THE EFFECTS OF CULTURAL DEPRIVATION ON READING ABILITY OF CHILDREN

by

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B.S., Kansas State University, 1964

A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1967

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INTRODUCTION

It has long been recognized that children from impoverished backgrounds have educational problems peculiar to their group. Numerous studies have indicated that environment, i.e., social, cultural, and economic conditions, has had a direct relationship to learning. A study by Garrison,[1] as early as 1932, indicated that social status had greater influence than intelligence upon learning. This finding was borne out in research by Hunt.[2] The results of these and other investigations attested to the important role of environment upon learning.

The problems of educating children from deprived backgrounds have received much attention by educators within the last several years. This was partly attributed to the projection that by 1970 one out of every two public school children in our fourteen largest cities would be deprived.[3] This was already shown to be the situation in Washington, D.C., Baltimore, Wilmington, and Philadelphia.[4]

Much of the research in the area of cultural deprivation has served the function of identifying problems with little done in the area of recommendations to alleviate them. Educators, concerned with this weakness of existing research, began to direct their attention toward instituting changes and

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[1]K.C. Garrison, "The Relative Influence of Intelligence and Socio-cultural Status Upon the Information Possessed by First Grade Children," Journal of Social Psychology, 3:362-367, August, 1932.

[2]Joseph McVicker Hunt, Intelligence and Experience, (New York: Ronald Press, 1961), pp. 358-63.

[3]Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 1.

[4]Bernard A. Kaplan, "Issues in Educating the Culturally Disadvantaged," Phi Delta Kappan, 45:71, November, 1963.

revisions in their policies and practices to cope with the situation. In their investigations, culturally disadvantaged children were shown to be particularly deficient in reading and English, but causes were not always clearly reported and little was done in the specific area of reading.[1] In his study, Curry discovered a direct relationship between reading deficiencies and socio-economic positions.[2]

In this report, research on the causes of such a relationship was investigated in an attempt to bring together current facts and opinions on the detrimental effect of inferior socio-economic conditions to reading ability of children and to review the programs currently under way to curtail these problems.

Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this study (1) to examine the characteristics and learning problems of the culturally deprived child, (2) to determine the extent to which environmental deprivation influenced performance in reading, (3) to identify resulting reading problems and their effects, and (4) to show how these problems could be alleviated as reported in current literature.

Definition of Terms

Deprived or disadvantaged child. This is the child who belongs to any race or ethnic group whose life is usually characterized by poverty, delinquency, and failure to achieve the goals established by the main streams of

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[1]Ernest H. Austin, "Cultural Deprivation - A Few Questions," Phi Delta Kappan, 47;68, October, 1965.

[2]Robert Curry, "The Effect of Socio-Economic Status on the Scholastic Achievement of Sixth Grade Children," British Journal of Educational Psychology, 32:46-9, February, 1962.

society; he lacks motivation, interest, and encouragement and is drop-out prone.

Cultural deprivation. This term refers to those aspects of middle-class culture--such as books, education, and formal language, from which these children have not benefited. The terms educationally deprived, underprivileged, disadvantaged, lower class, and lower socio-economic group will also be used to refer to the culturally deprived.

Linguistic deprivation. This term will be used to describe the language deficiencies created by inferior environments. Specifically, it refers to the inability to use standard English as a result of home conditions which neglected to foster stimulating conversation and self-expression.

Procedures Followed

Materials for this descriptive study were gathered primarily through library research. First, sociological literature was read to discover the characteristics of deprived families and to determine the effect of environmental influences on learning. The sociological material was limited to middle and lower-class families as most of the available comparative studies were directed toward these classes.

Educational literature was surveyed next, with particular emphasis on investigations in the areas of reading and language performance.

The final area of this study was concerned with the various programs and projects that had been instituted to solve or improve the existing situation. Attention was focused upon urban projects and reading innovations instituted by them.

The study was further limited to grades one through six.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CULTURALLY DEPRIVED

Cultural deprivation has been found the world over in cities and rural areas alike. Although instances of deprivation could frequently be found in homes of meritorious standards and values, this paper was based on the assumption held by Deutsch that cultural deprivation was more frequently characteristic of lower economic groups. He maintained that lower-class status apparently predisposed scholastic retardation, even though not all children were equally affected.[1]

According to Havighurst, deprivation could be classified as follows:

1. Affectional deprivation: inadequate amount of affection, love or emotional support.
2. Model-person deprivation: absence of persons in the child's life who are good examples for him to imitate as he grows up.
3. Intellectual deprivation: little or no discussion of books, politics, music, or similar intellectual activities.
4. Nutritional deprivation: insufficient or inadequate food.[2]

As it exists, deprivation cannot be relegated to Negro and migrant groups exclusively. Although these ethnic and racial groups constitute a large percentage of the lower socio-economic population, Davis has shown that of the sixty of one-hundred people making up the lower economic group, the majority are native white with Negro and white foreign-born groups following in that order.[3]

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[1]Martin Deutsch, "Social and Psychological Perspectives on the Development of the Disadvantaged Learner," Journal of Negro Education, 33:235, Summer, 1964.

[2]Robert J. Havighurst cited by Ralph H. Hines, "Social Expectations and Cultural Deprivation," Journal of Negro Education, 33:136, Spring, 1964.

[3]Allison Davis, "Socio-economic Influences Upon Children's Learning," School Life, 33:87, March, 1951.

Depressed Environments

The Head Start Child Development Program identified deprived families on the basis of annual income. Non-farm families of eight or more persons, with an annual income of $5,000 were recognized as impoverished, as were farm households of comparable membership with an annual income of $3,500.[1]

These homes were frequently characterized by sub-standard, over-crowded conditions, disorganization, restricted communication patterns, a lack of material possessions, and an absence of books and other reading material.

Culturally Deprived Children

Limited home environments produced children with negative self-images and restricted learning capacities. These children lacked proper orientations which normally led to perception of the long-range value of education. Often, they shared parents' negative attitudes toward the school, which stifled initiative and interest in learning for its own sake. Instead, education was seen only as an avenue for obtaining employment at the earliest opportunity. An absence of ambitious adult models to emulate heightened peer group influences on these children which emphasized strength and prowess while devaluing education.[2] Barbe forecasted that 30 per cent of these children would end up on relief or public welfare in adulthood, and that aptitude scores would decline over a five to six year period of school.[3]

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[1]Head Start Child Development Program, How to Apply for Head Start Child Development Programs, Office of Economic Opportunity (Washington: Government Printing Office, September, 1965), p. 8.

[2]Robert D. Strom, Teaching in Slum Schools, (Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1965), p. 6.

[3]Walter B. Barbe, "Who Are the Educationally Retarded?" Education, 85: 451, April, 1965.

Investigators agreed that cultural patterns in the home which did not transmit the necessary learning skills characteristic of the schools and larger society was the main factor contributing to cultural deprivation.[1]

The following patterns and detriments to learning were described by Riessman:

1. The lack of an "educational tradition" in the home, few books, etc.
2. Insufficient language and reading skills.
3. Inadequate motivation to pursue a long-range educational career, and poor estimate of self.
4. Antagonism toward the school, the teacher.
5. Poor health, improper diet, frequent moving, and noisy, TV ridden homes.[2]

Literature on deprivation revealed three prevalent conditions which appreciably affected academic achievement: (1) lack of demonstrated parental affection and close family relationships, (2) restricted background of experiences, and (3) insufficient language skills.

Without parental affection and close family relationships, children were not likely to develop a sense of identification with others.[3] Since children learn their behavior by unconscious imitation of adults, negative self-concepts developed as a result of insufficient identification opportunities. Indifference of schools to the unique learning problems of deprived children acted

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[1]Benjamin S. Bloom, Allison Davis, and Robert Hess, Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 4.

[2]Riessman, op. cit., pp. 4-5.

[3]Charlotte Buhler, Childhood Problems and the Teacher, (New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1952), p. 56.

to reinforce poor self-concepts.[1]

Inadequate or inappropriate experiences in early childhood, those which were not conducive to learning, yielded little in terms of a meaningful background with which to encounter each new learning experience. In addition, poor perceptual development resulted. Objects and materials were frequently unfamiliar or nameless, therefore, these children were unable to make associations between ideas and objects.

As a consequence of inferior experiential backgrounds, language patterns of deprived children suffered. Difficulties were increased by the inferior level of verbal interaction within the family setting. Parents had little time to communicate with their children other then directing and commanding specific behavior. Responses were essentially monosyllables or non-language signals. Deprived children, therefore, went to school ill-equipped to handle abstract concepts and verbal patterns necessary for reading proficiency.

Effects of Deprivation on Reading Ability

The majority of deprived children were potentially able, but developmentally retarded with regard to their reading capacities.[2] They had the same drives for achievement, recognition, end acceptance es their peers, but deficiencies in early experiences, motivation, and family interaction weighted the odds against academic success.[3]

Research findings have indicated that these children were capable of

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[1]Martin Deutsch, "Some Psychological Aspects of Learning in the Disadvantaged," Teachers College Record, 67:263, January, 1966.

[2]Hilda Taba, "Cultural Deprivation as a Factor in School Learning, "Merrill Palmer Quarterly, 10:151, April, 1964.

[3]Frederick Shaw, "Culturally Deprived Youth in Urban Centers," Phi Delta Kappan, 45:92, November, 1963.

learning when provided with modifications in curriculum and materials and taught by understanding individuals who were familiar with their problems.[1] They had more verbal ability than they exhibited, but a somewhat slower learning rate.[2]

Reading retardation in depressed areas had been found to be as high as 80 per cent as compared with 10 to 20 per cent retardation in middle-class communities.[3] When consideration was given to the noisy, over-crowded conditions not conducive to solitary reading opportunities, children's poor reading achievements were more readily understood. In light of these circumstances the progress they did make in reading was commendable.

An important outgrowth of the conditions described was that deprived children were conditioned by their environments to not listen. In their attempts to find seclusion in their over-crowded homes, they developed the ability to allow only certain items to come to the level of consciousness. That which they did not wish to hear was ignored or relegated to subconsciousness.[4] This action was a deterrent to reading instruction when directions were given verbally by teachers.

Another environmental factor that hindered reading ability was the minimal

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[1]Howard H. Cummings, "Conclusions," in U.S. Office of Education, Programs for the Educationally Disadvantaged, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 101.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Paul C. Berg, "The Culturally Disadvantaged Student in Reading Instruction," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, H. Alan Robinson, (ed.). (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 113.

[4]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore, and Gertrude M. Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Primary Years, Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 14.

amount or complete absence of reading matter in the home. Limited exposure to reading material created difficulties in relating verbal concepts to printed symbols and ideas.

The New Jersey Education Association summarized the status of reading as conceived by lower-class children as follows:

> Their home life does not put value on reading and does not prepare them for learning. These children do not understand the need for reading and lack the visual discrimination which enables them to begin reading easily. Consequently, many of them do not readily learn to read or write well.[1]

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

It was commonly recognized that schools measured reading success by the capacity to manipulate verbal symbols and abstractions. These were accomplishments least stimulated by depressed environments.[2] It is important, therefore, to understand the pattern of successful language development so that perspective may be gained for viewing the language problems of deprived children.

Successful Language Development

Foundations for all verbal development are laid by the cultural levels of the home and the language patterns of parents and immediate associates.[3] Intellectually stimulating activities are essential for language development. One benefit of these activities is a high level of perceptual development

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[1]New Jersey Education Association, The Disadvantaged Child: A Program for Action, 1964, p. 9.

[2]Taba, loc. cit.

[3]Eunice Shaed Newton, "The Culturally Deprived Child in our Verbal Schools," Journal of Negro Education, 33:184, Summer, 1964.

which in turn enhances ability to fix words or names to objects.[1]

Perceptual development is encouraged further by a system of rewards and corrective feedback from parents. Frequent use of language in relation to the environment and the people in it enables the child to use words and language as a thinking tool.[2] Adeptness in self-expression and ability to compare and differentiate were also improved by parent-child interaction.

Adequate auditory and visual discrimination were also necessary elements for successful speech and reading development. Auditory discrimination develops within unique environments in which a special system of speech sounds prevail. Introduction of alien sounds tends toward perceptual distortion as attempts are made to reproduce sounds to their nearest equivalents within the individual's familiar system.[3] Visual discrimination entails the ability to relate sounds or symbols to objects, pictures, and ideas. Deficiencies in visual discrimination create problems in transition when attempts are made to relate sound to the printed page in the reading process.

Vocabulary development takes place when labels can be attached to concepts accumulated from a child's experiential background. Problems in vocabulary arise when the speaker lacks appropriate words to which he can relate sounds.

When familiar sentence structures are at variance with standard structures of books, problems of syntax arise. Word order may be reversed so that

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[1]Benjamin S. Bloom, Allison Davis, and Robert Hess. Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 13.

[2]Ibid, p. 15.

[3]The remaining discussion on skills and abilities for successful language development was described by Thomas J. Edwards, "The Language-Experience Attack on Cultural Deprivation," Reading Teacher, 18:546-8, April, 1965.

approximations are made closest to those with which the speaker is familiar.

Language Problems of the Disadvantaged

Culturally deprived children had adequate verbal ability for communication with peers at a reasonable level of fluency.[1] However, their limited language was unlike the formal language requirements of books and school experiences which they encountered. In this respect, culturally deprived children were also linguistically deprived. This contention did not assume, however, that they were totally deficient in verbal ability. Culturally deprived children were reported to possess much hidden verbal ability when adequate techniques were used to reveal these capabilities.[2]

That these children were handicapped in language development, however, could not be denied. Deutsch upheld this belief when he said that "social-class determination of linguistic styles and habits is an effective deterrent to communication and understanding between the child and teacher."[3] In addition, Newton reported that disadvantaged environments were known to have deleterious effects on verbal ability and learning.[4] It was discovered that poor speech habits and language patterns in the home acted to discourage proper language development and restrict the number and variety of words recognized.[5]

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[1]Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 74.

[2]Frank Riessman, "The Culturally Deprived Child: A New View," in Programs for the Educationally Disadvantaged, U.S. Office of Education (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 8.

[3]Martin Deutsch, "Some Psychological Aspects of Learning in the Disadvantaged," Teachers College Record, 67:264, January, 1966.

[4]Newton, op. cit., p. 185.

[5]Benjamin S. Bloom, Stability and Change in Human Characteristics (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965), p. 77.

Perceptual unreadiness was similarly a by-product of deprived environments.

Basil Berstein, in studying the relationship between social class and language development, distinguished two distinct patterns of communication.[1] These were identified as restrictive and elaborate forms.

Elaborate patterns were those found basically in middle class homes. Speech patterns were more individualized, complex, and concise. This he termed formal language.

Restrictive forms were characteristic of lower-socio-economic groups and deprived environments. These patterns were usually simple in structure; utilized short, often unfinished sentences; contained few adjectives, adverbs, and subordinate clauses; and consisted of highly generalized concepts, limited vocabulary ranges, and repetitive use of conjunctions.

Educationally disadvantaged children, according to Riessman, were at home with "public language," but deficient in "formal language."[2]

Edwards reported that linguistically deprived children generally came from environments in which either an entirely different language was spoken, or one in which there was considerable variation of standard English. They had, therefore, been exposed to diverse systems of speech sounds and cultural idioms, modified systems of labeling concepts, and systems with syntax of considerable simplicity. Consequently, standard English was frequently alien to them.[3]

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[1]Basil Berstein, "Social Class and Linguistic Development: A Theory of Social Learning," in Education Economy, and Society, A Reader in the Sociology of Education, A. H. Halsey, Jean Floud and C. Arnold Anderson, (ed.). (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961), pp. 288-314.

[2]Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 75.

[3]Edwards, op. cit., p. 546.

Newton partially attributed verbal destitution to non-standard English patterns used during formative years which were characterized by: (1) causal observance of standard inflections, (2) simple, monosyllabic words, (3) frequently mispronounced words, (4) rare use of descriptive or qualifying terms, and (5) the simple sentence or sentence fragment in both oral and written expressions.[1]

Olsen offered a number of explanations for inadequate verbal capacity which recapitulated all other reasons given;

1. Lack of language experience.
2. Language development not accepted by school.
3. Lack of concepts that arise from certain kinds of experiences so that language seems impoverished.
4. Hesitancy to share experiences because they fear experiences will be disvalued.
5. Formal situations may cause them to be tongue-tied.
6. Questions asked require little talking.
7. Inability to respond to words alone.[2]

He pointed out that these reasons for poor verbal facility were applicable to all children, not just the culturally different.

In his investigations, Figurel discovered that at grade two the vocabulary range of these children was approximately one-third that of normal children and differences increased to one-half by grade six.[3] He further found that less than one-half of the vocabulary words known by average pre-schoolers were known by deprived second graders. Common name words were learned one to two years later. Their greatest barrier to language development was the

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[1]Newton, loc. cit.

[2]James Olsen, "The Verbal Ability of the Culturally Different," Reading Teacher, 18:554-5, April, 1965.

[3]J. Allen Figurel cited by Millard H. Black, "Characteristics of the Culturally Disadvantaged Child," Reading Teacher, 18:466, March, 1965.

inability to perceive the concept that objects had names, and that the same object had many names. Marked deficiencies on language tests were also reported in a discussion by Frierson, with children tested being handicapped to an even greater extent on non-language tests which demanded discrimination, comparison, and use of symbols.[1]

Linguistic Deprivation and Reading

Comprehensive verbal ineptness created many functional inadequacies in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Adequate language development, therefore, was a necessary prerequisite to printed language.

Reading skill was highly dependent upon the degree to which disadvantaged children could relate experiences to verbal symbols. Limitations in this area led to difficulties in the complex task of mastering reading skills. Because abstractions were obscure for these children, transition of sound to written symbols remained ineffective and reading ability substandard. Reading then, became a puzzle for them rather than another means of communication.[2]

DEPRIVATION AND READING

Children suffering from cultural deprivation had problems which were academic, social, and emotional. Much that has been presented in earlier discussions gave insight into the social and emotional problems of underprivileged children. The remainder of this paper will be primarily concerned with academic problems of deprived pupils and more specifically with reading

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[1]Edward C. Frierson, "Determining Needs," Education, 85:464, April, 1965.

[2]Lucille Mozzi, "Evaluating the Needs of the Culturally Disadvantaged Reader--In Kindergarten Through Grade Three," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, Conference on Reading, H. Alan Robinson, (ed.). (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 122.

ability.

Needs of Disadvantaged Readers

The following learning styles, reflecting the conclusions of many persons who studied the culturally disadvantaged, were believed by Riessman to be characteristic in the lives of children from depressed area homes:

1. Physical and visual rather than aural.
2. Content-centered rather than form-centered.
3. Externally oriented rather than introspective.
4. Problem-centered rather than abstract-centered.
5. Inductive rather than deductive.
6. Spatial rather than temporal
7. Slow, careful, patient, persevering (in areas of importance) rather than quick, clever, facile, flexible.[1]

These characteristics implied that disadvantaged readers needed to be challenged with a variety of teaching methods.

Motivational devices commonly employed in middle-class schools were ineffectual in eliciting required responses from depressed area children. The whole style of culturally disadvantaged learners was conditioned not to respond to oral and written stimuli used by schools.[2] Instead, they responded more readily to visual and kinesthetic signals.[3] Effective reading approaches, therefore, revolved around a core of action-centered techniques.

Disadvantaged children saw little value in learning to read. Some had

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[1]Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 73.

[2]Paul C. Berg, "The Culturally Disadvantaged Student and Reading Instruction," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, Conference on Reading, H. Alan Robinson, (ed). (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 117.

[3]Frank Riessman, "The Culturally Deprived Child: A New View," in Programs for the Educationally Disadvantaged, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 8.

no conception of reading at all since no adult had ever read to them.[1] Recurrent unsuccessful attempts at learning to read also contributed to discourage lower-class children from acquiring the skill. Greenberg and associates uncovered an implication from their study of deprived children which seemed to suggest that deprived children did admire and value reading, but they did not view it as an influential force in their lives.[2] This was essentially the belief of most investigators. In light of this conclusion it was evident that these children needed to feel that reading had something to offer them. They wanted reasons for learning this skill which were of immediate and practical value to them.[3]

The ultimate goal of all reading instruction is to produce life-long participants in the activity. Reading, then, would be a self-rewarding experience. Realization of this goal was dependent upon proper motivation and interest.

Ausubel believed that motivation for most effective learning had to be intrinsic rather than extrinsic. He made the following observations:

> . . . intrinsic motivation for learning is more potent, relevant, durable, and easier to arouse than its extrinsic counterpart. Meaningful school learning, in contrast to most kinds of laboratory learning, requires relatively little effort or extrinsic incentive, and, when successful, furnishes its own reward.[4]

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[1]Educational Policies Commission, Education and the Disadvantaged American, (Washington: Educational Policies Commission, 1962), p. 28.

[2]Judith W. Greenberg et.al., "Attitudes of Children from a Deprived Environment Toward Achievement-Related Concepts," Journal of Educational Review, 59:57-62, October, 1965.

[3]Benjamin S. Bloom, Allison Davis, and Robert Hess, Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 21.

[4]David P. Ausubel, "A Teaching Strategy for Culturally Deprived Pupils: Cognitive and Motivational Considerations," School Review, 71:455, Winter, 1963.

Other authors concurred on the superiority of intrinsic motivation, but they believed that external approaches predisposed interest. Ennis's conclusion confirms their opinions. He believed that motivational support for reading from sources other than the intrinsic rewards of the activity were of great importance, particularly for the beginning reader.[1] It could be surmised from his report that teachers had to provide activities which exposed deprived children to a wide variety of stimuli that acquainted them with the vocabulary and subject matter of reading.

Lower economic groups had many reading deficiencies that made it almost impossible for them to do well in school.[2] Krugman reported on a study of lower economic children in New York City which showed that they were retarded one year in reading in the third grade, almost two years in grade six and more than two and one-half years in the eighth grade.[3] Studies by other investigators yielded similar discoveries.

Despite the many barriers for progress, recent studies indicated that deprived children had much potential for reading success.[4] Reading projects, discussed in detail elsewhere in this paper, revealed that deprived children did succeed in reading when appropriate materials were used and adequate measures for readiness were taken. Improvement also took place when children were met at their developmental levels and progressively brought to higher levels of

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[1]Philip H. Ennis, "Recent Sociological Contributions to Reading Research," Reading Teacher, 17:579, May, 1964.

[2]Patricia Cayo Sexton, Education and Income, (New York: Viking Press, 1961), p. 31.

[3]Morris Krugman, "The Culturally Deprived Child in School," NEA Journal, 50:23, April, 1961.

[4]Sexton, op. cit., p. 32.

achievement. Acceptance by understanding, non-condescending teachers was an asset to learning potential, as were provisions for suitable learning environments. These children responded well to reading plans which were flexible and adequately fulfilled their needs.[1]

All of the studies indicated that the basic element for successful reading performance was an early exposure to readiness experiences, preferably in the pre-school years, to combat the inferior influences provided by their homes. The director of reading for the U.S. Office of Education emphatically stated the necessity for prolonged readiness programs prior to formal reading instruction.[2] These programs effectively raised aspiration levels, entrenched values, and dealt with setbacks in reading before they occurred.

APPROACHES FOR TEACHING CULTURALLY DEPRIVED READERS

With increased awareness on the part of educators that the same curriculum for all groups of learners afforded inequalities in educational opportunity, curriculum adaptations in reading were made to compensate for environmental deficiencies suffered by educationally retarded pupils.

Much has been written on the innovations and techniques used with educationally retarded readers, however, in the following section, no attempt has been made to present all modifications currently in operation. Instead, an attempt has been made to present approaches for teaching reading most

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[1]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore, and Gertrude Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Middle Grades, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 20.

[2]Warren G. Cutts, "Reading Unreadiness in the Under-privileged," Department of Health, Education and Welfare, U.S. Office of Education, NEA Journal, reprint, April, 1963.

frequently mentioned in the literature that have proven to be effective in dealing with the special reading problems of the deprived.

Reading Specialists

The U.S. Office of Education has reported on the use of reading specialists to compensate for reading deficiencies. Two of these specialists are not discussed at length since their functions are generally known. These are remedial teachers who are assigned to one or more schools to work with children having serious reading difficulty, and reading consultants, who are similarly assigned, but whose job entailed demonstration of newer techniques for teaching.[1]

Reading improvement teachers, sometimes called reserve teachers, were newer additions to improvement staffs. These teachers worked with groups of four to six slowly progressing pupils for periods of twenty to thirty minutes daily and assisted with principal reading problems. They used materials which were different from those used in classrooms, but worked in conjunction with classroom teachers. Instructional programs of reserve teachers were based on results of individual diagnostic studies. They frequently conducted their programs in small groups within the immediate classroom.[2] Other duties of these teachers included accompanying classroom teachers on home visits, taking children on trips, and assisting regular teachers in areas where their services were needed.[3]

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[1]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore, and Gertrude Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Middle Grades, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 21.

[2]Eugene Klemm, "Appropriate School Programs," Education, 85:488-89, April, 1965.

[3]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore, and Gertrude M. Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Primary Years, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 24.

Reading Clinics

Reading clinics provided up-graded or continuous development programs and engaged various approaches to teach disadvantaged readers. Increased staff services, in-service training programs, and rigid instructional staff requirements were a necessary part of the clinical programs.[1]

Cohn, in commenting on New York City's Special Reading Services, reported that each clinical staff consisted of a full-time school psychologist, one full-time school social worker, a part-time psychiatrist, three reading teachers, and a secretary. Each staff member displayed competence in reading.[2]

Pupils referred to the clinic were usually third or fourth graders and referrals were based on the degree of retardation, parental willingness, and "average" mental ability.

Services were provided in instructional, clinical, and auxiliary areas--pediatric examinations and follow-up, and speech diagnosis and treatment. Work was highly integrated and conducted as a team approach. Statistical evidence revealed that the children made notable progress in reading.

Tutoring Centers

There were several approaches and organizational plans reported for tutoring centers. Essentially, they had one major objective in common: to offer individualized or small group instruction to pupils in areas in which they were particularly weak. Most were instituted for reading difficulties, but some

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[1]Klemm, op. cit., p. 487.

[2]Stella M. Cohn, "Upgrading Instruction Through Special Reading Services," Reading Teacher, 18:477-81, March, 1965.

included any or all academic subjects. For the most part, they were after-school programs, but in some areas they were conducted during the regular school day utilizing lay or pupil volunteers.

A highly successful tutorial system was reported by Mackintosh. This project used the talents of able sixth graders to tutor first graders with reading difficulties. Sixth grade volunteer tutors were taught how to plan lessons, how to approach a child, how to give him help, and how to keep records. In addition, each student tutor was supplied with a kit of reading games, paper, pencils, and pictures and was given easy access to supply centers for additional materials. They gathered with their pupils for thirty minute daily sessions which were presided over by a teacher-supervisor. Reading progress made, and the valuable ego-building experience it offered both participants, attested to the program's productivity.[1]

Provisions for reading tutorial services in intermediate grades were described by Klemm. These were after-school projects conducted twice weekly by teachers or former teachers in private homes. Volunteer tutors and classroom teachers jointly planned and coordinated instruction for these after-school programs. High school students also helped as tutors in after-school sessions at the high school.[2]

Kvaraceus reported that programs operating on the "helper principle" showed that pupils responded as well to volunteers as they did to professionally trained personnel.[3]

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[1]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore and Gertrude M. Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Primary Years, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 38.

[2]Klemm, op. cit., p. 489.

[3]William C. Kvaraceus, "Programs for the Disadvantaged: Promise or Pretense?" National Elementary Principal, 45:62-3, February, 1966.

Cultural Enrichment

General recognition that inadequate experiential backgrounds were one prime factor in reading retardation led to innumerable suggestions as to the kinds of activities that could be used.

Activities listed by Cutts encapsuled all others:

> . . . listening to stories told or read by teachers; taking field trips to parks, farms, zoos, airports, fire stations, and other points of interest; using and listening to tape recorders; hearing records, and seeing movies and film strips.[1]

The main objective of such activities, he believed was to provide language experiences for children, therefore, it was important to give them time to react to the things seen or heard.

In addition to language experiences, Olsen indicated that properly planned enrichment activities increased auditory and visual skills and aided conceptual development.[2]

Action Approach

Instructional techniques that involved the use of physical activities satisfied two needs of deprived children. They appealed to the children's love of action and served to release self-expression.

Reissman maintained that disadvantaged children best expressed themselves in spontaneous situations and were readily accommodated through role-playing situations.[3] Role-playing activities entailed spontaneous reactions to hypothetical incidents of interest to them. Highly vivid presentations were

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[1]Cutts, op. cit.

[2]James Olsen, "Challenge of the Poor to the Schools, Phi Delta Kappan, 47:79, October, 1965.

[3]Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), pp. 76-7.

afforded by these opportunities and they enabled deprived children to verbalize freely. Reissman, however, cautioned against using these activities solely to provide for children's enjoyment or as a substitute for discussion. The main purpose of role-playing was to stimulate advanced discussion and thinking.

Other action oriented approaches included dramatization and manipulative activities including games and handling objects. Maximal use of sensory skills through audio-visual media were also advocated.[1]

Language experience approach

This stimulating and challenging approach proved to be particularly effective with disadvantaged children.

Briefly stated it involved promotion of thinking and language skills through stimulating discussion. Subject matter emerged as an outgrowth of the discussions and appropriate learning skills were applied and developed as the opportunity arose. To be most effective, however, readiness and skillful integration of methods and materials were essential.[2]

Essentially the technique consisted of four steps: (1) initiatory discussion in which pupils were encouraged to examine alternative ways for handling and looking at the problem at hand, (2) discussion and organization of ideas, (3) cooperative paragraph construction using class developed outlines, and (4) silent reading of the entire selection followed by oral re-reading. Follow-up activities included verbal summaries, pairing students for dictation activities, correcting spelling errors, and independent writing or reading on the topic.[3]

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[1]Bloom, op. cit., p. 13.

[2]Edwards, op. cit., pp. 548-51.

[3]Ibid.

The following skills were yielded by this approach.

1. Logical organization and critical thinking.
2. Oral language facility.
3. Expanded background of concepts coupled with appropriate vocabulary labels.
4. Auditory discrimination.
5. Word recognition skills.
6. Organizational skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing.)
7. Syntax mastery.
8. Composition in organizing ideas and following idea arrangement.
9. Reading and listening comprehension, both assimilative and critical.[1]

Phonics

This is a word attack tool that helps to develop self-reliant and independent readers. Essentially children are taught to work out pronunciation by recognizing the association between phoneme and grapheme, i.e., between the auditory stimulus, the sound, and the printed word or symbol.[2]

Although much argument has evolved regarding the value of this approach, Mackintosh reported that teachers recognized phonics as a fundamental skill which deprived children must acquire because it enabled them to see and hear words better and gave them something to "hang on to" as they moved ahead.[3] Frostig shared this belief and favored the functional approach over the systematic teaching of phonetic rules.[4]

Individualized Reading

This instructional technique used a wide variety of reading materials as

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Marianne Frostig, "Corrective Reading in the Classroom," Reading Teacher, 18:577-78, April, 1965.

[3]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore, and Gertrude M. Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Primary Years, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 19.

[4]Frostig, op. cit., p. 578.

the core of the reading program. It was a radical departure from basal techniques in that most of the steps used in a basal method were eliminated.[1]

Exponents of individualized reading characterized it as a technique of seeking, self-selection, and packing in which children explored a wide range of reading material, chose their own reading material, and proceeded at their own pace.[2]

Acknowledgement of the following assumptions as basic to the program was made by Strang:

> . . . the teacher makes a continuous study of each student and plans a course of study specifically for him; that suitable books are available; that the teacher can become familiar with all these books; and that the student has sufficient skills to read these books or that he can be taught the necessary skills in individual conferences.[3]

The value of this approach, she felt, was that it could stimulate initiative and interests that made reading a rewarding lifetime experience.

Contribution of Some Current Programs

In addition to the methods discussed above, several projects were reported that offered valuable suggestions for reading programs in teaching culturally deprived children. A few of these projects are discussed below to give some insight into some of the techniques that were effective in dealing with the reading problems of the deprived.

McAteer Program. The McAteer Compensatory Education Program was a state-

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[1]Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability, (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 114.

[2]Harris, op. cit., p. 115.

[3]Ruth Strang, "Effective Use of Classroom Organization in Meeting Individual Differences," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, Proceedings of the Twenty-sixth Annual Conference on Reading, H. Alan Robinson, (ed.). (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 168-69.

supported plan instituted by the California legislature. It provided funds for lowering teacher load, improving reading, and teaching English to non-English speaking children. It enabled the hiring of special teachers to work with selected children daily in remedial periods lasting from forty-five minutes to half the school day. Assistance was given in reading and related language arts, in preparing for and carrying out trips, and in follow-up work.[1]

Banneker Program. This program was part of the Great Cities program operating in St. Louis, Missouri. The Banneker area was largely comprised of a Negro population (95 per cent), and the program was directed toward raising academic achievement of student residents. Two major aspects of the program were pre-school enrichment experiences which developed perceptual, listening, speaking, and reading readiness skills, and an intensive reading program involving parent participation.

Activities conducted for pre-schoolers were basically those described in the earlier section on cultural enrichment.

Parental participation may best be described by the Parent's Pledge of Cooperation, part two of which dealt exclusively with reading. It is submitted here in context:

> II. I recognize the fact that skills in reading is the key to success in school achievement. Therefore:
> 1. I will provide my child with a library card and insist that he use it regularly.
> 2. I will give him suitable books frequently (birthdays, holidays, and other special occasions.)
> 3. I will give him a subscription to one of the weekly school

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[1]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore and Gertrude M. Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Primary Years, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 21.

newspapers or magazines. (My Weekly Reader, Junior Scholastic, etc.)[1]

Other techniques included after-school reading clubs and making it necessary for parents to accompany children to the library in order to obtain cards, encouraging parents to read to their children, and enabling children to take books home to read to their parents.

The Maury School. In light of its high achievement scores, this depressed area school of Richmond, Virginia had a highly successful reading program.[2]

Reading was viewed as a process of "living and learning." Personal, community and classroom experiences were brought into the reading act through experience stories written by the pupils. The program was based on the assumption that reading content which was relevant to the child's interest made reading an easier task. The experience story approach was continued through the intermediate grades with groups of children working on sections to compile books which they shared with one another.

The Amidon School. This Washington, D.C. project based its successful reading program on a strong phonic system which began with early exposure of first graders to the alphabet, phonics, and syllabication. It used the phono-visual vowel and consonant charts devised by J. B. Timberlake. A combination of sighting, sounding, and kinesthetic methods were used and related to the over-all reading program. Krippner surmised that the phonics rules may have filled the disadvantaged child's need for structure.[3]

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[1]Samuel Shepard Jr., "A Program to Raise the Standard of School Achievement," in Programs for the Educationally Disadvantaged, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), p. 79.

[2]Stanley Krippner, "Methods and Materials in Reading," Education, 85: 469-70, April, 1965.

[3]Ibid., p. 470.

Dade County. The entire improvement program for the Dade County Public Schools of Miami, Florida was heavily based on the use of educational TV and many audiovisual aids.[1]

The developmental program was used for reading instruction. In addition, teachers were given help through curriculum guides, basal reader manuals, and demonstration teachers.

In areas largely comprised of disadvantaged populations developmental language programs preceded and became a major portion of the developmental reading program. Language experiences were provided through audiovisual resources including films, filmstrips, video-tapes, tape recorders, record players, television, etc. A novel approach for developing reading readiness skills utilized a hand puppet called "Drucilla the Dragon" who taught reading readiness telelessons. The puppet played the role of student and responded to instructions given by a teacher. It was highly effective since children readily identified with it.

Gray Areas Project. Gray Areas was the name given programs fostered by the Research Council of the Great Cities Program. These projects were comprised of ten of the fourteen largest school systems in the United States and was largely supported by the Ford Foundation.

Generally, the Great Cities program attempted to raise achievement levels of the deprived, identify and help able children, raise levels of aspirations, equip them for modern urban life by developing conpetencies, increase parental responsibility, and mobilize community support.[2]

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[1]John P. McIntyre, "Education for the Culturally Different," National Elementary Principal, 45:65-8, February, 1966.

[2]Frederick Shaw, "Youth in Urban Centers," Phi Delta Kappan, 45:93, November, 1963.

A brief review of the reading curriculum emphases of several city projects are made here.[1]

Buffalo utilized the services of a speech therapist in conjunction with the reading program to reduce speech problems that acted to impede reading skills.

Language laboratories in Philadelphia embodied independent reading activities, organization based on reading cycles, children's literature programs, in-service education, and self-image programs. In addition, teachers were provided with a booklet produced by the city's language arts consultants that offered guidelines for planning independent reading activities.

Pittsburg, experimenting with team teaching, distinguished group reading activities suited to this organizational plan. Extension of vocabulary, dramatization, choral speaking, and testing were identified as appropriate activites for larger group instruction, while phonic instruction, oral reading, and vocabulary-building exercises were more effective in small groups.

The Detroit program focused on development and use of appropriate materials for culturally deprived children.[2] Two were especially noteworthy. A newspaper, The Urban School News, geared for use in disadvantaged areas, and multicultural readers. In addition, a summer reading clinic and in-service reading instruction program had been established.

San Francisco had a project known as the School-Community Improvement Program. Strengthened reading and language arts skills were the major goals.

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[1]Note: unless otherwise indicated the following programs were described by Hermese E. Roberts, "Developing a Reading Curriculum for the Culturally Disadvantaged," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, Conference on Reading, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 205-207.

[2]Krippner, op. cit., p. 470-71.

a team approach was used and teachers concentrated their efforts on specific combined grade levels, i.e., 1-2, 3-4, 5-6. The program also integrated language arts with other subject areas.

Higher Horizons. This was an independent project carried on by the city of New York to raise educational and vocational aspirations of disadvantaged children. The intensive reading curriculum included the development of valid and appropriate tests, pre-school language experiences, and mandatory kindergarten. Urban oriented materials, pre-service and in-service training of teachers in the area of reading, special personnel, efficient reading records, improved research, and an extended school day were also a part of the project designed to provide adequate reading instruction.

Although the approaches mentioned yielded positive results in early evaluations, it was recognized that no one approach could be effective for all disadvantaged children. It was realized, however, that deprived readers needed fresh approaches for reading instruction. As a result, teachers used many and varied techniques in their attempts to fit the curriculum to the needs of the deprived.

MATERIAL FOR TEACHING CULTURALLY DEPRIVED READERS

An examination of the literature on reading and the culturally deprived reveals a pressing need for appropriate materials for use with these children. Only two relatively new provisions in this area could be found in the literature investigated by this writer. The evidence indicates, however, that there will undoubtedly be more material of this nature available in the future for use with deprived readers.

Multiculture Readers

Reading textbooks and materials used by schools were basically middle

class oriented with little or no concern for the problems of the culturally disadvantaged. These standard reading textbooks seldom used the language of lower-class students or communicated with them in any meaningful way. Minority groups were not represented in the books picturially or otherwise.

In an effort to meet the needs of pupils in multiculture areas, two projects were developed. These were the Bank Street College Multicultural Readers[1] and the Multicultural Readers of the City Schools Reading Program of Detroit.[2] Both projects and project objectives were essentially the same.

Bank Street College attempted to produce readers in which stories and illustrations reflected the positive aspects of the variety of communities and cultural settings which constituted American society. These books were not specifically written for minority groups, but for, and about all children.

In 1962 the Detroit City Schools introduced three pre-primers illustrated with multiracial characters and prepared specifically for the culturally deprived child.[3] Since it was generally recognized that reading difficulties in these children were essentially language problems the program promoted the development of correct speech in different ways: (1) natural, familiar speech patterns were used in accordance with good usage, (2) commonly misused words were repeatedly employed in correct, simple sentence patterns, (3) active verbs which enabled children to act out meanings were frequently employed, and (4) preference was given to words which gave rise to a strong phonetic program.

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[1]John Niemeyer, "Some Guidelines to Desirable Elementary School Reorganization," Programs for the Educationally Disadvantaged, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1963), pp. 80-5.

[2]Gertrude Whipple, "Multicultural Primers for Today's Children," Education Digest, 29:20-9, February, 1964.

[3]Note: In a December 1964 report by Whipple at the Chicago Conference on Reading, two additional pre-primers were in press.

Stories employed the suspense element with resolutions taking the form of surprise or humorous conclusions. Illustrations and content were designed to stimulate interest.

One particularly interesting aspect of these readers was the shorter length of each book. This was specifically intended to provide early success in completion. These books were also designed to promote social development as well as skill improvement.

The five innovations and objectives of the series--racially mixed settings, promotion of verbal competence, stimulating desire to read, shorter length, and improved social relations--were appraised by an experimental program. The books received superior ratings in every area.

Programmed Instruction

Programmed instruction utilizing teaching machines was an effective motivating and reinforcing device for teaching reading. Machines were especially appealing to culturally deprived children and fulfilled the need for a novel approach for reading instruction. In addition, the principle of immediate success and feedback on which these machines operated successfully fulfilled the need for early accomplishment.

Harris indicated three significant motivating characteristics of effective programmed material: they had to guarantee at least 90 per cent successful attempts, a prolonged success element, and high quality material.[1]

Investigators were in general agreement that the machine was most effective when used as an adjunct to regular reading programs. Denny suggested its use

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[1]Albert J. Harris, "Influences of Individual Differences on the Reading Program," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 21.

in practicing mechanical skills of reading, as a mode for make-up work, or for providing supplementary exercises.[1]

Both multiculture readers and programmed instruction have proven their effectiveness with culturally deprived readers. Because of their success, educators are concentrating their efforts upon producing similar materials that may raise the reading achievement levels of these children to an even greater extent.

ORGANIZATIONAL ADAPTIONS

No one organizational plan is effective for all children. Successful reading programs rely on the diagnostic consideration given to teaching of reading, suitable materials for instruction, and the competence and creativity of sincere teachers.[2]

Although most of the plans discussed here were those used with normal children, they are included because they were particularly adaptive to meeting the needs of deprived children.

Pre-school Education

With the discovery that many barriers to learning were a result of experiences prior to school entry, increased attention was given pre-school experiences of lower socio-economic children.

Early evidence from already operating pre-school programs indicated that participation in these programs brought favorable results. Improvements were

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[1]Terry Denny, "Using Special Modes of Learning to Improve Reading Instruction in Grades Four Through Eight," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, Conference on Reading, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 40.

[2]Strang, op. cit., p. 165.

made in language, use of books, increased attention spans, levels of interest and curiosity, and improved intelligence test scores.[1]

In these educationally oriented programs children were provided with a wealth of activities, both real and vicarious, which led to self-confidence; discriminatory abilities in vision, observation, speech, and hearing; interest in books and what they contain; and to general interest and independence.[2] Investigators repeatedly pointed out the need for a multitude of structured activities which strengthen chances for success when a formal reading program was encountered.

Mingoia and others indicated that listening activities, trips, an acquaintance with objects, events, and places of interest steadily increased ability to perform required reading skills that led to mastery.[3] He added further that upon school entry, disadvantaged pupils needed enrichment experiences to strengthen their frame of reference prior to initial reading instruction. He traced frequent achievement patterns of disadvantaged readers as follows: (1) with help they probably read pre-primers at the beginning of the second grade, (2) at third grade they developed sufficient maturity to grasp the complex task of reading, along with some basic word attack skills, (3) progress tended to accelerate at fourth grade since they moved from a first reader to a third grade readiness book or third II level reader at the beginning of grade four

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[1]Gertrude Whipple, "Curricular and Instructional Provisions for the Culturally Disadvantaged Reader," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, Conference on Reading, H. Alan Robinson, (ed.). (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 139.

[2]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore, and Gertrude M. Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Primary Years, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 18.

[3]Edwin M. Mingoia, "The Language Arts and Deprived Pupils," Education, 85:284, January, 1965.

to the end of grade five, (4) in grade six progress approximated a normal year's growth as they advanced from a three-I reader to a fourth reader by the year's end. From this point they branched out in reading, and vocabulary proficiency surpassed word attack skills. Some, however, barely read a primer in grade six.

In addition to strengthening reading development, pre-school programs, day camps, and nursery schools provided excellent opportunities for teachers and other specialists to work cooperatively with parents. Success in this area was important in that values fostered by both were more likely to be the same.[1] It was essential that activities provided be directed toward the acquisition of skills and foundations which enhanced kindergarten learning, otherwise, their purposes were defeated. Studies demonstrated that pre-school experiences could raise culturally deprived children to satisfactory stages of readiness for regular school learning nearly comparable to their more fortunate age-mates.[2]

Multiple Unit Classroom

This is more recent terminology for grouping within the classroom. It embodied ability, need, and interest groups.[3]

The formation of ability groups were the outcome of teacher observation and test results. Children were divided into able, average, and less able groups and instruction paced accordingly. Although ability groups had some merit, it was generally recognized that boredom, over-learning, or inadequate learning frequently took place because it was based on the assumption that all

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[1]Cutts, op. cit.

[2]Benjamin S. Bloom, Allison Davis, and Robert Hess, Compensatory Education for Cultural Deprivation, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965), p. 16.

[3]Strang, op. cit., p. 164.

children in the group had the same interest and learned at the same rate.[1]

Groups based on difficulties were composed of pupils with similar problems who were provided with additional instructions and practice to overcome the specific difficulty.

Interest groups enabled pupils of different abilities to work together on projects based on common interests.

Multiple unit groups were particularly valuable for deprived children since they maximized children's interests which served as a self-motivating device for reading. They also encouraged language development and good social attitudes since much verbal interaction and cooperative skills were needed to carry on group activities.

Reading Levels

This was a relatively new way of organizing in which children were divided according to levels of achievement. It cut across age levels so that several combinations resulted.[2]

As with ability grouping, teacher judgement and test scores determined group placement. Reading classes were scheduled for the same period for all children. Questionnaire results from pupil participants disclosed favorable response to this technique and re-tests showed major gains in reading.[3]

Despite these positive aspects, the plan had several drawbacks. Among these were difficulties in integrating or correlating reading with other subject

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[1]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore, and Gertrude M. Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Primary Years, U.S. Office of Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1964), pp. 19-20.

[2]Ibid., p. 19.

[3]Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability, (New York: David McKay Company, Inc., 1961), p. 107.

areas, reading teachers could not get to know their pupils well, and increased expenditures for materials.[1]

Reading levels were of value for deprived readers since it accommodated individual differences and reduced the range of differences. In this way, reading instruction could be concentrated on strengthening and improving reading skills at specific developmental levels. A basic requirement of such a program, however, was preparation of pupils for dividing into these classes. Children had to be made to see that assigning them to different reading teachers facilitated better instruction for them. In this way, social stigma would at least be somewhat alleviated.

Team Teaching

This plan involved placing a larger number of pupils together to be taught by two or more teachers. It was sometimes used in conjunction with a non-graded format. The team approach enabled teachers to work with small groups or individuals while another gave instruction to the larger group. It allowed for variation in class size and specialized instruction by teachers proficient in a particular area. Other values of such an approach included: additional free time to plan lessons, joint evaluation of problems, and lessened chances of pupil alienation which might occur due to personality conflicts.[2]

Culturally deprived pupils who were retarded in reading benefited from such a plan since individualized instruction was provided. The plan made it possible to accommodate several reading levels within the immediate classroom and facilitated mobility from one level to the next without discontinuity or

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[1]Ibid., p. 108.

[2]Panel of Educational Research and Development, Innovation and Experiment in Education, (Washington: Government Printing Office, March, 1964), p. 35.

gaps in reading skill. In addition, by observing one another, different ideas and approaches could be gained by teachers and incorporated into their own instructional groups.

Non-graded Primary

These schools permitted orderly, continuous, and sequential progress as children advanced at their own speed. Children were grouped by achievement for basic subjects, but progressed at their own rate.

Accurate records of individual progress were an essential part of the program to assure that gaps in learning or needless repetition did not take place.[1]

Instruction was focused on the sequential reading development of each individual, therefore, reading materials were provided in abundance to accommodate several achievement levels. Carefully planned enrichment activities were also a vital part of the approach.

The non-graded program was especially effective in meeting the needs of the deprived. Since these children were characteristically described as able slow learners, the non-graded format accommodated them by providing the additional time required for learning vital reading skills. Reduced discouragement and increased self-confidence were also positive outgrowths of this plan. Most important, perhaps, was that it allowed teachers to become more familiar with specific skill and comprehension problems of these children and enabled them to structure lessons which strengthened these weaknesses over a period of several years. The following observation by Deutsch was indicative of the value of the non-graded format. He wrote that a non-graded primary which was

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[1]Ibid.

preceded by enriched pre-school and kindergarten experiences would be a highly effective approach for developing good reading skills of the deprived. In this period, he believed, deprived children could be saturated with basic skill training required for competence in higher grades. In addition, it would make it possible to devise a systematic curriculum consistent with the actual developmental levels of the child during the early childhood period.[1]

The primary thesis of this discussion was to point out that each plan for organization had merit and was adaptive to the deprived child's needs. No one plan could resolve all the instructional problems of the disadvantaged. Each situation had to be carefully assessed before a plan was instituted.

ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon school administrators rests the responsibility for providing the best possible education for all children. Since reading skill is basic to all other learning, their greatest responsibility lies in this area. In addition to the modifications in curriculum and organization discussed in earlier sections, these administrators had auxiliary responsibilities that served to strengthen reading programs for disadvantaged learners.

Language Arts

First among these responsibilities was the institution of intensive language arts programs with reading as the dominant concern. Methods and approaches that fit the needs of pupils in depressed area schools had to be incorporated into these programs. In addition, programs needed to place heavy emphasis on the thinking process--relating, generalizing, classifying,

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[1]Martin Deutsch, "Social and Psychological Perspectives on the Development of the Disadvantaged Learner," Journal of Negro Education, 33:243, Summer, 1964.

modifying--and utilize many and varied audio-visual materials.[1]

Since depressed area homes seldom contained reading material of any literate standard, it was essential to allow for many opportunities to expose children to books. A central library, therefore, was a necessary adjunct to the total language arts program. Administrators had to provide libraries which were attractive and easily accessible, and staffed by competent personnel who were familiar with the needs of the deprived. Many opportunities had to be provided to expose these children to books, to allow them to handle them, and permit them to take books home.[2]

Enthusiasm for reading had to be exhibited by all school personnel and steps had to be taken to popularize reading. Mackintosh suggested book exhibits, fairs, sales of used paperbacks, reading clubs, and out of school library hours to encourage reading for children and interest in it by parents.[3]

Schools that lacked sufficient funds for elaborate libraries were encouraged to utilize the wealth of quality paperbacks available and to take advantage of the free and inexpensive materials available from government, business, industrial, and cultural sources.[4] In addition to printed material, administrators needed to transform libraries into instructional materials centers. Included

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[1]Eunice Shaed Newton, "Planning for the Language Development of Disadvantaged Children and Youth," Journal of Negro Education, 33:270-71, Summer, 1964.

[2]Sexton, op. cit., pp. 259-61.

[3]Helen K. Mackintosh, Lillian Gore, and Gertrude M. Lewis, Educating Disadvantaged Children in the Middle Grades, U.S. Office of Education. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 24.

[4]Marie Greico, "Providing Materials for Meeting Individual Differences," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, H. Alan Robinson, (ed.). (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 190.

in these centers were pictures, photographs, films, filmstrips, programmed material, slides, video tapes, records, and tape recordings. Teachers had to be educated to ensure skillful use of these materials. Administrators, therefore, had to institute training programs consisting of demonstration situations as well as instruction on the operational mechanics of the equipment.[1]

Teacher Competence

Of all the individuals a deprived child encountered in school situations, it was recognized that teachers were the most important determinants of success. This recognition placed the responsibility of providing the best possible teachers for depressed area schools in the hands of administrators, supervisors, and consultants.

The job of providing competent teachers began with teacher education colleges. Present course requirements seldom prepared teachers for the difficult tasks they were to face in educating the deprived. Landers suggested that course requirements include areas of sociology, anthropology, social psychology, minority group histories, human relations, group processes, and other related fields that gave insight into the personal and social problems of these children. In addition, he felt that methods courses must emphasize the practical and therapeutic measures applicable to the realities of depressed area schools.[2]

Pre-service and in-service education was also needed to develop specific skills and techniques for working with disadvantaged children. Teachers had to understand the unique learning styles of these children and to understand the effects upon learning of their deprived backgrounds. It was recommended

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[1]Ibid.

[2]Jacob Landers, "Responsibilities of Teachers and School Administrators," Journal of Negro Education, 33:329-30, Summer, 1964.

that special courses be required of all teachers of depressed area schools.[1] To this Figurel added the necessity for providing teachers with new approaches and ideas for teaching reading and other language skills which they could understand, accept philosophically, and put into proctice. In order to assure superior instruction, classes of no more than twenty pupils were also required.[2] Administrators would do well to look for the following characteristics of successful teachers of the disadvantaged when hiring instructional personnel:

1. Has genuine respect for disadvantaged children and views them realistically.
2. Views their alien background as a student, i.e., makes an effort to understand their backgrounds, values, kind of work, and life to which they aspire.
3. Knows that many bear scars of intellectual under-stimulation in early years of their life.
4. Is aware of their family structure.
5. Is aware of ethnic group memberships and how this shapes their self-image.
6. Knows that their language is closely tied to the life they lead.[3]

To this list Riessman added the personal qualities of warmth and understanding rather than condescension or patronization.[4]

Identification and Diagnosis of Reading Problems

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[1]Ibid., p. 331.

[2]J. Allen Figurel, Challenge and Experiment in Reading, International Reading Association Conference Proceedings, Vol. 7. (New York: Scholastic Magazines, 1962), p. 104.

[3]Miriam L. Goldberg, "Adapting Teacher Style to Pupil Differences: Teachers for Disadvantaged Children," Merrill Palmer Quarterly, 10:167-68, April, 1964.

[4]Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1962), p. 2.

Closely related to competency in teaching is the ability to detect strengths and weaknesses in learning.

The ineffectiveness of the widely-used intelligence or reading readiness scores were repeatedly pointed out by investigators. Because of this, administrators had to be especially cautious in making assumptions about the reading ability of these children on the basis of these scores.[1] These tests had considerable predictive power, but were most valuable when major emphasis was placed upon the diagnostic and prescriptive techniques to guide the instructional team toward corrective measures.[2]

Research indicated a definite lack of accurate diagnostic devices for deprived children. Despite this limitation, however, it was clearly shown that identification and diagnosis of reading problems could best be made by teachers and specialists trained in recognizing symptoms of disturbance which created obstacles to reading success.[3]

Responsibilities in this area did not end with the development of effective diagnostic measures. Closely related to the development of instruments was the need for more effective data recording and processing procedures which help educators follow the child's development over time and relate this development to his educational needs.[4]

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[1]New Jersey Education Association, The Disadvantaged Child: A Program for Action, (New Jersey Education Association, 1964), pp. 17-18.

[2]Research Conference on Education and Cultural Deprivation, Research Problems of Education and Cultural Deprivation, University of Chicago, Benjamin S. Bloom (ed.). Cooperative Research Program of the U.S. Office of Education. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1965), p. 32.

[3]Ruth Robins, "The Identification and Diagnosis of Social and Emotional Problems that Affect Reading Instruction," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, Conference on Reading, H. Alan Robinson, (ed.). (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), pp. 196-200.

[4]Research Conference on Education and Cultural Deprivation, op. cit., p. 34.

Special services personnel were also needed to whom referrals could be made and steps taken to reduce these problems. Maximum use of these special services personnel ensured a more effective diagnostic program.[1]

Home-School Relations

Educators recognized that a closer alliance was needed between homes and schools to reduce existent gaps between them.

This public relations function of schools was extremely important in deprived area schools because parents seldom visited the schools. Consequently, the primary source of information about the school was likely to be parents whose children had been in some difficulty, vocal protests of children themselves who were dissatisfied with a school situation, or casual observers in or about the school. Negative evaluation was the net effect of such a situation. Conscientious administrators had to make every effort to inform and integrate parents from their communities into the school to avoid such repercussions.[2]

The Gary Indiana First Steps program used a reading improvement approach worthy of reproduction in other school systems. They utilized home and school visitations by both parents and teachers to discuss reading problems and instituted a successful parent education program to inform these parents of the necessity for reading. This program also gave insights into how to foster good reading skills and habits in their children. Lay leaders were used to encourage attendance at these educational programs which were made up of workshops, panels, and general discussions. Parents were acquainted with reading programs used in the schools, the techniques and problems in reading instruction and the

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[1]Robins, op. cit., p. 200.

[2]Harold Spears and Isadore Pivnick, "How an Urban School System Identifies its Disadvantaged," Journal of Negro Education, 33:248, Summer, 1964.

specific problems of their own children. Great success was recorded for this program by the educators involved.[1]

The literature on the responsibilities of school administrators in depressed areas clearly indicated that theirs was a complex and trying task. The principal who kept the needs of his pupils in mind and made every effort to accomplish the objectives of his compensatory education plan, however, was likely to gain much satisfaction from his seemingly thankless task when pupils from his school demonstrated competence in reading and other scholastic areas in later school years.

SUMMARY

In its simplest form, the problem of educating culturally deprived children was one of reducing environmental differences that affect learning and motivation between them and more advantaged children. The problem confronting educators, therefore, was the identification of handicapped readers and their learning experiences so that curriculum programs could be established that would best do the job of educating these children.

This report was undertaken to investigate the following problem areas affecting deprived children: (1) to examine the characteristics and learning problems of the culturally deprived child, (2) to determine the extent to which environmental deprivation influenced performance in reading, (3) to identify resulting reading problems and their effects, and (4) to show how these problems could be alleviated as reported in current literature.

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[1]Carrie B. Dawson, "A Cooperative Plan for Helping the Culturally Disadvantaged Reader," in Meeting Individual Differences in Reading, H. Alan Robinson, (ed.). (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 201-205.

Despite the many barriers presented, culturally deprived children were capable of learning to read when appropriate modifications in curriculum and instruction were made. The goals for educating the deprived were the same as for all children. On the basis of the evidence presented, the following observations could be made about culturally deprived children retarded in reading:

1. These children were most frequently found in lower socio-economic groups.
2. Home conditions and cultural patterns acted to depress potential reading success.
3. Variant language patterns created the greatest obstacle for learning to read.
4. Teacher and pupil morale were important factors in the success of every program. Positive relationships between children and the school had to be established before any project could be undertaken.
5. Children from depressed areas required more intensive educational programs than their middle class counterparts. They required more depth, quality, and material appropriate to their cultural backgrounds.
6. Culturally deprived children wanted to learn to read, but had to be shown the practical value of reading.
7. The school was cited as the most important institution to assist these children in raising their social and cultural levels.
8. There was a definite lack of appropriate reading material for use with culturally deprived children.
9. Enrichment programs were a valuable asset for deprived readers. Although they may not have fully compensated for deficiencies provided by the home, they were invaluable in gaining ideas that helped meet the special problems of the deprived.
10. The success of every reading program was particularly dependent upon administrative resourcefulness.

In light of these observations, it becomes evident that the task of educating the culturally deprived is very complex. It includes consideration of academic, emotional, and, particularly, social problems confronting these children. Therefore, solutions to the problem of how to best teach these

chidren to read must be related to the problems and attitudes of parents, teachers, administrators, and the community at large. Undoubtedly, these problems are the pressing concern of the Nation. This report has attempted to acquaint the reader with current attempts toward treatment of educational problems of the culturally deprived. The widespread interest in the problem would indicate that even more significant measures to alleviate the problem will be available in the future. Whatever the approach, all projects will have directed their attention toward equipping deprived children with sufficient skill in reading to enable them to make the mature decisions required of them as adult members of society.

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THE EFFECTS OF CULTURAL DEPRIVATION ON READING ABILITY OF CHILDREN

by

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B.S., Kansas State University, 1964

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1967

It has long been recognized that children from impoverished backgrounds have educational problems peculiar to their group. Numerous studies indicated that environment had a direct relationship to learning. In many of these investigations culturally deprived children were shown to be particularly deficient in reading and English, but causes were not always clearly reported and little was done in the specific area of reading.

This report was undertaken to bring together the current facts and opinions on the detrimental effect of socio-economic conditions to the reading ability of children and to review the programs currently underway to alleviate these problems.

The specific purposes of this study were (1) to examine the characteristics and learning problems of the culturally deprived child, (2) to determine the extent to which environmental deprivation influenced performance in reading, (3) to identify resulting reading problems and their effects, and (4) to show how these problems could be alleviated as reported in current literature.

Much of the material for this report was obtained from periodicals and government publications since the problem of deprivation has only recently been given concentrated attention.

It was discovered that three prevalent conditions most appreciably affected scholastic achievement of the culturally deprived: (1) a lack of demonstrated parental affection and close family relationships, (2) restricted experiential backgrounds, and (3) insufficient language skills.

As a consequence of these and other factors, reading retardation was found to be as high as 80 per cent in depressed areas. It was recognized, however, that deprived children could learn when provided with appropriate materials and approaches for their unique learning style.

Compensatory programs were initiated by schools across the country in an

effort to provide appropriate educational experiences for deprived children. These projects placed much emphasis on strengthening reading since it was recognized that reading skill was prerequisite to all other learning. All had three common objectives for reading improvement: to improve attitudes toward reading, to raise reading achievement levels, and to foster personal-social development.

The particularly outstanding innovations were the following: (1) the establishment of pre-school education programs to strengthen experiential backgrounds through enrichment opportunities, (2) the introduction of multi-cultural readers for use by all children which contained subject matter and illustrations that were familiar to disadvantaged children, and (3) the addition of reading improvement specialists to the instructional staff of schools to give assistance to slowly learning pupils requiring individualized instruction. These three innovations recorded much success in improving reading skills of deprived children.

Several implications could be made about reading instruction for these children on the basis of the evidence presented: (1) children from depressed areas required more intensive educational programs than their middle-class counterparts, (2) there was a definite lack of appropriate reading material for use with these children, (3) the school was the most important institution to assist these children in raising their social and cultural levels, (4) enrichment programs were a valuable asset for deprived readers, and (5) administrative resourcefulness determined the success of every reading program.

The widespread interest in the problem would indicate that even more valuable means of alleviating the problem of cultural deprivation will be available in the future.