directed activity during the reading period either individually or with a small group.

Pupil-teacher evaluation of independent work. After an independent work period, the teacher spends a brief time informally evaluating the work completed. Children will be doing independent work that is needed to reinforce a skill or practice on a new skill. As the teacher walks around the room she will be in a position to make comments to each pupil.

READING PROGRESS PROFILE
LEVEL ONE - READING READINESS

Name: _____ C.A. _____ M.A. _____

Grade: _____ Results of Reading Readiness Test _____

	Inadequate	Improved	Adequate
<u>Ideational facility</u>			
Converses easily			
Uses complete sentences			
Speaks distinctly			
Uses correct english			
Solves problems independently			
<u>Experiential reading skills</u>			
Observes carefully on excursions			
Contributes to chart stories			
Reads from left to right			
Makes accurate return sweep			
Reads phrases and separate words			
<u>Visual and auditory skills</u>			
Notes variations in word patterns			
Sees details in word forms			
Hears variations in sounds			
Hears word elements			

Dates of each check: 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____

Notes concerning child:

READING PROGRESS PROFILE

LEVEL TWO - BEGINNING READING

Name: _____ C.A. _____ M.A. _____

Grade: _____ Reading Age _____ Reading Grade _____

	Inadequate	Improved	Adequate
<u>Oral reading skills</u>			
Accomplished reading purpose			
Phrases correctly			
Uses natural expression			
Uses automatic L-R eye movement			
Makes few reversals			
Makes few regressions			
<u>Vocabulary skills and abilities</u>			
Retains sight vocabulary			
Uses context clues			
Uses visual clues			
<u>Silent reading skills and abilities</u>			
Reads easy books voluntarily			
Makes accurate recall			
Does seat work independently			
Uses few or no lip movements			
<u>Skill in the use of the book</u>			
Handles books with care			
Knows how to find a page			

Date of each check: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Notes concerning child:

READING PROGRESS PROFILE
LEVEL THREE - RAPID PROGRESS STAGE

Name: _____ C.A. _____ M.A. _____

Grade: _____ Reading Age _____ Reading Grade _____

	Inadequate	Improved	Adequate
<u>Oral reading skills</u>			
Reads for meaning			
Uses natural expression			
Recognizes new words independently			
Makes use of punctuation marks			
<u>Silent reading skills</u>			
Uses supplementary books voluntarily			
Discusses content intelligently			
Reads workbook independently			
Increases silent reading speed			
Eliminates vocalization			
<u>Vocabulary skills</u>			
Recognizes consonants by ear and eye			
Recognizes sight words automatically			
Uses common word endings			
Uses configuration clues			
Adds prefixes and suffixes			
<u>Skills in the use of the books</u>			
Handles books carefully			
Makes use of the Table of Contents			

Dates of each check: 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5 _____ 6 _____ 7 _____ 8 _____ 9 _____

Notes concerning child:

The work should be discussed so that children realize the work in which they engage without teacher supervision is important. A record can be kept of the child's independent work. A sample of an Independent Work Record is given below.

INDEPENDENT WORK RECORD

Name:		
Date and book	Related independent work	Optional independent work

Skills. Samples of evaluation check lists have been given for the various skills to be taught in reading. The examples are not complete nor are they intended to be used with each classroom. Each teacher should make her own check list which corresponds to the grade level she is teaching. The particular skills introduced and the rate of introduction depend upon the individual child; that is, skills are taught when they are needed and if they are needed. Each teacher must be well-informed about reading skills. These skills are taught individually or in small groups.

The following composite listing represents the skills mentioned most frequently for development at the primary level in seven books devoted to the teaching of reading.¹¹³

¹¹³Phylliss Adams, "Guidelines for an Individualized Reading Program at First Grade Level" (Denver University), p. 13-15. (Mimeographed.)

I. Word Recognition Skills

- A. Recognizing whole words by sight
- B. Using configuration clues (studying the length, height, and peculiar characteristics of a word)
- C. Using context clues (examining the known words around the unfamiliar word in order to get a hint concerning the unknown word)
- D. Using picture clues (scrutinizing the picture for clues to the unknown word)
- E. Using phonetic analysis (associating appropriate sounds with printed words)
 1. Auditory discrimination
 2. Sounds of initial consonants
 3. Mental substitution of initial consonants
 4. Initial consonants digraphs (th, ch, sh, wh)
 5. Sounds of final consonants
 6. Initial consonant blends
 7. Mental substitution of final consonants
 8. Vowel sounds
- F. Using structural analysis (examining the structure of a word to gain a clue to its recognition)
 1. Inflectional endings: s, es, ed, ing
 2. Compound words
 3. Contractions
- G. Using the dictionary
 1. Picture dictionary
 2. Beginning knowledge of alphabetical order

II. Comprehension Skills

- A. According to the reader's purpose
 1. Reading to find the main idea (i.e., selecting the best title for a page or for a class-composed story)
 2. Reading to select important details (i.e., answering such a question as, "How old was Bobby?")
 3. Reading to answer questions (i.e., reading a story to find out who went to the circus)
 4. Reading to establish sequence (i.e., telling what happened first, next, and last in a story)
 5. Reading to follow directions (i.e., drawing a picture from written directions)
 6. Reading to predict outcomes (i.e., telling what is likely to happen next in a story)
 7. Reading to gain visual images (i.e., describing what is visualized after reading a specific passage from a story)
- B. According to the length and nature of the selection
 1. Phrase meaning (i.e., matching phrases with words of similar meaning)
 2. Sentence meaning (i.e., drawing a line under the one sentence which is illustrated by a picture)

3. Paragraph meaning (i.e., telling in one sentence what a paragraph is about)
4. Meaning of longer selections (i.e., telling in several sentences what a total story is about)

III. Study Skills

- A. Selecting and evaluating information (i.e., finding the part of the story that is exciting or humorous)
- B. Organizing what is read (i.e., telling what items belong in specific categories: animals, food, toys, colors and so on)
- C. Following directions (i.e., following directions that are written on the chalkboard)
- D. Locating information (i.e., using the table of contents to locate a story)

IV. Critical Reading Skills

- A. Comparing and contrasting
- B. Drawing conclusions
- C. Evaluating conclusions
- D. Making inferences
- E. Predicting outcomes
- F. Arriving at generalizations
- G. Distinguishing fact from fancy
- H. Making judgements
- I. Determining relevancy of statements

Grouping. The teacher, on the basis of individual conferences, will plan group sessions for the purpose of developing skills or sharing activities. A group may be formed to reinforce gaps in skills, to overcome confusions, to study common difficulties or to anticipate needs in the direct future. These small groups are formed for instructional purposes when: (1) two or more children share a common need in skill development; (2) two or more children have read the same book and wish to discuss the story; and (3) there is a need for planning or sharing of ideas. These small groups are flexible, are of a short term duration and are brought together for a specific purpose. These change

as the needs change. It is desirable to use basic readers for the purpose of instruction in skills when you have more than two children in a group.

The teacher may wish to keep a record of small group instruction; the skills taught, suggestions for future work, and the composition of the groups. A sample record sheet is given below.

GROUP WORK RECORD

Group Work				
Date	Content covered	Children assigned	Future work on:	
			Content	Children

Book sharing. The sharing period is a very valuable part of the reading period. Books which are shared enthusiastically by pupils become irresistible to other children; thus, teachers are not faced with the problem of trying to locate a book which will interest each child. Many of the children will have decided which book they want to read next after hearing about it during the sharing period.

Every effort is made to keep the sharing period interesting and stimulating. This goal can be achieved by taking time to help children plan different ways of telling about books.

Children are eager to engage in discussions about their readings with other children. Small groups need to be used for this purpose and there should also be planned whole-class activities and sessions for the purpose of capitalizing on experiences which could and should be shared by all. Many whole-class sessions are devoted to having children either individually or in groups share with the class the ideas gained from their wide readings. A sample program for a whole-class session is found on the following page. Children should be permitted to volunteer for this type of sharing and sign up a week in advance when they feel that they are ready.

Some of the satisfying results of book sharing are:

1. There is noticeable improvement in reading and an increased interest in books.
2. The need for self-expression is satisfied, latent talents and hidden abilities are discovered.
3. Ingenuity and imagination are stimulated, and creative endeavor is challenged.
4. The reading and sharing of books will open doors to a fascinating world which children might otherwise never enter.

The teacher encourages her class to share books and advertise them to one another in interesting ways, thus stimulating them to read more books and giving them an opportunity to show their ingenuity and creative ability in art, writing, dramatic arts, and other fields.

Every effort is made to keep the sharing period interesting and stimulating. This goal can be achieved by taking

PROGRAM

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25

The following classmates are sharing their books with us today.

1. Movie

"Two is a Team" by Lorraine and Jerrold Beim

Student: Gary Robinson

2. Shadow Play

"Sleeping Beauty" by Grimm's Fairy Tales

Students: Janice Smith
Betty Sabin
Garland Hutchinson
Laura Schilling
Bill Hosier
John Stark

3. Flannel Board

"Crazy Quilts" by Paul Brown

Student: Beth Werner

4. Panel Discussion

"Loopy" by Hardie Gramathy

Students: Beth Jardine
Charles Salo
Phillip Stanton
Bruce Schneider

5. Slides

"Down Huckleberry Hill" by Leonard Weisgate

Student: Cliff Combra

6. Opaque Projector

"Why The Bear's Tail is Short" by Golden Book

Student: Sheila Bratcher

time to help children plan different ways of telling about books. Pages 106 to 109 are suggestions as to how children can share books with each other.

Some children are not as adept as others, but yet have a real feeling for the books they have read and will wish to discuss these with the teacher. Opportunity should be given for a variety of techniques of sharing the book on a teacher-pupil basis. In addition much of this type of work will be done as independent work.

Reading clubs. A teacher may find that a few children share a hobby or an interest, such as collecting rocks, building model airplanes and making poetry books. Such a group can be encouraged to form a club and share common problems and knowledge, find reading materials based on their special interests, exchange information, and give reports to the class. Several clubs may be set up in the class on a voluntary membership basis. These clubs would not have to meet often, once a week or even once every two weeks.

Independent Activity Centers

Much of the teacher's time in individualized reading is taken during the conferences. Children, however, have considerable free time when they have finished their reading activities. If children's free time is to be a learning time, the teacher will need to organize activity centers so the children can work independently or in small groups.

HOW CHILDREN CAN SHARE BOOKS WITH EACH OTHER

1. Constructing a miniature stage setting for one of the scenes in a story is a delightful experience. A box laid on its side is ideal for a stage.
2. Writing a book review for a class, school, or town newspaper not only requires careful reading of the book but gives a real purpose for using language arts.
3. Making a poster is a good experience.
4. Creating a series of original illustrations for a story requires good judgment in selecting incidents to picture.
5. Writing a movie script for a good action story requires good experience that helps the pupils to arrange events in sequence.
6. Children who have read the same story or play may wish to dramatize it.
7. If a travel book has been read, have a pupil give an illustrated lecture, using post cards, photographs, slides, or magazine pictures.
8. Children may make a movie of a book, using familiar mechanical devices.
9. Write or tell the most humorous incident, the most exciting happening, or the part liked best.
10. The child who enjoys new, unusual, interesting words and expressions to his vocabulary may use them in a resume of the story.
11. A pantomime cleverly acted out makes children curious about the story. They will read the book to find out more about it.
12. Giving a synopsis of a story is an excellent way to gain respect and experience in arranging sequence.
13. Using information in a book he has read, a child may make a collection of things or assemble a scrapbook about a subject.
14. A puppet or a marionette show to illustrate a story is sure to interest children.

15. A historical book lends itself to the making of a colorful, pictorial line or map.
16. Broadcast a book review to other classes over the school's sound system. Such an activity requires careful reading, and correct precise speech.
17. Preparing a book review to present to a lower-grade class is a good experience in story telling.
18. Have an especially artistic child give a chalk talk about his favorite story.
19. Have a child make an original reference book of facts from a non-fiction book.
20. Children may write letters to the librarian requesting that certain books be purchased.
21. Suggest that children listen to excellent radio reviews of children's stories.
22. Writing letters to friends or classmates to recommend a book spreads good news about it.
23. Dressing like a book character and describing the role played provides an experience in character interpretation.
24. Create a colorful class mural on the blackboard, paper or cloth.
25. A child's original book jacket will attract other children to read the book.
26. Children will like to prepare a monologue from a book.
27. Those who have read "How to Make" books may show step by step ways to make an object.
28. Stating real reasons for liking or not liking a book takes critical thinking.
29. Have a child give a vivid description of an interesting character in the book.
30. Have a child add his own ending to a book or make other changes when he is not satisfied.
31. Have a child read some parts orally to the class. These passages help improve pupil's imagery.

32. Occasionally have a story told to musical accompaniment.
33. Have children who have read the same book each write a set of questions which he thinks the readers should know.
34. Have several children choose favorite authors. Each may give a brief biography and tell some of the author's books.
35. Cut a large thumbnail out of paper. Place it on the bulletin board with the title, "Thumbnail Sketches" and add drawings and sketches from several books.
36. Stretch a cord across the bulletin board between two sticks. Fasten paper clothes cut from jackets on it and call it "A Line of Good Books."
37. Make models of book characters, animals or buildings, etc. from clay, soap, wood or plaster.
38. Construct a diorama representing a scene from a story on the sand table.
39. Dress dolls made from paper, wire, or rags as book characters. Show them with descriptions of the people they represent.
40. Make a rebus of the children's classics or many good books.
41. Plan a "living book" as a class project. Make a large frame and have a tableau.
42. Have the children decorate the bulletin board with pictures of people laughing and include incidents from funny stories.
43. Compare one book similar to others of the same type.
44. Think up new adventures of incidents to add to the book.
45. Those interested in dramatics would like to write and produce an original play about the magic of books.
46. If possible, have the class see a movie that has been made from a book they have read.
47. Plan an attractive book fair during Book Week.
48. Plan a class visit to a book store or library to acquaint children with the new books there.

49. Children will enjoy making a miniature television set, drawing a book scene on the screen.
50. Books of poetry can be shared in the following ways:
 - a. An experience in the joy of sharing, choral reading, is excellent with group participation and spontaneity, and through such recitation, the timid child can be helped.
 - b. Writing a composite poem after reading a book of verse gives each child an opportunity to make a contribution.
 - c. Collecting pictures to illustrate verses selected from books builds appreciation of poetry and art.
 - d. Accompanying poetry with various rhythmic activities is an enjoyable experience.
 - e. Setting a verse to music is a delightful aesthetic experience.
 - f. A poetry parade in costume gives the children an opportunity to participate in dramatic activities.
 - g. Adding original stanzas to a poem given, gives the children an understanding of poetry construction and encourages them to write.

Careful teacher-pupil planning is needed concerning rules and procedures children are to follow while working at the centers. In this way children are guided toward self-reliance and self-control while working independently.

These activity centers are introduced one at a time with a new one being set up only after the ones already in use are being used profitably by the children. Only an ideal situation would have enough space available for many centers at once. The teacher will find that it is necessary for her to pick and choose among the many possibilities; she will need to change today's scrapbook center into an exhibit center tomorrow and to concentrate on activities that children can do at their seats.

A majority of the activities can be set up in a minute or two when the occasion demands. Others, exercise boards, games, and puzzles must be prepared ahead of time and will give the classroom a more or less permanent store of materials to draw on as needed. Many of the following ideas can be adopted or adapted for classroom use. The teacher is encouraged to find new ideas. A good teacher's imagination usually shapes ideas to her own uses and leaves them better off than they were.

Library Center

Since personal reading is the goal toward which all reading activities point, the library center should be the heart of the classroom. It will never lose its charm if new

things are introduced from time to time, models, pictures or even a bowl of flowers on the table.

Hobby Center

The hobby center can take the place or supplement the sharing period. A spot should be designated in the room where children can put up a display of their hobby.

Listening Center

A corner for records and record player can provide many happy hours for children. The record player can be fitted with earphones for personal listening on the part of the children.

Picture, Chart and Scrapbook Center

A chart and scrapbook table can be the center for scores of good learning activities; here will be assembled piles of old magazines, scrapbooks with blank pages, large sheets of tagboard, scissors, paste and crayons. Children can use various kinds of material for their charts and scrapbooks; pictures cut from magazines, their own drawings or paintings, original stories and poems, photographs, pressed leaves and flowers, and cut and paste pictures. Every chart or scrapbook should have a basic plan. Even the pictures that first graders cut out for foods can be classified. Foods for breakfast, for dinner, for a picnic, for a birthday party and so on, can all be a particular section of the book.

If a teacher notices that a child needs a change of activity she may suggest that he look through the magazines for pictures to cut out and paste on one of the charts. The cutting and pasting is also organized with a purpose; a child may have a weakness in a particular beginning consonant sound, he would then be directed to find pictures that begin with that consonant sound.

Crafts Center

If possible, the teacher should assemble all the odds and ends that can be found that children might use for arts and crafts. A set of shelves near a table would be ideal for storage. The materials the class would need include: colored paper, scissors, paste, newsprint, string, wallpaper, buttons, beads, pipe cleaners, bits of felt and cloth, chalk, clay, ribbons, toothpicks, yarn, needles and burlap.

Scrap designs can be made by the children. The teacher should help the child see that the shapes of the scraps suggest the pictures they might make. The children can make collages, pictures to feel; these are made by fastening down on paper or tagboard materials that have different textures, as well as different shapes and colors. Many of the odds and ends that will find their way to the crafts center make excellent collages, such as lace-paper doilies, cotton, autumn leaves and birch bark. There is no end to the list.

For preparation for making a "feeling picture", the teacher might assemble materials like those mentioned above

and let the children, with their eyes closed, see if they can tell what has been put into their hands just by feeling. After children have tried to identify several different materials by touch, they will begin to sense that there is a variety in textures as much as there is in color and shape and they will begin to find words to express how things feel. They will, from such experiences of feel, store in their memories the expressive words used that will have a value for their creative writing. For in reading and writing we recreate life from the evidence given to us by our five senses.

Good Grooming Center

Cleanliness and interest in one's appearance plays an important part in the school environment of all grades. In the classroom or elsewhere, a place should be provided with a mirror, facial tissues, a clothes brush and a cloth for polishing shoes. This makes a good breaker for primary children when they need a change of pace.

Game Center

A place should be provided where children may go to play quiet games and work with puzzles. Children can make many of their own games and puzzles.

Class and School News

In the primary grades, charts or the bulletin boards may carry interesting news about the home, school, and

community. This interest may develop into a class newspaper. The newspaper may include original news stories written by the children.

Calendar and Weather Chart

Children of all ages are interested in the weather. A large sheet of paper can be used which has been blocked off with a space for each day of the month. Children can check the weather each day and fill in the chart with symbols to designate rain, sunshine, snow, wind and clouds. A thermometer should be available both in and out of doors.

Flannel Board

The flannel board is another good center for independent activities. A piece of outing flannel thumbtacked to a piece of cardboard makes an adequate board small enough for a child to work independently but yet large enough to hold a number of pictures. A small square of sandpaper or flannel pasted on the back of each picture will make the pictures adhere.

Painting Center

If the school does not have easels available for a painting center, the teacher can improvise a very good one by providing room for three or four painters by putting cardboard in the chalk trays. A caption might be used above the easels saying, "come and paint what you are thinking." The children should be encouraged to use large sheets of

paper and to fill in all the spaces. Sponges could be used for painting in addition to brushes.

Help Yourself Box

A box of suggestions is a device teachers use to add an element of fun and surprise to the independent work periods. In the box are placed cards or slips of paper, each giving directions for a particular activity. Children who have finished their work may pull a card and do whatever it suggests. An example of an activity might be: "Make up a story about this picture of a sad old hen. Tell about what makes the hen so sad."

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purposes of this study were: (1) to review the present practice of reading instruction; (2) to survey current findings in the use of individualized reading; (3) to survey literature of procedures to be used in individualized reading; and (4) to propose specific guidelines to be used in an individualized reading program.

Reading in the past has been taught to achieve such broad goals as equipping individuals to read the Bible, building loyalty to the United States, providing moral lessons, developing interest in literature, and building effective oral and silent reading skills and habits. Since the

year 1925, reading authorities have agreed on present-day reading objectives. They have agreed that reading should foster and develop permanent interests in reading and that children acquire those habits, skills and attitudes that enable children to read efficiently and that broaden and enrich children's experiences.

Continuous effort in the past has been carried out by educators to improve instructional patterns. Numerous experiments have been tried in the last century to improve instruction. The conclusion reached was that efficient teaching is not inherent in any single pattern of instructional organization. Efficient teaching can be achieved through the use of different types of class organization, an organization that is designed to meet the needs of each individual child.

During the colonial period, 1607 to 1776 the most famous reading book was the New England Primer. The New England Primer was followed by the American Spelling Book which held the field until approximately 1820. The first successful graded series of readers were the McGuffey Readers which appeared around 1830. From that time to the present graded basic reading series have been used.

Basal readers are used today in as many as 95 per cent of the elementary schools. There has been a trend to move away from the single basic reading series to multiple basal reading series, supplementary materials and library materials.

In the 1920's intelligence testing was advanced and its results pointed out individual differences in ability. A few educators began to move away from the basic reading texts and advocated individualized reading. Individualized reading recognizes, accepts and respects the fact that children differ and that each child is an individual in his own right. It attempts to meet individual differences by dealing with them individually. Reading guidance and teaching are tailored to the child. Each child is taught the reading skills when he needs them. It also recognizes that a child's interest is a great motivating and sustaining factor in learning. Therefore, individualized reading does not rely on a single or multiple basic reading series. Materials in a wide array of difficulty and content are used.

The literature revealed that variations existed among the different individualized reading programs in method and procedure. Certain prime characteristics occurred regardless of the variations in practice that were found. The characteristics were: (1) self-selection of materials by pupils; (2) individual conferences between each pupil and teacher; and (3) groups organized for other than reason of ability or proficiency in reading.

Studies at the primary level of individualized reading programs were limited in number. The studies that have been done are conflicting in their findings. Most studies indicated that there were no significant differences between groups of children who had been taught by the individualized

method and those who had been taught by the basic reader method. The one element that most of the researchers were in agreement with was that individualized reading is far superior in promoting reading interests, attitudes and a desire to read more books.

Conclusions

In the light of these findings, it is apparent that there is a great need for further research on individualized reading programs in the primary grades. A major objective of reading is to cultivate interest in personal reading that will inspire the future lives of all readers. It appears that individualized reading does accomplish this goal. In view of this, individualized reading should continue to be used and experimented with in the future.

Any conclusions or trends given are necessarily tentative. Additional research will tend to substantiate and/or provide new insights into the discussion of problems in this report. The proposed program for individualized reading should be regarded as tentative and should be revised continually as new research develops new theories.

Recommendations

This study proposed an individualized reading program for the primary grades of an elementary school in Jefferson County, Colorado. The recommendation is made that the program be used in the primary grades on the basis of

volunteer teachers. It is further recommended that in the first grade, children should not begin individualized reading until they have gained enough skill in word recognition and word analysis to read independently; in the second and third grades they may begin when both the teacher and the class are ready.

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A PROPOSED INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM FOR
THE PRIMARY GRADES OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
IN JEFFERSON COUNTY, COLORADO

by

Doris Elenor Cook Richers
B.S., Kansas State University, 1959

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study were: (1) to review the present practice of reading instruction; (2) to survey current findings in the use of individualized reading; (3) to survey literature of procedures to be used in individualized reading; and (4) to propose specific guidelines to be used in an individualized reading program.

The first part of the report dealt with a review of literature of reading objectives, the use of basal readers and individualized reading programs. The theory of individualized reading as well as the actual practice was investigated.

Present day reading authorities agree that the broad objectives of reading should: (1) foster and develop permanent interests in reading; (2) develop those skills, habits and attitudes that enable children to read efficiently; and (3) broaden and enrich children's experiences.

The literature revealed that variations existed among the different individualized reading programs in method and procedure. Certain prime characteristics occurred regardless of the variations in practice. The characteristics were: (1) self-selection of materials by pupils; (2) individual conferences between each pupil and teacher; and (3) groups organized for other than reason of ability or proficiency in reading.

Studies at the primary level of individualized reading programs were limited in number. The studies that have been done have been conflicting in their findings; however, most studies indicated that there were no significant differences between groups of children who had been taught by the individualized method and those who had been taught by the basic reader method. The one element that most of the researchers were in agreement with was that individualized reading is far superior in promoting reading interests, attitudes and a desire to read more books.

In the light of these findings, it is apparent that there is a great need for further research on individualized reading programs in the primary grades. A major objective of reading is to cultivate interest in personal reading. It appears that individualized reading does accomplish this goal. In view of this, individualized reading should continue to be used and experimented with in the future.

The second part of the report was devoted to a proposal of an individualized reading program to be used in the primary grades. Guidelines were given in administering the program: setting, equipment, routines, and orientation of children, parents and teachers. Specific suggestions were given for procedures to be used in the program. Various suggestions of how to begin, how to conduct conferences, methods of keeping records, how to group children, and how children could share their reading experiences were stated.

The recommendation was made that the program be used in the primary grades on the basis of volunteer teachers. It was further recommended that in the first grade, children should not begin individualized reading until they have gained enough skill in word recognition and word analysis to read independently; in the second and third grades they may begin when both the teacher and the class are ready.