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A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE RELATING TO THE
ORGANIZATION AND COMPONENTS OF A
WELL-BALANCED READING PROGRAM

by

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Many reading programs fail because they neglect to provide a suitable plan for meeting individual learning needs in all aspects of the teaching-learning process. Children come to school with a variety of interests, needs, and backgrounds; need materials, motivation, effective teaching, and seek cooperation and involvement of administrators, parents, reading specialists and/or consultants, as well as a variety of methods of instruction. The foregoing characteristics of a well-balanced reading program, to name but a few, should be considered when organizing any program. To do so will likely result in less failures in reading and more mature readers which our present society demands.

Both research and teacher observations, indicate that wide differences exist in children's abilities to learn to read. Authorities usually agree that there is no single plan yet devised which effectively meets individual differences that exist in every classroom. However, some system of organization is commonly listed as an essential factor. Organizing an effective reading program is ultimately important if the goal of meeting existing individual differences is to be achieved. Whether the organization begins on the county, school, and/or class level, it will require encompassing the components of a well-balanced reading program. When planning for the development of pupils, the organization of a reading program which emphasizes the needed skills is imperative if success in reading is to occur.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This report was specifically undertaken to determine the importance of the several components of a well-balanced reading program. As a result of the writer's experiences in providing for the individual needs of thirty pupils in a developmental reading program, it became apparent that effective organization of a classroom reading program would require knowing what organizational schemes existed on the county and school level, which would include the components of a well-balanced program.

An attempt was made to (1) provide essential background information on the reading act; (2) define a developmental reading program, specifically in its relationship to an overall or total reading program; (3) select and discuss several characteristics of a well-rounded program; (4) examine some organizational guidelines; and (5) examine some specific instructional plans within the total reading program.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Reading. Reading is a complex process which involves thinking, with the words as stimuli, reorganizing our own experiences, reacting to the experiences of the writer, and using the thoughts and ideas of what is read to develop and modify thought behavior.

Developmental reading instruction or activities.

Throughout this report, the terms mean a sequential program or

instruction which emphasizes the development of reading skills.

Overall developmental reading program. This term refer to a total reading program consisting of several specialized instructional programs: accelerated, adapted, developmental, corrective, and remedial, all supplementary parts which compose the total reading program. Its aim is reading achievement that reaches the limits of each person's capacity.

Accelerated instruction. This instruction refers to provisions made for enrichment and challenge for gifted or superior students.

Adapted instruction. This term describes that instruction concerned with children of limited ability, or slow learners.

Remedial instruction. Remedial instruction focuses upon intensive diagnosis and special tutoring for the disabled reader.

Corrective instruction. This term refers to the immediate diagnosis and corrective help given to eliminate gaps and minor deficiencies in skill development.

LIMITATIONS

There has been no conclusive research by authorities as to any one single plan of organization for effectively meeting individual differences of the students in any reading program. For the purposes of this study, an organizational plan emphasizing an overall developmental reading program is presented.

DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

This study involved a review of the literature which dealt with the organization and characteristics of some effective reading programs. References such as the Education Index and Dissertation Abstracts were used to identify the literature. Several organizational plans located in the Educational Research Information Center (ERIC) microfiche collection were also investigated.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Individuals concerned with the organization of an effective reading program need background information. To provide this information, several areas were studied. First, the objectives of reading were identified and defined from a broad point of view. Second, an overall developmental reading program was defined in terms of the total reading program in the elementary school. Finally, some characteristics of an overall reading program were identified and presented in terms of recent research. With this information, individuals concerned with organizing an effective reading program may be able to meet the needs of the pupils involved, utilizing the various components of a good reading program.

THE READING PROCESS AND OVERALL DEVELOPMENTAL READING PROGRAM

Reading is a continuous process which is a part of the individual growth of the child into his mature years. It is a developmental process, an idea readily accepted by most educators today. A person does not become a mature reader in just a few years. According to Rogers and Gray, " a mature reader has enthusiasm; reads widely and interprets words, ideas, moods, and feelings; makes use of ideas gained in reading; reads critically and evaluates the material;

integrates ideas gained in reading with previous experiences; adjusts pace to the occasion and the demands of interpretation; and discriminates in the selection of material and interpretation of the selection."¹

Reading, a complex process, involves more than merely getting the meaning or the purpose of the writer. Reading is not just a mechanical process of fixations, return sweeps, or eye movements. An individual does not merely recognize words in print, be able to "say" the words, and consider himself reading. Grouping words into thought units which enables an individual to develop fluency and understanding as a reader only partially define reading. A reading program must develop more than basic skills and techniques.²

Although the aspects mentioned are part of the complex process termed reading, the reading process is also a thinking process, with the words as stimuli; Stauffer summarizes a view of reading as a thinking process:

In summary, it is quite clear, I believe, that children can read and think critically about matters relating to their experiences. It is also clear that, to prepare pupils to be effective readers, teachers must teach reading as a thinking process. If they do so, then basic readers with structured content may be used appropriately to direct group-type reading-thinking activities. And, when this is done effectively--along with a sound program of self-selection through individualized instruction--skilled,

¹William Gray and Bernice Rogers, Maturity in Reading (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1956), p.56.

²Guy L. Bond and Eva Bond Wagner, Teaching the Child to Read (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), pp. 8-10.

well-rounded, efficient readers will develop.³

Reading is also reorganizing our own experiences. Reading is reacting to the experiences of the writer; the reader achieves meaning as part of the total reaction in reading. The reader reacts whether orally or silently to the abstractions of symbols that represent sound. Reading in an elementary form involves developing skill in recognizing words and getting meaning from them. Reading is using the thoughts and ideas of what is read to develop and modify thought behavior.⁴

The foregoing views of reading may apply at all levels from the very beginning in grade one, and/or when a child starts to read, to the end of life. If the proper instruction in reading is to make the important contribution to the development of pupils, it must give them increased levels of competence in perceiving words, understanding the language forms and structure, comprehending meaning, evaluating ideas, and integrating the new and previous experience thus involving a viewpoint on the part of the reader.

It is essential at this point that a developmental reading program be clarified. Harris and Sipay describe the total reading program of the elementary school as having three broad goals or purposes, one of which is to develop the ability to read: "Developmental reading activities are those in which

³Russell G. Stauffer, "Children Can Read and Think Critically," Education, LXXX, Number 9 (May, 1960), 525.

⁴Albert J. Harris and Edward R. Sipay, Effective Teaching of Reading (New York: David McKay Company, 1971), pp. 8-13.

the teacher's primary general aim is to bring about the improvement of reading skills, and the materials and procedures are selected accordingly."⁵ It is a sequential program of instruction which reinforces and extends the previously acquired reading skills. New skills and appreciations needed by pupils must be developed if they are to understand and enjoy the complex forms of reading which new programs and new experiences demand. A sequential program seeks to provide opportunities for students to increase their reading abilities. The many different purposes and needs in reading are recognized. Plans are made to try and meet those needs. Attempts are made to relate reading effectively to other experiences in the individual's program. A sequential program of instruction seeks to extend students' interests. Children's reading interests should be wide and varied.⁶

SOME ASPECTS OF A WELL-BALANCED READING PROGRAM

In order to highlight the need for each type of instruction, in a well-balanced reading program which includes accelerated, adapted, remedial, corrective, and developmental

⁵Ibid, p. 18.

⁶Miles A. Tinker, Teaching Elementary Reading, (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1952), pp. 11-15.

instruction, an understanding of the meaning of an overall developmental reading program is necessary. The overall developmental reading program, though broadly conceived, should be one which provides a framework for working with the vast range of individual differences and problems encountered. The program should be focused upon each individual learner. The developmental reading program is viewed as an overall reading program in which several specialized instructional programs, namely, accelerated, adapted, developmental, corrective, and remedial, are interrelated. These specialized instructional programs are conceived as but supplementary parts contributing to the entire developmental reading program. The ultimate goal of the total developmental program is reading achievement that approaches the limits of each person's capacity.

When planning the developmental program, the objectives, administrative arrangements, specialized personnel, and other specifics of the master plan of organization must be arranged in ways that are appropriate and practical in given situations. A good reading program is sufficiently broad to provide for all levels of ability.⁷

Accelerated Instruction

The focus of accelerated instruction is upon enrichment and challenge for bright, well-motivated, successful learners.

⁷Wayne Otto and Richard J. Smith, Administering the School Reading Program, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1970), pp. 27-33.

Consideration must be given to the gifted or superior student. Research is not conclusive as to the relative merit of "special" versus "regular" classes. However, there is a current trend toward homogeneous grouping with either groups within a heterogeneous class, or separate classes. Gifted children do profit from being with other children of their ability. They are challenged and stimulated. A reading program which is highly individualized and includes provisions for skill development must be considered when organizing a program for the accelerated students. When planning for the development of the gifted, organizational provisions are necessary; however, Lehmann advocates that the same consideration should be applied to all children.⁸

Adapted Instruction

Adapted instruction is that instruction concerned with children of limited ability, or slow learners, who are most likely to benefit when instruction is carefully paced and long-term expectations are modified in view of their limitations.⁹ Paul A. Witty describes the developmental reading aims for the slow learners:

For the slow-learning pupil, a developmental reading program appears especially desirable. Such a program recognizes the value of continuous systematic

⁸C.F. Lehmann, "Organizational Modification for Gifted Children," Issues and Innovations in the Teaching of Reading, Ed. Joe L. Frost (Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1967), pp. 259-262.

⁹Otto and Smith, op. cit., p. 31.

instruction, utilization of interests, fulfillment of developmental needs, and the relationship of experience in reading to other types of worth-while activity. By this four-fold approach, steady growth in reading skills is made possible, and the attainment of basic human satisfactions is facilitated.

One aim of this program is to lead the slow learner to become like other pupils, independent in using the library and other resources for satisfying his interests and fulfilling his varied and changing needs. This objective will be achieved if the student is enabled to enjoy reading and the results of reading.

He usually will enjoy reading if he acquires a reasonable command of silent and oral reading skills. He can acquire this skill through an efficient, systematic program of reading instruction and guidance throughout the course of his education.

The slow-learning pupil will enjoy the results of reading when reading experience is associated with his interests and needs. Accordingly, slow-learning pupils may become skillful, independent readers on their own levels and may continue to extend their understandings and satisfactions throughout their lives by reading.¹⁰

Remedial Instruction

The remedial instruction focuses upon intensive diagnosis and special tutoring for the disabled reader.¹¹ In a total reading program, remedial reading instruction has a definite place. Stumpe suggests that in order to have an effective remedial reading program for the elementary schools the principles and practices which are

¹⁰Paul A. Witty, "Needs of Slow-Learning Pupils," Reading and the Elementary School Child, eds. Virgil M. Howes and Helen Fisher Darrow, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 116.

¹¹Otto and Smith, op. cit., p. 32.

followed in the instructional program itself should be considered. These factors will determine the degree of success the remedial program will enjoy. Cooperation of teachers from all instructional levels will be an important factor also.¹²

When planning the instructional program for remedial reading, Kennedy suggests the following requisites:

1. Understand the participating students.
2. Group students according to the ways in which they learn best.
3. Select the significant skills to teach.
4. Plan a teaching sequence.
5. Distribute instructional time properly among the various aspects of teaching.
6. Select appropriate materials.
7. Plan daily lessons.¹³

To function effectively, the foregoing require study, understanding and organization.

The physical setting of the remedial program should be considered in planning. Some school systems provide a separate building for remedial teaching while others provide a single classroom set aside in a particular school as the site for remedial instruction. If a single classroom is to be employed for remedial instruction it should be selected and organized according to (1) the number of children

¹²Doris M. Stumpe, "Planning for an Effective Remedial Specialist Program for the Elementary Schools," The Reading Teacher XXIV (April, 1 1971), p.624.

¹³Eddie C. Kennedy, Classroom Approaches to Remedial Reading, (Itasca, Illinois: F.E. Peacock Publishers, 1971), p. 165.

involved, (2) the experience and preparation of the teachers, and (3) the kinds of difficulties to be corrected.¹⁴

Robinson and Rauch suggest some useful ways for organizing for remedial instruction: (1) special reading instruction may be conducted by the remedial reading teacher for students dismissed at scheduled times; (2) classes can be combined at various times so that the teacher is free to provide instruction; (3) the remedial teacher can provide instruction in the classroom while the remainder of the class continues to receive instruction from the regular classroom teacher. The following tips may prove helpful when scheduling remedial instruction:

1. Teachers need to know the bases for selection and scheduling.
2. Screening and selection for remedial instruction is preferable during the spring to avoid a loss of time in the fall when instruction begins.
3. Grouping on the basis of need should be included in the spring or summer scheduling of remedial classes.
4. Children should be grouped according to needs, size of groups involved, and physical facilities. Some individuals may require special tutoring. Some children who share a common reading deficiency may occasionally require special instruction. The limit for most remedial groups should not exceed more than seven students.
5. Instructional time may last from thirty to forty-five minutes, depending on age, reading weaknesses, and concentration ability.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 160.

6. Daily instruction is recommended, when feasible. Three times a week is acceptable; however, remedial cases should not be scheduled for just once a week.¹⁵

Corrective Instruction

Corrective instruction focuses upon immediate diagnosis and instructional help in order to eliminate gaps and minor deficiencies in skill development.¹⁶ The regular classroom teacher can be expected to give corrective instruction to those students who are not seriously disabled readers; or to those students who tend to read well on standardized tests but who do not use their ability in daily reading; and to students who scored satisfactorily on general reading tests, but who are deficient in certain skills. These students, a part of the regular developmental program, may be taught by the teacher who can adjust materials to their levels and emphasize the skills needed by each pupil.¹⁶

Schubert and Torgerson recommend that a developmental program be augmented by a correctional program consisting of self-directed instructional material of appropriate difficulty and challenging content. "Efficient developmental programs in reading, individualized or otherwise differentiated, are

¹⁵H. Alan Robinson and Sidney J. Rauch, Guiding the Reading Program (Chicago: Science Research Associated, 1965), pp. 61-62.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 61

dependent on an ample supply of appropriate instructional material utilized to the fullest by teachers who promote wholesome classroom practices."¹⁷

When organizing for corrective instruction, it is suggested that:

1. The program be flexible to fit the individual needs of each child.
2. Diagnosis be careful and systematic.
3. Instruction begin at the level where the child can perform with confidence.
4. The child, parents, and teachers be aware of the pupil's progress.
5. The exercises used must be meaningful to each pupil as well as meet the basic needs of each individual taught. The pupil should be satisfied with his work.
6. The surroundings or environment must be pleasant and favorable to learning.
7. Materials and activities should be varied and stimulating to hold the child's interest.
8. Regular and systematic help must be given.
9. The pupil needs help in gaining self-confidence. Therefore, praise and rewards must be given thoughtfully.
10. Time is essential in helping children to overcome bad habits. The teacher should not rush through the material.
11. The child needs opportunities to also hear the teacher read.¹⁸

Developmental Instruction

The developmental instruction is concerned with the sequential development of reading skills. It is the regular classroom teaching program that is geared toward developing competence in reading skills for the normal child who

¹⁷ Delwyn G. Schubert and Theodore L. Torgerson, Improving Reading Through Individualized Correction (Dubuque, Iowa: W.C. Brown Company Publishers, 1968), pp. 67-69

¹⁸ Selma E. Herr, Diagnostic and Corrective Procedure in Teaching of Reading (Columbia, Missouri: Lucas Brothers Publishers, 1967). pp. 3-4.

progresses through the sequence without complications.¹⁹

Pescosolido, Schell, and Laurent define the instructional or developmental program as that part of the total reading program concerned with the skills a child learns during instructional periods which will enable him to become independent in identifying words, and competent in understanding what he reads. The following guideposts are suggested as an aid in developing a meaningful and effective instructional reading program:

1. Proper instructional level using the Informal Reading Inventory as basic criteria for determining a child's difficulty in reading.
2. Appraisal of pupil-skill development using a check-list to determine the needs of each pupil.
3. Flexible grouping and individualization to insure the teaching of skills needed by each pupil.
4. Availability of varied materials and practices to meet the needs of the child as well as to add variety and enjoyment to learning.
5. Developing purpose for activities so that the teacher and child are aware of the reasons for the lesson.

"The instructional segment of the reading program is concerned with developing competence in skills in word identification and comprehension. Skills of silent and oral reading are also important and it must be remembered that instruction in reading is also concerned with developing attitudes toward reading and a love for reading. Therefore, the instructional session becomes the core of the entire reading program."²⁰

¹⁹ Otto and Smith, op. cit., p. 29.

²⁰ John R. Pescosolido, Leo M. Schell, and Marie-Jeanne Laurent, Reading: Approaches and Rituals (Baltimore, Maryland: Publication Press, 1970), pp. 13-20.

SUGGESTED STRATEGY FOR ORGANIZING CLASSROOM READING PROGRAMS

To develop specific classroom strategies in organizing an effective reading program Otto and Smith suggest that the reading program be composed of three definite phases:

(1) developmental reading, (2) functional reading, and (3) recreational reading. The three phases are interrelated and mutually reinforce each other. According to this viewpoint of a total reading program, remedial, adapted, and corrective instruction as generally provided would be a part of the developmental phase. All three phases: remedial, adapted, and corrective instruction stress attitudinal and skill development. An enrichment program can well be provided for within any of the three phases. The effectiveness of the program will depend principally upon the kind of enrichment or acceleration being emphasized. The important idea is to have the objectives, motivations, and materials of each phase blend with those of the others so that the distinction will exist primarily for determining the emphases of the various phases of the reading program. To exemplify, the pupils, hopefully, will obtain satisfaction from the developmental exercises they engage in and would be essentially motivated to read the content area materials. When a child reads self-selected materials and topics assigned in the content areas, it is hoped that he will develop his vocabulary and comprehension skills as well as create favorable attitudes toward reading. The ultimate objective of the

reading program is clear, that is, "the development of mature readers in and through all of these reading activities."²¹

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF A TOTAL READING PROGRAM

Recent research gives insight as what to expect in terms of reading instruction in the '70's. Hilton observes that there are clear signs that schools will give top priority to reading instruction in the '70's. This will mean, among other things, budgeting time for effective reading programs--time for teachers to teach reading. There is no general agreement on any one best way to teach reading. Nor is there general agreement that any one set of materials is better in all ways than others; consequently, reading programs will make use of varied methods and materials. Yet, in any one school, there must be structure to the program. To say that there is no one best way is not to say that "grabbag" teaching is good. The quality of instruction will continue to be the most important element in a reading program, and it is likely that teaching performance will be subject to more searching review and evaluation than in the past. Many schools will continue to develop programs around a basal reading series, making effective use of varied supplementary materials that will increasingly be so designed that children can be as self-directing as possible. Middle-grade reading

²¹Otto and Smith, op. cit., pp. 72-73.

programs will be strengthened; there will be clearer focus on the reading-study skills and on literature, using materials appropriate to the objectives sought.²²

Sanders believes that a viable reading program must be founded on an understanding of what reading is and a willingness to implement that understanding in logical and at times innovative ways. The reading program is concerned with the student's broadening experience, his changing interests and attitudes, and with his increasing sophistication--with the constantly enlarging fund of knowledge and know-how that he can bring to bear on the reading tasks expected of him. Students and the reading-related demands of the school are characterized by change. A sound program must therefore emphasize skills initially; but it must attend, also, to increasingly complex and varied intellectual demands of the children. It must recognize that reading is not a subject to be mastered by some predetermined age or grade but is a very subtle and sophisticated relationship of the student to the printed matter at hand. A definition or philosophy of reading is intimately related to the instructional strategies, evaluative procedures, curriculum, and

²²Ernest Hilton, "Some Notes on Strategy and Content for Elementary Reading Programs in the '70's," The Elementary School Journal, LXXXI (April, 1970), p.390.

organization of the school.²³

Dietrich advocates many ways of organizing reading programs. The teacher is challenged to find the program which fits the needs of the youngster and provides satisfaction to the teacher as he approaches the teaching of reading. A group of students extremely deficient in a particular skill area may need one type of organizational program, while a group of students who lack depth and interest in reading may do best when placed in another type of organizational pattern.²⁴

Herr points out that the specific organization of a reading program will depend upon the characteristics of the local situations. The size of the community, the economic status of the citizens, the number of students who need help in reading, the material and funds available, and the school personnel are all factors that are to be considered in the establishment of a program.²⁵

Stumpe suggests the commitment of the superintendent and his staff should be attained when organizing a remedial reading specialist program in the elementary schools. The

²³Peter L. Sanders, "Impetus, Participants, Facilitator--A Definition of the Administrator's Role," Journal of Reading, XIV (May, 1971), 549-550.

²⁴Dorothy M. Dietrich, "Challenges in Reading," The Reading Teacher, XXIII (December, 1969), p. 265.

²⁵Selma E. Herr, General Patterns of Effective Reading Programs (Iowa: W.C. Brown Company, 1963), p. 6.

superintendent's staff can set the planning in motion by organizing a reading committee. This committee should include representative teachers from all instructional levels, personnel from reading related services, students, parents, and administrators. The superintendent's staff and the building principal must take the responsibility for seeing that certain administrative matters are taken care of before the program can successfully begin. Creative instruction is less likely to occur if teachers, consultants, and specialists are too preoccupied with space and materials problems. Matters which the school administrator should take care of include the following: space, budget, materials accessibility, parent communication, testing, and the school organizational plan.

Another critical area in setting up an effective remedial reading program is that of selecting the remedial reading specialists. Not only must the remedial teacher possess the professional qualifications but certain essential personal qualifications are also necessary. Furthermore the continuing professional development of the remedial staff must be insured.

The final critical area of responsibility in setting up a remedial reading specialist program is that of providing for assessment. If realistic program objectives were specified, then evaluation should be made in terms of the degree to which these have been met. Any implementation plan is at best only the bare framework upon which a program can

be built. The principles and practices which are followed in the instructional program largely determine the success to be achieved in the remedial program. Careful planning, however, combined with district commitment to making the remedial specialist program really of value to children with reading problems, should get the program off to an effective start.²⁶

Tinker and McCullough share the following views concerning organization of a reading program:

Whether it is the principal with his staff organizing the reading program for a school, or a teacher with a particular child organizing his reading program, he must recognize that organization is merely a means to an end--a means with shortcomings which must be constantly watched and balanced by other methods. Interclass grouping, team teaching, departmentalization, homogeneous grouping, the self-contained classroom, even private tutoring, all have their drawbacks as well as their advantages. The ways by which a teacher can manipulate children--as a whole class, in groups, with special purposes (instructional level, special needs, team, tutorial, interest, research), or in private conference--have their special values for parts of the reading program, and their limitations if they are exclusively depended upon. Furthermore, any administrative selection must consider the personalities of teachers and children.²⁷

After making an international survey, Gray says that at least three types of information have been used in developing reading programs. The first relates to the nature and extent of the previous experiences of the children to be taught and their chief interests and needs. Such information suggests

²⁶ Stumpe, op. cit., pp. 621-629.

²⁷ Miles A. Tinker and Constance M. McCullough, Teaching Elementary Reading (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1968), p. 398.

the kinds of reading that will make the greatest appeal and the background of experience needed in interpreting what is read. The second type relates to the level of development of the children--mentally, physically, socially, and emotionally. Such information is needed in determining the readiness of children for reading when they enter school, their probable rate of progress, and the nature of the difficulties to be anticipated and overcome. The third type includes records of the progress normally made by children in different aspects of reading and the emphasis that should be given to each in teaching.²⁸

According to Southgate and Roberts, criteria for assessing reading approaches should be concerned with the following:

1. The need for a framework
2. The following considerations--
 - A. The teacher
 - B. The situation
 - C. The children
 1. The group
 2. Individual children
 - D. The reading materials
 1. The author
 2. The medium and method employed
 3. Children for whom the materials are appropriate
 4. Optimum situations
 5. Scope of the materials
 6. Structural and functional competence
 7. Production of the materials
 8. Excellence
 9. Cost
 - E. Apparatus²⁹

²⁸ William S. Gray, The Teaching of Reading and Writing (An International Survey; Switzerland: UNESCO, 1969), p. 122.

²⁹ Vera Southgate and Geoffrey R. Roberts, Reading--Which Approach? (London: University of London Press, 1970).

According to Shepherd, the school reading program may consist, basically, of five parts. They are: (1) a systematic and continual means of teaching the reading skills, (2) supplementary reading of materials related to the topics of study, (3) techniques of reading in the content areas, (4) extensive use of the library; and (5) provisions for remediation. Reflection upon the foregoing five part program, leads to the following inferences. One is that both skill teaching and wide reading are provided for. The other is that reading is taught and fostered whenever the pupil is using printed materials--reading is not relegated only to a period during the day but, rather, is taught throughout the school day.³⁰

Lichtman agrees that another effective characteristic of an effective reading program is to have materials that are varied and multi-level in all grades in order to meet the individual needs of each pupil. Research does not indicate that any one type or set of materials works best with any type of learning problem. Likewise, the results from the United States Office of Education sponsored research studies pointed out that no one kind of material or program (i.e., phonetic materials, basal readers, linguistic materials, etc.) was more effective in teaching reading to any one group than

³⁰David L. Shepherd (ed.), Roles of the Administrator and Parent in the School Reading Program (Proceedings of Hofstra University Reading Conferences; New York: Hofstra University, 1966), p. 22.

any other... "it appears safe to conclude that the provision of a wide variety of materials for each teacher of reading is imperative."³¹

Camp suggests that materials can be organized in learning centers to facilitate their usage. These learning centers need not be elaborate to be effective. They can simply be tables set up in several areas equipped for various kinds of activities. One could be utilized as a listening station and equipped with tape recorder, cassette player, and/or record player with headsets. Another could serve as a viewing center and be equipped with individual viewers, a filmstrip projector, a screen, and whatever is necessary to provide sound for the kind of materials that are used. The screen could be placed so that only those students at this center could see the projected images. Other areas could feature multiple materials arranged in interest centers from which students could choose such things as reference materials, trade books, creative writing materials, games, crossword puzzles, materials for art projects, and other supportive materials. Even the small traditional classroom can be transformed into the kind of environment which can accommodate students working on multiple levels using multi-media materials. This kind of environmental organization frees the teacher to

³¹ Marilyn Lichtman, "Keys to a Successful Reading Program," The Reading Teacher XXIV (April, 1971), 655.

give direct attention to groups or individuals.³²

Good staff morale and attitudes must be an integral part of the reading program. Communication between administrators and staff must be good. The responsibility for reading must be shared by all. Tinker and McCullough point out the following:

The reading program requires complex organization and administration not only of individuals and groups but of many kinds of material and equipment. It requires the cooperation of pupils, parents, librarian, teacher, and principal. Beyond these there is another ingredient without which all may add up to sawdust. Parents, librarian, teacher, principal, and other children must believe--must be sufficiently informed so that they do believe--that their cooperative program is, so far, the best conceivable program for progress in reading. If all of these persons know what their aims are, if they know how important it is for themselves and for their country that their goals be attained, and if they know that the way they are working for them is a good way, then they will have the confidence, the will, and the pride in teamwork to make the program effective.³³

Lichtman states that the first step toward the improvement of a reading program at the class, school, or county level is a determination of the goals and objectives of a total reading program. Ideally, each teacher might derive behavioral objectives for each individual. Practically, however, long range objectives should be stated for each grade level or each level of instruction. It is imperative that these objectives be stated behaviorally,

³²Gloria S. Camp, "Take the Child Where?" The Reading Teacher XXIV (December, 1970), 241-242.

³³Tinker and McCullough, op. cit., p. 398.

i.e.--they should be capable of being observed or measured by the teacher. It is usually advisable that the teachers from a given school come together and determine the long range behavioral objectives in reading. Such mutual determination provides continuity, carryover, and consistency in the total reading program. In addition to long range objectives, each teacher needs to establish behavioral objectives on a weekly, monthly, and unit basis. Once the objectives have been established in behavioral terms the next task for the teacher is to diagnose each child to determine the level at which instruction should begin and the specific reading skills needed by each individual. It should not be assumed that because a child is at a particular level he needs all skills that are usually taught at that level.³⁴

Several typical categories of goals are directly related to the reading achievement of the learner and listed by Harris as:

1. Learners develop positive attitudes toward reading.
2. Sequential skill instruction is provided.
3. Lifelong reading interests are initiated.
4. High standards of taste are developed.
5. Other goals are associated with teaching:
6. On-going evaluation is conducted with a variety of techniques and instruments.
7. Corrective and remedial instruction is provided immediately.
8. Instruction is individualized.
9. In-service education is provided.
10. The goals include the importance of materials:
11. An adequate supply of facilities, equipment and materials appropriate to the needs of each learner are available.

³⁴Lichtman, op. cit., p. 652-654.

Finally, goals related to the entire program are included:

10. Parents and the community at large are well informed about the program.
11. The program objectives are specific and clearly defined.
12. Experimentation with and evaluation of new and innovative ideas are conducted.³⁵

In discussing evaluation of materials, Cox observed that there is much overlap in the characteristics of the following skills: get the facts and identify the problem, critically think through what has been said, and use the meanings supplied by the author as a launching pad for one's own ideas. There is some reading material which demands more of one kind of skill than another. To teach children to be flexible in the use of them and to adjust their type of thinking to a particular situation or reading task requires that the teacher evaluate material in view of systematically planned reading lessons that will provide opportunities for various cognitive experiences.³⁶

Rauch believes there is a need for constant evaluation of reading programs. However, all concerned must participate. Teachers must have confidence in the evaluators and the evaluators must recognize the many day-by-day problems faced by the average teacher. Despite the importance of standardized test results the heart of the evaluation is

³⁵Larry A. Harris, "Evaluating a Reading Program at the Elementary Grade Level," Measurement and Evaluation of Reading, ed. Roger Farr (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1970), p. 117.

³⁶Donald R. Cox, "Criteria for Evaluation of Reading Materials," The Reading Teacher, XXIV (November, 1970), 145.

classroom performance. Recommendations must be realistic. Evaluators must consider not only what should be done, but what can be done within a specific school-community environment. In most instances, evaluation has a positive effect on the reading program. It compels administrators and teachers to take a closer look at their methods, their materials, and their children--and this close examination generally results in progress.³⁷

In evaluation of reading programs Wahl believes that "a good reading program is going on....

*If the basal reader is used as a tool to promote continuity, sequence and stability in the reading program.

*If many materials--audio-visual materials, trade books, programmed materials and specific skill builders--are being appropriately used to supplement the basic text.

*If the child is the important person in the educational picture, and instructional patterns are planned with his needs foremost in mind.

*If the appropriate reading program is available to the child, whether it be developmental, corrective or remedial reading.

*If we see children reading for enjoyment and pleasure.

*If children are working in flexible groups to facilitate the adjustment of instruction to individual differences.

*If boys and girls understand that reading at different rates of speed according to the types of reading materials is both permissible and necessary.

³⁷ Sidney J. Rauch, "How to Evaluate a Reading Program," The Reading Teacher, XXIV (December, 1970), 250.

*If specialists are available to the classroom teacher for demonstration teaching and conferences.

*If teachers of every subject area plan lessons for vocabulary development, concept building, critical reading and organizing information.

*If worthwhile inservice training is provided by administrators.

*If teachers are made aware of educational innovations through their weekly bulletins.

*If new programs are explained and teachers are trained before the program is put into practice."³⁸

"The reading program needs to be improved....

*If the teacher teaches the grade level, subject matter or content rather than the children.

*If the grade-level textbook is being used regardless of the child's reading level or real reading needs.

*If the basal reader is used to the exclusion of all other reading materials and activities.

*If the use of a basal reader limits appropriate innovation and individualization.

*If the teacher slavishly follows the manual or, alternatively, if the teacher ignores the manual completely.

*If reading instruction and guidance is not included in the content areas and reading is taught as a separate isolated subject.

*If pupils are disinterested or disdainful of reading."³⁹

Some implications of research studies are preented by Oliver:

1. The best organizational plan for reading instruction is the one which permits teaching

³⁸ Jeanne Wahl, "Evaluating Your Reading Program," Grade Teacher, LXXXVII (May-June, 1970), 110-111.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 111.

that is most appropriate for the teacher, the pupils, and the reading lesson. Whole-class instruction may sometimes be the best method of organization when teaching to meet instructional needs common to all members of the class.

2. Homogeneous groups composed of children who are selected on one criterion will be composed of children with different instructional needs. Homogeneous grouping does not inherently provide a setting for greater gains in reading achievement.
3. Teachers do not move pupils from group to group to the extent that individual differences would suggest necessary. Teachers need formal guidelines for assigning pupils to reading groups and for changing them from group to group.
4. Standardized reading tests tend to yield scores that indicate performance at or near frustration. Teachers and pupils accept reading group placement based on performance levels determined by informal reading inventories. Teachers do not like to administer informal reading inventories themselves. Cloze tests constructed by the teacher would seem to provide a simple, efficient, and accurate procedure for determining the appropriate placement of children into reading groups.⁴⁰

For the reading teacher and for the reading supervisor or specialist, Dorost says that this is a time of great opportunity. Public sentiment is strongly in favor of anything that can be done to improve reading skills, both for the population as a whole and, more specifically, for those for whom correctible defects can be identified and assessed. It would be nothing short of criminal for our profession to fail to evaluate objectively and adequately outcomes of our

⁴⁰Marvin E. Oliver, "Organizing for Reading Instruction," The Elementary School Journal, LXXXI (November, 1970), 102.

present affairs. A valid determination that a technique is not effective is as valuable as a determination that it is effective. We can learn by our mistakes as well as our success. There can be no onus on making a mistake once, it is inexcusable if the same mistake is perpetuated because we fail to assess the nature of our failure and take proper steps to correct it. What is needed is more effective evaluation at the local level wherever projects are set up on the basis of the local option, and the supplementing of the local effort by encouraging cross validation of programs which embody the best of what has been found. The problem then is to obtain a convincing mass of data to show that a replicable technique has been identified and perfected which will give results. Every person intimately involved in the problem of improving reading instruction has a responsibility in this matter.⁴¹

⁴¹Walter N. Durost, "Accountability: The Task, the Tools, and the Pitfalls," The Reading Teacher, XXIV (January, 1971), 304; 367.

Chapter 3

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

According to available research and teacher observations, wide differences do exist in children's abilities to learn to read. There is no single plan yet devised which effectively meets the individual differences that exist in every classroom. Commonly listed as an essential factor, however is some system of organization. The organization of an effective reading program is important if the goal of meeting the existing individual differences is to be achieved.

To prepare for the challenge of organizing a well-balanced reading program to meet these individual differences that exist in the classroom, several areas were investigated: (1) essential background information on the reading act; (2) a developmental reading program specifically its relationship to an overall reading program; (3) several aspects and characteristics of a well-rounded reading program; (4) some guidelines to consider when organizing a reading program, and (5) some specific instructional plans within the total reading program.

There are few reading programs that are identical in scope and operation. The main factor for the differences may be attributed to the differences among school populations. Significantly, however, some programs are more effective and/or preferred than are some others. There is no single set of criteria or formula to follow when establishing a

successful reading program. However, some basic components are necessary if success is to be achieved: (1) cooperative planning by the school staff of a developmental reading program based upon a specified philosophy; (2) well-defined objectives; (3) provisions for achieving the objectives stated; (4) learning experiences and provisions for students with reading problems as well as for pupils with average and superior ability; (5) instruction which is adapted to meet the pupils' demonstrated needs; (6) varied materials; (7) continuous evaluation of the pupil's progress and the reading program, and (8) an in-service program which considers the children, the teachers, the parents, the administrative staff, and community.

An overall developmental reading program tends to recognize the many different reading purposes and needs of children. Plans are made to try and meet those needs. Attempts are also made to relate reading to other experiences in the individual's program. A sequential program of instruction seeks to extend students' interests, and is focused upon each individual learner. A coherent developmental reading program consists of several specialized instructional programs: Accelerated, adapted, developmental, remedial, and corrective instruction. These subsidiary parts contribute to the total developmental reading program, the aim of which is reading achievement that approaches the limits of each person's capacity.

To effectively organize the classroom reading program, it is suggested that the total reading program be conceptualized as being composed of three distinct phases: developmental reading, functional reading, and recreational reading. From this viewpoint of a total reading program, the remedial, adapted, and corrective instructional phases would be a part of the developmental phase because all three phases stress attitudinal and skill development. The accelerated phase of instruction may well be provided for within any of the three phases. The instructional strategies, evaluative procedures, and organizational plans will depend much upon the philosophy of reading and the objectives of the program.

There is no one method of organization to employ for organizing our reading programs. This statement may apply to the organization of a reading program on the county, school, or classroom level. In viewing the characteristics of any reading program, the method of instruction employed, and the content of materials available, it is clear that the effective implementation lies in being able to organize to meet the requirements or demands of the students. If the organizational reading plan is such that it meets the needs of each individual, then it may be considered successful.

The available research indicates that the various characteristics and components of many programs can be incorporated into one to form an effective reading program

that can be made to work effectively for children. Those individuals responsible for organizing the reading program will need to determine the needs of the learners and plan to meet those needs. Planning may involve encouraging, assisting, and inspiring individual teachers to adopt methods, content, and materials that will meet the unique requirements of the students. Successful use of any school organizational plan will depend upon the desire and commitment of teachers and administrators to make the reading plan work effectively for each individual.

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A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE RELATING TO THE
ORGANIZATION AND COMPONENTS OF A WELL-BALANCED
READING PROGRAM

by

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

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The purpose of this study was to (1) provide essential background information on the reading act; (2) define a developmental reading program, specifically in its relation to an overall reading program; (3) select and discuss major characteristics of a well-rounded program; (4) examine some guidelines for consideration when organizing an effective reading program; and (5) examine some specific instructional plans within the total reading program, principally to emphasize the need for each type of instruction within a coherent reading program.

Research literature concerning the characteristics and components of an effective reading program was examined to collect data for this study. Some of the characteristics of a well-balanced reading program cited from the literature are: (1) co-operative planning by the school staff upon an agreed upon philosophy and well-defined objectives; (2) instruction which is adapted to meet the pupils' demonstrated needs; (3) varied materials; (4) continuous evaluation of the pupils' progress and the reading program; and (5) an in-service program for teachers.