

THE VALUE OF THE CONTROLLED READER APPROACH IN  
JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL FOR IMPROVING SPEED AND COMPREHENSION

by *GSJ*

MARILYN CHARLENE JENSEN

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Approved by:

*Gen M Schell*

Major Professor

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Albert Harris said, "a literate adult in today's hectic world goes through more reading material in a week than his greatgrandfather probably covered in a year."<sup>1</sup> These words help express the reason for the mounting pressure on schools today to strengthen their reading programs and also helps explain the wealth of mechanical devices which fill the modern classrooms.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

The need for fluency in reading. Because reading is a complex activity, students not only need to be taught the fundamentals of comprehension but also must be equipped with the skills that make reading a fluent and efficient process. They need to be given specific instruction in the visual-functional and perceptual skills that enable them to make maximum use of all the information and experience they bring to reading. "Students need to build coordination and motility so that they will become more comfortable readers; to develop better directional attack in order to be perceptually more thorough and systematic; to achieve quicker word recognition and the ability to think and associate more rapidly in order to develop the fluency that will make reading more enjoyable and rewarding."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (N.Y.: David McDay Company Inc., 1961), p. 503.

<sup>2</sup> Controlled Reading (Huntington, N. Y.: Educational Developmental Laboratories, -P-351, 1968) p.o.

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Speed and comprehension problems. The developmental reading program has three distinct problems which involve rate and comprehension. The following problems will be visible to the teacher after giving a reading survey test: (1) a child who is slow in rate and satisfactory in comprehension, (2) a child who is satisfactory in rate but poor in comprehension, and (3) the child who is retarded in both rate and comprehension. These problems, along with a brief comment about the approach being used with the students in this study, are explained below.

A child who is poor in both speed and comprehension needs to concentrate on the improvement of comprehension. Speed should not be emphasized until this child can read with understanding. It is believed that as the extremely slow student learns to read with more effective comprehension, his speed will increase without special attention.

The child who reads rapidly but with poor comprehension needs training which emphasizes comprehension. It is not advisable to stress slowing down the rate, since it is desirable to retain as much speed as is consistent with adequate comprehension. The teacher should look for reasons for poor comprehension. This child may profit from the rate training if more time is stressed building a purpose rather than emphasizing speed. Through the pre-reading activities a child having the problems mentioned above will be able to read in a more organized way, therefore improving his comprehension.

Rate training can be particularly useful with the child who