

Language Arts in the School

ALTHOUGH the "language arts" encompass listening, speaking and writing as well as reading, it is the latter area which has most persistently held the attention of both laymen and educators. Concern with the teaching of reading is definitely not limited to those who are responsible for the education of young children. There has come a belated realization that the development and refinement of reading skills is a process which must be continued beyond the elementary school years.

The most effective contribution that educational leadership can make to the improvement of American schools may well lie not in helping to extend frontiers of knowledge, but in fostering the utilization, in common practice, of the procedures and techniques long since tested and proved in the classrooms of frontier teachers. The seriousness of the discrepancy between the potential and the actual is clearly visible in the data presented in a recent study (2) of programs for preparing future teachers, especially for teaching reading. Recommendations of this study are directed primarily to colleges and universities offering pre-service programs. The findings should be carefully studied by persons concerned with in-service programs, to the end that such programs will become

more pointedly directed toward rounding out the professional competencies of all those presently concerned with instruction in our schools.

Preservice and In-Service

The Harvard-Carnegie Reading Study secured data on the preparation of prospective teachers from 530 colleges and universities distributed over the 50 states and the District of Columbia. In 74 of the participating institutions, visiting field teams sought: (a) an overview of the college program including admission policies and general curriculum and certification requirements; (b) data on the content and conduct of reading courses; (c) reaction to some of the current issues in training teachers in the field of reading; and (d) reaction to the practice teaching experience as a means of integrating theory and practice. The second part of the study was focused on the college faculty members offering the courses in reading instruction, on the nature and content of these courses, and on opinions regarding specific practices in the teaching of reading in the elementary school. Questionnaire responses were received from 638 instructors in 371 institutions.

The data show that college courses in

the teaching of reading tend to stress the program of the primary grades. Neglect of the middle grades reading skills inevitably ensues. Only rarely do prospective secondary teachers receive any kind of preparation designed to help them meet the reading needs of their future students. That reading instruction may profitably be included both at the junior and senior high school level is evidenced by such studies as those of Reeves (5) and Ramsey (4). Thus it seems almost certain that new teachers, at all levels above the primary, will need special guidance if they are to teach reading effectively.

Techniques for teaching word recognition skills also receive major emphasis in college courses. Instructors indicated that many students had difficulty with this aspect because they either had not learned or had forgotten the principles of phonetic and structural analysis. This

deficiency was noted in an earlier investigation by Aaron (1), who suggested that perhaps the difficulty was due to fallacies in those particular phonics generalizations which were tested in his study. Interest in structural linguistics, especially as related to the teaching of grammar, is growing rapidly and giving impetus to such studies as those by Mallis (3) and Senatore (10). There is need for studies exploring the possible contributions of linguistic science in developing improved techniques of word analysis.

The importance of adjusting reading instruction to meet individual differences is a third principal area of emphasis in the college courses, but the effectiveness of individualized reading programs is generally questioned by the college instructors. The Roseville experiment supports this reaction. In this study with second grade children, Sartain (9) com-

**To predict
how rapidly
your students will learn a foreign language**

THE MODERN LANGUAGE APTITUDE TEST

*for classical as well as modern languages
in grades 9-13*

The student's "ear for language" is measured by a tape-recorded portion of the test. The total test is a better predictor of foreign language success than are IQ tests.

For descriptive information, write Box L



THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CORPORATION

304 East 45th Street, New York 17, N.Y.

A member of our professional staff will be at
Booth 99, Convention Center, ASCD
Las Vegas, Nevada, March 4-8

pared results secured when using individualized reading with those secured through instruction following a basal reader. Using a rotation plan for the study, this investigator found greater growth during the first half of the year, regardless of the method of instruction. He concluded that a combination of both methods would be more effective than either method alone. The college teachers in the Harvard-Carnegie study expressed doubt that the "typical primary grade teacher was knowledgeable enough in the sequential development of the complicated network of skills constituting reading ability to carry on a reading program without the guidance and direction of a basal reading system" (2:53). They felt, therefore, that better reading instruction could best be realized by helping students develop skill in "the principles and procedures of a systematic program of reading instruction centered on the basal reading series" (2:54). They urged changes in the basal readers to upgrade the materials and to extend instruction in the reading skills into the junior and senior high school.

Reaction to significant issues showed general agreement among the respondents of this study to the effect that—

Early achievement in reading is influenced by multiple factors.

Phonetic analysis has value in word analysis but only when used in conjunction with other techniques.

The beginning reading vocabulary should be rather closely controlled.

The basal reader, a vocabulary- and skill-controlled tool, is a material aid to effective instruction at all grade levels.

Both group and individual instruction are essential in the reading program.

These viewpoints are probably also adhered to by most classroom teachers, whose preservice courses were taught

CURRICULUM BULLETIN

Since 1939, a monthly publication of the...

School of Education
University of Oregon
Eugene, Oregon

Order Blank

- Annual Subscription (starting Jan. Issue) \$ 7.50
Back issues: (unbound)
 Any single year, 1956-61 \$ 6.50
 All six years, 1956-61 \$30.00
Single issues, in print, as priced* (see below)
Out-of-print bulletins, available on microfilm*

Illustrative Titles

99. Test of Critical Thinking \$.25
 104. Test of Reasoning Ability40
 154. The Far East (Jr. High)55
 161. Health Instr. in Sec. Schools-Gen. Organ.50
 162. Health Instr. in Sec. Schools-Unit Organ.90
 170. Tchrs. Can Construct Better Ach. Tests50
 173. Enriching American History: Anno. Biblio. 1.50
 181. Promising H.S. Cur. Practices, Part I75
 182. Promising H.S. Cur. Practices, Part II75
 187. Unit on Canada (Jr. High) 1.00
 190. Teaching Written Composition90
 198. Policies on Homework in Secondary Schools70
 204. Meeting Individual Differences.60
 207. Secondary School Music25
 208. Ungraded Primary School 1.60
 210. Teaching of Grammar75
 211. Teaching Machines50
 212. Science Books for Elem. School Library65
 215. Lists of Free & Inexp. Teaching Mtrls. 1.50
 216. Bib. of Biblio. of F & Inexp. Tchng. Mtrls.50
 218. High School Multi-Purpose Theatre85
 219. Portland, Oregon, Cur. Survey-Summary 1.50

* Send for Curriculum Bulletin No. 206 for complete list of bulletins from 1939. Free.

by these instructors, and so they may be regarded as a conceptual base upon which in-service growth can be structured.

Awareness of an established theory does not, however, guarantee practice consistent with belief. Among specific discrepancies noted, the following were mentioned most frequently:

The use of rigid ability groups without providing either for further individual adjustments within groups or for adjustments of techniques and materials among the groups

Intermediate grade instruction in which all children were using the same page of the same book

The exclusive use of a basal text and excessive adherence to the accompanying teachers manual

Word recognition skill developed solely on phonetic analysis

Continued reteaching of primary skills at intermediate grade levels rather than the

development of study skills and critical reading skills.

Inadequate training of the prospective teacher was named as one of the factors contributing to these shortcomings. Also indicated as a factor was the lack of qualified leadership in the schools. Probably contributory also is the nearly complete omission, from preservice courses, of attention to research bearing on instructional problems.

Many schools and school systems are developing a research consciousness in their staffs through cooperative in-service investigations. The findings resulting from such studies need not yield definitive answers to educational problems for them to have a salutary influence upon instructional practices. As a recent example may be cited the Reading Study Project of San Diego County, California (6, 7, 8).

Three approaches to the teaching of

EVERYTHING YOU NEED . . . AND MORE!
THE NEW BUILDING BETTER ENGLISH

for Grades 2-12

This completely coordinated series of texts has all the elements needed for thorough, abundant, and enjoyable instruction in English. Each text offers:

- logical, consistent organization
- thorough coverage of four important areas of communication—speaking, listening, reading, and writing
- a strong, practical basic-skills program of grammar and usage
- clear, understandable instruction of skills combined with effective and appealing practice materials
- reinforcement of skills with continuous maintenance, review, and testing
- useful application of English to everyday activities
- enrichment materials for advanced students.

Also available—Teacher's Editions for Grades 2-6, and Teacher's Manuals and Answer Keys for Grades 7-12. For users of workbooks—ENGLISH SKILLS AND DRILLS for Grades 3-6, and WORKBOOKS AND HANDBOOKS for Grades 7-12.

ROW, PETERSON AND COMPANY

publishers of good books in Evanston, Illinois/Elmsford, New York

reading were identified and analyzed: the basic approach, the individualized approach, and the language experience approach. The large number of variables involved made it inadvisable to attempt a comparative study of these approaches. Instead, an exploratory study was planned to analyze "the consequences of teaching within each of the three approaches" (7:6). Sixty-seven teachers of above average ability and with teaching experience ranging from one to twenty-nine years were the voluntary participants. Grades one through six were represented.

The study was carried out in two parts. During the first half of the year, the control period, five in-service meetings were attended at which the teachers sought to develop a thorough understanding of one of the approaches to the teaching of reading. During the experimental period, the second half of the year, each

teacher endeavored to order his instruction as nearly as possible according to the selected approach.

A "Teacher Inventory of Approaches to the Teaching of Reading," developed for this study, was administered at the end of the control period and again at the end of the experimental period. The 14 teachers who selected *the basic approach* for study maintained their high agreement with this approach throughout the study. They showed little change in their lesser acceptance of the individualized approach, but intensified their disagreement with the language experience approach.

The 37 teachers who chose *the individualized approach* actually showed greater agreement, at the beginning of the experimental period, with the basic approach. At the close of the study, their acceptance of the individualized approach had shifted to almost total agree-

Give them

THE MACMILLAN UNIT READERS

and you give them . . .

- Child-sized books—32 pages each—written at the primary- and intermediate-grade levels.
- Child-styled books that both stimulate and satisfy their desire to read a variety of stories *by themselves*.

Write for further information to:

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

60 Fifth Avenue, New York 11, N.Y.

A Division of The Crowell-Collier Publishing Company

ment, while attitude toward the basic approach moved sharply into the disagreement area. Their reactions to the language experience approach remained essentially the same.

The 16 teachers in the third group, the language experience approach, reacted similarly to all three approaches at the beginning of the study, agreement with the chosen approach being only slightly greater than for the other two. At the close of the study, however, there was practically complete agreement with the language experience approach, unchanged moderate agreement with the individualized approach, and general disagreement with the basic approach.

While the committee planning this study regarded the in-service growth of teachers as a secondary purpose only (7:6), this may actually have been the more important outcome. The stated purpose of the teacher inventory, at any rate, is a description of at least one "approach" to this end:

... to assist the teacher, through self-evaluation, to improve his insight and understanding of the teaching of reading. It should be remembered that there is no single approach considered to be the best or the only one for all teachers. Each teacher should develop an approach to the teaching of reading that is in harmony with his most effective teaching style. This can best be accomplished by the careful analysis and study of his approach to the teaching of reading. . . . (8:13).

Bibliography

1. IRA E. AARON. "What Teachers and Prospective Teachers Know about Phonics Generalizations." *Journal of Educational Research*, May 1960.
2. MARY C. AUSTIN and others. *The Torch Lighters*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1961.
3. JACKIE MALLIS. "Experiment with the New Grammar." *English Journal*, October 1957.
4. WALLACE Z. RAMSEY. "An Experiment in

Teaching Reading in High School English Classes." *English Journal*, November 1957.

5. RUTH E. REEVES. "Experiment in Improving Reading in the Junior High School." *English Journal*, January 1958.

6. Department of Education, San Diego County, California. *Description of Three Approaches to the Teaching of Reading*. I R I Monograph No. 2. San Diego: the Department, 1961.

7. Department of Education, San Diego County, California. *Report of the Reading Study Project*. I R I Monograph No. 1. San Diego: the Department, 1961.

8. Department of Education, San Diego County, California. *Teacher Inventory of Approaches to the Teaching of Reading*. I R I Monograph No. 3. San Diego: the Department, 1961.

9. HARRY W. SARTAIN. "The Roseville Experiment with Individualized Reading." *Reading Teacher*, April 1960.

10. JOHN J. SENATORE. "S V O: A Key to Clearer Language Teaching." *English Journal*, October 1957.

—CLARA G. STRATEMEYER, *Editorial Director*, My Weekly Reader, Wesleyan University Press, Middletown, Connecticut.

EMPHASIZE *the* FUNDAMENTALS

with Continental Press
Publications

NOW... 149 TITLES

for any LIQUID DUPLICATOR

KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE 9

- ENGLISH — Grades 2 to 9
- PHONICS — Grades 1 to 5
- SCIENCE — Kindergarten to Grade 6
- ARITHMETIC — Kindergarten to Grade 8
- ARITHMETIC Enrichment Series — Grades 3 to 6
- READING READINESS
- READING — Grades 1 to 3
- OUTLINE MAPS — All Grades
- SOCIAL STUDIES — Grades 1 to 6
- HEALTH & SAFETY — Grades 1 to 3
- HEALTH — Junior High
- GUIDANCE — Junior High
- SPECIAL EDUCATION SERIES



Write for Complete Catalog
of 149 Liquid Duplicating Titles
THE CONTINENTAL PRESS, INC.
ELIZABETHTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA

Copyright © 1962 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.