

THE COUNSELOR
AND
REMEDIAL READING INSTRUCTION

by
RICHARD F. THAW

A PAPER
submitted to
OREGON STATE COLLEGE

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

December 16, 1946

APPROVED:

Redacted for Privacy

Professor of Education

In Charge of the Major

Redacted for Privacy

Head of the School of Education

Redacted for Privacy

Chairman of the State College Graduate Council

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

To Dean Salser and Dr. H. R. Laslett the writer owes a debt of gratitude for their constructive criticism of the set-up for the research work, and for their guidance and suggestions in the preparation of this paper.

Acknowledgment is made to Dr. R. J. Clinton, and Prof. S. E. Williamson, who gave so willingly and unstintingly of their time in offering suggestions and constructive criticisms of this paper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION. | 1 |
| CHAPTER II. GENERAL CAUSES OF READING DIFFICULTIES . . . | 4 |
| Inferior Learning Capacity | 4 |
| Poor Auditory Acuity | 6 |
| Poor Visual Acuity | 8 |
| Immature Eye Habits. | 9 |
| Handedness and Eyedness. | 9 |
| Emotional Factors. | 11 |
| CHAPTER III. LOCATING RETARDED PUPILS IN READING ABILITY | 13 |
| Observation of Students While They Read. | 13 |
| The Study of Eye Movements During Reading. | 14 |
| Interest Inventories and Graded Books. | 16 |
| Choosing Pupils With the Greatest Need for Remedial Instruction | 19 |
| CHAPTER IV. REMEDIAL READING TECHNIQUES. | 21 |
| Diagnostic Treatment | 21 |
| Improvement of Speed of Reading. | 22 |
| Improvement of Vocabulary. | 23 |
| Improvement of Reading Comprehension | 26 |
| Remedial Reading Program | 27 |
| CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS | 29 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY. | 32 |

THE COUNSELOR AND REMEDIAL READING INSTRUCTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Reading, and reading skillfully, is a basis for success in school work. It is an art that should be mastered by every student. Reading skill involves more than a comprehension of material read. Two other qualities, accuracy and rate of reading are also very important. The student must understand what he reads and to do so he must read accurately. Speed is essential if a great deal of material is to be covered in a limited period of time.

It is imperative that all children acquire certain basic reading skills in the grade schools and then develop these skills into greater reading abilities through the medium of the secondary school. It must not be assumed that a sufficient reading ability can be attained in the elementary school. Reading is, or should be, a continuous learning process throughout elementary, junior high, and senior high school and should carry over into the college training program. Such a continued learning process would not in most cases necessitate remedial reading instruction above the elementary level. However, a great many students do have a need for such remedial work, those students who have progressed from grade to grade but at the same time have not progressed proportionately in reading ability.

Remedial reading is the "individual or group instruction aimed at correcting faulty reading habits and at increasing the efficiency and

accuracy of performance in reading."¹ These faulty reading habits may be the effects of poor teaching or poor learning but, whatever the cause, remedial reading instruction is a means of eliminating bad habits and forming new and good habits in reading.

"The functions of the counselor and remedial teacher are complementary and cooperative when dealing with pupils with reading difficulties."² Their objective is that of removing, in-so-far as possible, the causes of reading difficulties and at the same time of further developing reading techniques so that the disabilities will cease, in themselves, to become causes of further trouble.

The counselor is more concerned with the discovery and elimination of the cause or causes of the reading inefficiencies while the remedial teacher deals with the improvement in the mechanics of the technique(s).

It is essential then that the counselor have some detailed knowledge of remedial techniques if he is to coordinate his efforts with those of the remedial instructor. The counselor will do more in directing the program than he will in undertaking remedial teaching as such but, because counseling and teaching are so closely related, the personnel in each of the above two fields of work will do well if they have some knowledge of the work of the other.

It may be that the counselor will be called upon to practice some remedial teaching, but this should not be the case unless the counselor has had some training in that particular phase of remedial

¹Good, Carter V., Dictionary of Education, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York, and London, 1945, p.330.

²Morris, W. A., and Thaw, R. F., "Remedial Instruction," Unpublished Paper, 1946, p.1.

work or there are no trained remedial teachers available. A more complete teaching staff will allow the counselor to refer pupils to classes in remedial work in these fields in which the pupils are having difficulty.

It is of importance to realize that secondary school or college students will probably have developed certain techniques to compensate for reading disabilities, for example, paying close attention to what can be heard in lectures or by utilizing the group study method by which the material which is otherwise in a book can be memorized after hearing it a number of times. It naturally follows that teaching will usually be adapted to the reading habits of the majority of students and, very often, remedial instruction in ways of reading must come before the teaching of subject materials if that teaching is to be effective.

CHAPTER II

GENERAL CAUSES OF READING DIFFICULTIES

The causes of reading disabilities may be very complex, so complex that the causes can not presently be clearly identified. A number of causes occur quite frequently and are relatively easily identifiable for one trained as a counselor. Of course, the counselor should be ever on the alert for these causes, for no lasting and effective remedial work can be accomplished until the basic and underlying causes have been discovered, eliminated, or at least in part removed.

Inferior Learning Capacity. This is one of the most common of all causes for backwardness or retardation in school work and is, of course, an important obstacle confronting both the counselor and the teacher. Counselors who have worked with pupils who are backward in reading have found intelligence tests to be useful in the diagnostic stage in counseling.

Here a word of caution may be appropriate. It is essential to use tests which do not necessitate extensive reading or the tests will confirm what has already been discovered, that the pupil can not read well. Several tests that do not require much, if any, reading are mentioned below:

The California Test of Mental Maturity.³

This test provides both a language IQ and a nonlanguage IQ. The language IQ section of the test is similar

³ Blair, G. M., Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching in Secondary Schools, The MacMillan Co., 1946, pp.64-65.

to most group intelligence tests which are used in schools. The nonlanguage is administered orally to the pupils by the examiner, and consists of subtests labeled Immediate Recall, Sensing Right and Left, Manipulation of Areas, Foresight in Spatial Situations, Opposites, Similarities, Analogies, Number Series, and Numerical Quantity. An added feature of the test is a series of exercises which appraise the vision, hearing, and motor coordination of the pupil. These tests of physical factors are not highly refined ones, but are valuable in identifying those pupils who have sensory difficulties which might interfere seriously with obtaining valid results on the test. The California Test of Mental Maturity has been designed for pupils at several grade levels. The Intermediate series is for pupils in grades 7 to 10, while the Advanced Series is designed for individuals from grade 9 up to and including the adult level. There is a relatively high correlation between the results secured on this test and those obtained from the Revised Stanford-Binet Scale.

In addition to the California Test, the Revised Stanford-Binet Scale, the Revised Beta Examination, the Chicago Non-Verbal Test, The Arthur Performance Test, and several others are useful in finding the mental abilities of pupils apart from or influenced by their reading abilities while taking the tests.

The Revised Stanford-Binet Scale is for the most part an oral test, i. e., it is administered orally and it is very useful for testing poor readers. It is a test that comes in two forms, and it can be used in testing individuals ranging from three to eighteen years of age. The outstanding handicap to the using of the Revised Stanford-Binet Scale is the fact that much diligent study and training in the use of the test must be obtained before it can be administered accurately. This test should be given only by those persons who have had special training in its use.

The Revised Beta Examination, the Chicago Non-Verbal Test, and the Arthur Performance Test can be used effectively in given instances and with particular students. They are tests that are usually used in clinics and administered by persons trained in techniques of testing.

Poor Auditory Acuity.⁴ Investigators have not determined definitely the extent to which poor hearing produces retardation in reading, but it is obvious that deaf children would be handicapped in the phonic phase of learning to read. The phonic method being a "method of teaching reading based on the analysis of words into their basic speech sounds."⁵ Here the counselor must work closely with the teacher in order to ascertain whether or not certain children suspected of being deaf are deaf. Furthermore, all pupils should have the opportunity of being tested in hearing ability. There are several tests that the counselor may use in appraising the hearing ability of pupils. The Audiometer made by Western Electric Company in two models is perhaps the best known of such devices. The individual tester and the group appraiser are the two models made. The 4B or group audiometer is used in classrooms with as many as forty pupils simultaneously. Each pupil is equipped with earphones which are connected to the audiometer. A record is played in which four series of numbers are heard, the first two voices those of women and the last two those of men. Each series of numbers begins at loud volume and then the volume gradually

⁴"Oregon Manual for the Use of the School Health Record Card," Oregon State Joint Committee for Health and Physical Fitness, Vol. I, No. 2, Revised, 1944, pp. 16-17.

⁵Goed, Carter V., Dictionary of Education, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York and London, 1945, p. 297.

diminishes until the numbers at the end of the series can barely be heard if they are heard at all. Each student records the numbers spoken, in so far as he can hear them, on a specially prepared form. This test is made first with one ear and then the other. The pupil's record gives the data necessary for evaluating his hearing.

In smaller school systems that can not afford an audiometer, the Watch-Tick Test may be used. All that is involved in this test is the use of a loud ticking watch held at varying distances from the pupil's ears, not allowing the pupil to see the distance at which the watch is held away from him. The pupil notifies the examiner when the pupil fails to hear the ticking. The average ear can hear the ticking of a watch at a forty-eight inch distance. A quiet room must be selected for this test. The pupil stands sidewise in relation to the tester; and the tester, hiding the watch from the pupil by means of a card held at the side of the pupil's head and in front of the ear, gradually withdraws the watch (horizontally) until the student fails to hear the ticking. A stop at 20 inches shows a hearing acuity of $20/48$. The test is then reversed, the watch is held at 48 inches distance and is gradually brought closer to the ear till the child can hear it. An average of the two distances is then found.

If a pupil can not hear beyond a sixteen inch distance in this test, he is sufficiently hard of hearing to warrant special attention.

Another test that is useful is the Whisper Test. This test is a simple one requiring no devices in its use. The child is placed in a corner of a room with his back to the examiner who stands at a

distance of twenty feet. Covering one ear, the child repeats the numbers spoken by the examiner. If the child can not hear the examiner's voice, the examiner advances toward the child till the numbers are heard. The hearing may be recorded as "whispered voice, 20 feet" or whatever the distance may be.

Poor Visual Acuity. In many secondary schools, little if any attention is given to pupils suffering from visual defects. The teachers and counselors should work cooperatively in discovering and aiding these children (and not from the standpoint of reading ability alone). A number of tests may be employed in the appraisal of visual ability of pupils.

An instrument that checks visual equipment in great detail is the Keystone Telebinocular. It examines for near-sightedness, far-sightedness, astigmatism, vertical imbalance, lateral imbalance, far-point fusion, binocular visual efficiency, and near-point fusion. Stereoscope cards are placed in the telebinocular, which is in itself a stereoscope, and the cards and telebinocular make up the material used in this test. The telebinocular is so constructed that it is possible to appraise eye coordination similar to that involved in reading.

The Farnes Eye Test is another visual test that is appropriate for school use. Its subtests are scored as "Passed" or "Failed" and its use is simple and inexpensive. The test screens for visual acuity, near-sightedness, far-sightedness, astigmatism, fusion, and muscular imbalance.

The Snellen Chart can be used in measuring near-sightedness and visual acuity. This test involves the use of a Snellen Chart which is

hung on a wall. The pupil is placed twenty feet from the chart and asked to read (first with one eye, then the other) the lines of letters of varying size on the chart. According to the size of the smallest printed line read by the pupil, the examiner can determine whether or not the student has normal vision. If the twenty-foot line can be read at a distance of twenty feet, the pupil is said to have normal or 20/20 vision. If the pupil can read the fifteen-foot line from twenty feet, he is said to have better than normal vision or 20/15. However, if a pupil can not read the forty-foot line from the twenty foot mark (20/40 vision), he should be sent to an eye specialist for an examination.

A test similar to the Snellen Chart is the American Medical Association Rating Reading Card. The distance this card is placed from the eyes is only fourteen inches, making normal vision a fraction of 14/14. The sizes of type used in this chart are much smaller than those of the Snellen Chart.

Immature Eye Habits. Such habits include the guiding of the eyes along a line of print by the use of a finger, pencil, or paper; the turning of the head rather than a mere turning of the eyes while reading; too many fixations or number of pauses per 100 words; and too many regressions or movement of the eyes backward from right to left per 100 words.

Handedness and Eyedness. Handedness and particularly left-handedness has given rise to the theory that the left-handed person may show a preference for reading toward the left, i. e., reading from

right to left rather than from left to right or briefly glancing at the end of the sentence instead of at its beginning. This has not been proved as a serious reading disability, in fact, studies that have been made show that left-handedness is not a significant factor in reading disability.

Eyedness or mixed hand and eye dominance refers to the characteristic of being, for example, left-handed and right-eyed. Normally, an individual who is left-handed is also left-eyed and the same holds true for right-handed people, the majority of whom are right-eyed. The theory of cerebral dominance comes into the thinking and study of the investigators in this field. Cerebral dominance refers to the idea that the right cerebral hemisphere of a left-handed individual is more highly developed than the person's left cerebral hemisphere. Note here that the right cerebral hemisphere controls, in general, the left side of the body below the neck. This also applies to right-handed people whose handedness is controlled largely by the left cerebral hemisphere. Thus, "mixed dominance" is said to exist if an individual is right eyed and left-handed. There is no proof available as to how much or even whether such dominance will affect reading. "The evidence is conflicting as to whether mixed hand-eye dominance is a contributing factor in reading disability. Some studies have presented data which seem to indicate that such is the case, but others even more numerous have shown that there is little if any connection between mixed dominance and reading ability."⁶ Therefore, it should

⁶ Blair, G. M., Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching in Secondary Schools, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1946, pp. 69-73.

not be considered as a causative factor in reading difficulties until we learn for certain that it is or is not such a cause.

The methods that a counselor may use in determining eyedness in pupils are very simple. Sighting, as one would holding a rifle, is a method of discovering whether the pupil is prone to be mixed in handedness and eyedness. The pupil should sight with the right eye if the stick he is sighting over is held right-handedly and vice versa. Other simple devices have been used, such as looking (with both eyes) at an object on the floor through a dime-size hole cut in a card. If the student closes his right eye and then cannot see the object, he is right-eyed. With both eyes open, closing the left eye and then failing to see the object denotes left-eyedness.⁷

Emotional Factors. Usually, emotional factors are more often responsible for reading difficulties than are physical factors. This is where the counselors and teachers will have the greatest difficulty in helping to solve pupil problems, for these causes are not so evident as physical defects. In brief, the counselor must locate the difficulty and use whatever techniques he can in straightening out the problem.

Among any number of causative factors in reading disabilities the several listed below are important.⁸

⁷Gates, A. I., The Improvement of Reading, The MacMillan Co., New York 1935, pp. 348-349

⁸Williamson, E. G., How To Counsel Students, McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., New York and London, 1939, pp. 330-331.

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Lack of reading experience | Absence |
| Inadequate vocabulary | Skipping grades and school transfer |
| Lack of interest | Poor environmental conditions |
| Guessing | Inferior ability to retain and reproduce sounds |
| Speech defects | Word-by-word reading |
| Timidity | Excessive lip movement |
| Inadequate training | Fatigue |
| Teacher personality | |
| Poor discrimination of words | |

Lack of reading experience is one of the outstanding causes of reading difficulties. Good readers are almost invariably those who read a great deal while poor readers read very little.

With attention to the above-mentioned reading difficulties and others that the counselor will come across, much more can be done to increase the reading abilities of many pupils.

CHAPTER III

LOCATING PUPILS RETARDED IN READING ABILITY

Before any remedial work can be done with retarded pupils these pupils must be located through an appraisal of the reading abilities of all the pupils in a given group. Those found to be the poorest readers should be the first considered for special attention. Since all pupils' reading can be improved, a developmental reading program might be initiated. Such a program is based mainly on wide reading. The remedial reading program should, however, function efficiently before the school branches out into any developmental program designed to improve the reading abilities of all of the pupils. As stated above, one of the initial steps in remedial work is to discover those individuals with the greatest need for such special study. There are various ways to appraise the reading needs of pupils and those methods most commonly used will be discussed below in respective paragraphs.

Observation of Students While They Read. Watching pupil behavior during a reading period will often produce evidence as to the causes of reading difficulties. Infrequent turning of the pages of a book or noticeably moving the lips while reading silently are usually signs of slow and inefficient reading. The habit of guiding the eyes by use of any tool, turning of the head rather than moving the eyes while reading, and restlessness are all symptoms showing one kind or another inability in reading.

Inability or ignorance as to the use of references, indexes, glossaries, and the like are poor study habits which do anything but enhance reading efficiency. The teacher should emphasize the importance of a good vocabulary and the habit of looking up definitions. No one can get a complete understanding of the printed page if several words on that page are meaningless to him.

The Study of Eye Movements During Reading.⁹ In reading, one's eyes move in a series of jumps along a given line of print. The fewer or less frequent these jumps the greater the reading efficiency, in contrast with the many such jumps from word to word shown by poor readers. These stops or pauses made by the eyes in reading a line of print or writing are known as fixations. Fixations and regressions have been mentioned above but their definitions are important enough to merit restatement here. Fixations may be defined as the number of pauses made by the eyes in a minute's reading. In addition to fixations, the counselor will attempt to observe the number of regressions the child experiences while he (the child) is reading. Regressions are sometimes known as "return sweeps" or the movements of the eyes backward from right to left. The standard of measurement for both fixations and regressions are the number of each per 100 words.

It is here that the counselor must be familiar with some eye movement norm. Such a norm as the one published by the American Optical Company would suffice in the counselor's work in determining the placement in groups of his pupils he has studied.

⁹Patterson, Samuel W., Teaching the Child to Read, Doubleday Doran Co., Inc., New York, 1930, pp. 49-54.

A major factor in the study of eye movements is that the number of such movements per line of print varies in different grade levels. The older or more mature the pupil becomes, the fewer fixations and the fewer regressions he should use in reading.

As an example, let us take a fourth grade pupil. He, according to the norm mentioned above, should make approximately one hundred and forty fixations and approximately thirty regressions per one hundred words. When he reaches the college level, his norm should not exceed eighty fixations and ten regressions per hundred words.

One of the most practical means of appraising eye movement habits in reading is the Miles Peephole Method. In this test, a reading selection mounted on a card which in turn has a three-sixteenths inch hole pierced through it is held before the pupil. As the pupil reads the selection, the teacher, being on the opposite side of the card from the pupil, peeps through the hole and observes the number of regressions and fixations the student's eyes make on each line of reading material. Since keeping an accurate count of fixations and regressions simultaneously is difficult, it is probably wiser to count the fixations for a given period of time and then count the regressions or vice versa.

Another means of rough appraisal of eye movements is the mirror test. This is a simple test in which a mirror is placed on the left hand page of the book while the student reads the right hand page or vice versa. While standing behind the pupil as he reads, the teacher or counselor can observe the reader's movements. The teacher and

counselor will remember that eye movements are not causes of reading deficiencies but rather symptoms of reading deficiencies.

Yet another means of studying eye movements and by all means the most accurate method is the use of the Ophthalmograph. This is an expensive and complicated instrument that perhaps can be purchased only by a first-class school district and not by small schools. In the event that the personnel of large schools are interested in obtaining the above-mentioned machine, all particulars including operation can be obtained by contacting a branch of the American Optical Company of Southbridge, Massachusetts.

Study of the pattern of eye movements must be accompanied by a check to see how much of the reading the pupil comprehends. Now that the counselor has determined a pupils' eye movement pattern, he trains him toward better reading ability through providing ample and appropriate reading experience. The counselor should not attempt to direct remedial work through the training of eye movements directly. Not only has this been shown to be of little value, but increased interest in the improvement of reading and in reading as a pleasing skill usually causes improvement in eye movements without direct attention to them.

Interest Inventories and Graded Books. The use of interest inventories will help the teacher or counselor in finding those pupils who do not like to read and, by the same means, those who read very little. Inevitably a great number, in fact the majority of these pupils are poor readers.

There are several such inventories available for use but they can easily be prepared by the remedial teacher, particularly if he or she has had experience in the remedial field. Blair, on interest inventories stated:¹⁰

By means of interest inventories which the teacher may devise and administer to pupils it is possible to locate those who do not like to read and who seldom read anything but assigned materials. These individuals are invariably poor readers. Even if standardized reading scores should show such pupils to be practically up to grade, the evidence is still clear that remedial work is needed. For instruction in reading has not accomplished its purpose until each individual possesses an absorbing interest in reading, and realizes its value in satisfying many of his basic needs.

An example of an interest inventory suitable for use with high-school pupils can be found in *Reading and the Educative Process*.¹ Such questions as: Do you enjoy reading books just for pleasure? How many books have you read in the past month? What magazines do you read? What newspapers do you read?—all give clues as to a pupil's interests in reading. An interest inventory is not only of value in locating poor readers but is frequently of great use in giving direction to remedial instruction once it has been initiated. For unless remedial work in reading is highly motivated little good can be expected to result from it.

The inventory used in the Junior High School at Niles, Michigan, is given below:

Name of Pupil. Date.

1. What do you do when you are not in school?
2. What games do you like to play?
3. Do you enjoy reading magazines and books?
4. What kind of books do you like to read?

| | |
|----------------|----------|
| Biography | Aviation |
| Adventure | Mystery |
| Animal Stories | Poetry |
| News | Plays |
| Legends | Myths |
5. Name some books you have read this past year. Check the one you like best.
6. Do you get books you read from home? School? Public library? From a friend?

¹⁰Blair, G. M., Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching in Secondary Schools. The MacMillan Co., 1946, pp. 21-22.

7. What kind of books and stories would you like to read?
8. What magazines do you read? Why?
9. Do you like to read newspapers? Why?
10. Do you like to have someone read to you? Who reads to you?
11. Does anyone encourage you to read during your leisure time? Who?
12. Would you like to have books of your own? What kind?
13. What school work do you like best?
14. What do you want to be?

Graded sets of books may be used to appraise reading ability.

Here again, the procedure is a simple one. An eighth grade pupil for example, may be tested for reading ability by having him read passages from books of different grade levels. If the teacher thinks that the pupil has only sixth grade reading ability, he may be asked to read a few pages from a sixth grade text. He may then be tested by a series of questions on his reading comprehension. If the comprehension test results are satisfactory, the test can be continued on higher grade levels. If the converse is found to be the case, the test can be carried on with lower grade level texts until his reading status is determined. To make the test most scientific, one should have the pupil read materials ranging over three or four grade levels before reaching a conclusion as to his reading ability level. The content, fiction as against scientific materials, will often shed some light on reading difficulties. In addition to the methods mentioned in the above paragraphs, the utilization of standardized reading tests is profitable. Such a measure is probably the most widely used method of appraising reading ability and identifying poor readers. These tests and explanations of their use are readily available to the schools. In the event that a particular school does

not have such tests on hand, they can be obtained by writing to such institutions as Columbia and Stanford Universities, to mention only two sources.

Choosing Pupils with the Greatest Need for Remedial Instruction.

Following the appraisal of pupils, the counselor and the teacher must segregate the poorest readers from the group and then organize and arrange special instruction for them according to the degree of their needs. Regardless of the fact that all pupils can improve their reading abilities, special instruction can be efficiently given for only special and marked reading difficulties. Then, as has been mentioned earlier, a reading developmental program can be organized that will in some measure aid in mass improvement of reading throughout the school. The real difficulty lies in the problem of selecting pupils for remedial work. Obviously not every pupil can be offered this instruction except in small part, unless every teacher can be a teacher of reading. If this were the case, then the school would be on a wholesale developmental reading program basis.

On the whole, pupils who fail markedly to come up to their grade norms on reading tests should be that special group which would receive special treatment. There are alternatives in this selection according to the abilities of the school in meeting the need. Larger institutions may find it feasible to devote several instructors and no small amount of facilities and time to this specialized work while, on the other hand, smaller schools may not find it possible to offer any instruction of this nature.

In the case of those schools that can offer some remedial work, a few points on conducting classes may be of importance. Remedial work should be extended to as many pupils as possible and the selection of pupils for remedial work should be made before or at the beginning of the school year. If, for instance, such instruction is planned for a ninth grade class, it would be a wise procedure to test eighth graders during the preceding year. An important fact that should not be overlooked is to avoid stigmatizing or branding the work, i. e., never use the word "remedial" in connection with the special classes. This work may be labeled in such a manner that both pupils and few parents would take offense. An example of an appropriate class title might be "Advanced Reading Techniques."

CHAPTER IV

REMEDIAL READING TECHNIQUES

Diagnostic Treatment. Before plunging into the standard techniques used in remedial work, the treatment needed as shown by diagnosis should be given each individual selected to receive this instruction.

Difficulties as a result of physical defects should be corrected. If it has been determined that a student needs glasses, he should be sent to a physician for corrective treatment. The same holds true for other physical faults whatever they may be.

The pupil's mental ability as shown by several tests may be lower than the average in his class and age group. Here such techniques as improving vocabulary, stimulating interest in reading, discovering (if possible) what home conditions if any, have adverse effects on the pupil's scholastic accomplishments, are valuable in aiding the pupil. In any event and whatever treatment is found to be necessary, the instruction should begin at the point where the pupil is. More harm than good can be accomplished if the instruction is too far in advance of the pupil. By adequate testing, and not by assumptions, it is possible to place the pupil in the correct grade level. In other words, never assume that a pupil knows more than he actually does know. Furthermore, any instruction, to be of optimum value, must have the support of interest. If interest is stimulated and the work is made real and essential to the pupil, his reading will show far more definite improvement than it would through a stereotyped procedure.

Rapid learning must be preceded by pupil satisfaction with the work he undertakes. To make the course desirable to the pupil is to fill partially the criteria of successful teaching.

The pupil to derive the maximum good from his work needs to be informed of his progress. Show him frequently that he is improving and his improvement will be even greater.

One should avoid routine exercises repetitiously presented, face the pupils with many and varied activities and projects and in that manner prevent what could too easily become a boring and dull grind and a grind that would net little gain. One should use several general procedures or techniques in attacking the problem facing the retarded pupil.

Improvement of Speed of Reading. Here is a function that is closely associated with habit. In fact, the speed at which an individual reads various types of written material is largely dependent upon habits. Speed in reading is a skill that responds more readily to training than any other aspect of reading and, on the whole, the process of improving speed noticeably requires a relatively short period of time.

Wide reading is normally a criterion for rapid reading skill. Generally those who do not read very much or very frequently are the slow readers, while those individuals that do read a great deal are usually the rapid readers. This is an application of the law of use and disuse. The time limit method of developing rapid reading skill is a fundamental one. Here an individual will limit himself to perhaps

10 minutes less time on a given article than it would usually require for him to read it. Constant practice with this technique will develop speed.

The push card method consists of a simple device that will operate in such a way that the reader is gradually forced to read at a faster pace. First, a pupil is timed to determine just how long it requires him to read a line of print. He is then allowed to read one or two lines at this speed. Then a card operated manually is placed on the top of the written page. It then descends the page line by line at ever increased speed. This will make the pupil read faster in order to keep ahead of the card. Mechanical devices have been invented to accomplish the same results with more exact timing for each line. Here again practice increases ability.

Improvement of Vocabulary. Naturally, it is of definite importance that an individual understand what he reads. Hence, it is a wise teaching procedure to determine, in so far as possible, the ability a pupil possesses in recognizing a minimum number of words at sight. This technique of testing by sight vocabulary usually involves the utilization of a basic list of words compiled for the appropriate age level. Such a list can be obtained from any publisher who prints remedial instruction tests. The manner in which this list is used is frequently interesting to the pupil. Separate words have been printed on individual cards. Two pupils employing the "coach and pupil" method practice learning these basic words. It is a matter of the pupil shuffling the cards and then going through them rapidly one at a time, calling out the word and handing the cards in succession

to the coach, schooled by the helper till all the words are mastered. Coach and pupil exchange places.

For study in connection with vocabulary building and wide reading, the dictionary can be helpful in-so-far as the pupil knows how to use it. It may fall to the teacher to give instruction in the use of the dictionary. The teacher should find out just what the pupils know about its use, should give dictionary tests in which words are to be defined in sentences or in lists; tests in which page numbers of maps, foreign phrases, prefixes, populations, flags, tables, and nationalities are noted on a paper. The teacher should engage the pupil in the listing of synonyms and antonyms, have him locate substitutes for trite words, pair words in one list with their meanings in another list, and require the use of new words in themes. These and other exercises that can be drawn up by the teacher and employed in an interesting and varied way will be of much value to the pupil. One should make projects for the pupils and, if possible by suggestion, have the pupils draw up their own projects. On vocabulary building, Blair stated:¹²

If test results and other data point to the fact that a pupil or group of pupils possess disproportionately poor reading vocabularies, special attention might well be given to a vocabulary-building program. Such a program will generally pay big dividends so far as improvement in reading is concerned, for it is only when pupils are equipped with a sufficient stock of concepts and word meanings that the activity of reading is made possible.

Sight Vocabulary. Before starting a pupil on any type of remedial reading program, it is most important to ascertain whether or not he possesses the ability to recognize a minimum number of words at sight. It is very discouraging for

¹²Blair, G. M., Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching in Secondary Schools, The MacMillan Co., 1946, pp. 90-93.

a pupil to have to stop and decipher every word that he encounters. In Table VI is listed the 220-common words which make up more than 50 per cent of all ordinary reading matter. If a pupil in the junior or senior high school should be found who does not recognize instantly each of these 220 words, special effort should be made to teach them to him. This basic list is composed of prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, and the most common verbs, and thus are words which will be encountered regardless of what type of subject matter the pupil eventually reads. An average third-grade pupil should be able to recognize all of the words. Therefore, only the most retarded readers in secondary schools will need assistance with these words.

TABLE VI

A Basic Sight Vocabulary of 220 Words (from Dolch, E. W.)

| | | | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|--------|-------|----------|
| a | clean | green | many | run | together |
| about | cold | grow | may | said | too |
| after | come | had | me | saw | try |
| again | could | has | much | say | two |
| all | cut | have | must | see | under |
| always | did | he | my | seven | up |
| am | do | help | myself | shall | upon |
| an | does | her | never | she | us |
| and | done | here | new | show | use |
| any | don't | him | no | sing | very |
| are | down | his | not | sit | walk |
| around | draw | hold | now | six | want |
| as | drink | hot | of | sleep | warm |
| ask | eat | how | off | small | was |
| at | eight | hurt | old | so | wash |
| ate | every | I | on | some | we |
| away | fall | if | once | soon | well |
| be | far | in | one | start | went |
| because | fast | into | only | stop | were |
| been | find | is | open | take | what |
| before | first | it | or | tell | when |
| best | five | its | our | ten | where |
| better | fly | jump | out | thank | which |
| big | for | just | over | that | white |
| black | found | keep | own | the | who |
| blue | four | kind | pick | their | why |
| both | from | know | play | them | will |
| bring | full | laugh | please | then | wish |
| brown | funny | let | pretty | there | with |
| but | gave | light | pull | these | work |
| buy | get | like | put | they | would |

| | | | | | |
|-------|-------|--------|-------|-------|--------|
| by | give | little | ran | think | write |
| call | go | live | read | this | yellow |
| came | goes | long | red | those | yes |
| can | going | look | ride | three | you |
| carry | good | made | right | to | your |
| | get | make | round | today | |

Perhaps the most effective way to enlarge one's vocabulary is through wide reading. Meanings are easily acquired through context when one possesses a knowledge of enough familiar words to help him over those which are unfamiliar. Furthermore, the precise meaning of a word can, as a rule, only be determined by the setting in which it is found. Due to this fact, erroneous conceptions of what certain words really mean are often gained when they are learned apart from context. Isolated word study can also be wasteful of a pupil's time, because he is not gaining any experience in reading when he is engaged in such activity. Reading is more than just knowing the meaning of individual words. It is possible for one to know a great many words but still read very poorly. Anyone who has undertaken the task of acquiring a reading knowledge of a foreign language can verify this fact. Frequently a student knows the meaning of every word in a foreign-language sentence, but is still unable to get its import. Such a condition generally results from studying words in isolation without spending much time on reading. What is said here is not to be construed as meaning that systematic word study should never be made a part of a vocabulary-building program. Such study has its place but it should remain supplementary and incidental to the activity of extended reading.

Another study of value is the derivation of words. Association of the Latin and the English words, for example, will help to increase the memory span.

Improvement of Reading Comprehension. This is the primary goal of remedial reading instruction. To comprehend what is read is an end product. Other matters involved in reading are secondary. Increased comprehension will strengthen other aspects of reading. The obtaining of a good background in a specific field, and this background generally comes through the medium of wide reading and

testing, will make it possible for the pupil to understand well in that field.

A few suggestions to improve comprehension may be in order here. First, one should read for main ideas. These are found in topic sentences, the main idea in each paragraph, in skimming a given amount of material, and in composing main headings or headlines. After the main idea of an article, chapter, or book has been ascertained; then one may read for detail. This will necessitate reading the material more than once.

The teacher can amass a great deal of reading matter, present it to the pupil, have him practice his work and then test his proficiency by means of objective tests. The counselor or teacher must keep in mind that ability in reading is a complex series of skills, each to be developed as far as possible by practice and that comprehension of what has been read is of primary importance.

Remedial Reading Program. In addition to the techniques aforementioned in this paper it is important to consider several pertinent factors of organization of those techniques and the operation of a remedial reading program.

Under first consideration at this point is the remedial instructor. The teacher should be trained not only in subject-matter methods but also in remedial techniques. Constant study of professional texts will supplement what has been learned in the class room. The teacher's load of work, as well as that of the pupils, should be lightened so as to give time for remedial work. What good would a remedial program

do if that program were sandwiched into an already heavy day's schedule? Therefore, remedial reading treatment should be scheduled as are other classes. The class designation should be one that will cause no embarrassment. To give regular credit for the course will stimulate interest and will not brand it as a special class. Besides being a regularly scheduled class, it should be of the same duration as other class periods.

Pupils lower in achievement in other subjects than their ability in reading would lead one to expect that these pupils should be selected for the special work. They should be chosen on a basis of intelligence, test results, and teacher judgments. And after being selected for such a class, that class should be required. The class, to effect the most good, must be conducted by individualized and not mass instruction. In fact, mass instruction techniques and procedures would fail miserably in such work for in few other training situations will individual differences show up so definitely and emphatically.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Careful investigation of pupils' difficulties in reading must be made in order to discover accurately where or in what the trouble lies. Let it be emphasized here that this is not to be a matter of guess work. Reading disabilities to be solved must be attacked by scientific procedures and techniques.

Some of the underlying causes of reading disabilities are: inferior learning capacity, poor auditory acuity, poor vision, immature eye habits, handedness and eyedness, lack of reading experience, and emotional factors. Any physical defects suspected should be in the physician's province.

It is obvious that discovering and solving any of the above problems calls for efficient teaching and counseling. The teacher, who in most cases, is both teacher and counselor must be on the alert to locate retarded pupils as the first step in any remedial program.

The next step in the program to improve reading ability is the selection of those individuals with the most pressing needs for improvement in reading and their placement in special training classes. These pupils should be selected before or at the start of the school year so that a smoothly functioning remedial instruction plan can be put in operation with a minimum of difficulty. These pupils must not be embarrassed by being noticeably "stuck" in a "remedial reading class." The class should have a less obvious title. Through

adequate testing, the problem confronting pupils may be brought to light. Once on the surface, most of the various disabilities can be met and eliminated by appropriate remedial techniques and methods.

Scientific diagnosis of each individual's problem or problems must dictate the nature of the remedial treatment he will receive. It is useless to meet specific difficulties with stereotyped teaching procedure handed to one and all. Specific handicaps call for specific treatment.

Several principles of remedial reading instruction that should not be overlooked if optimum training is desired are: begin instruction at that point where the pupil has a need for it; make the work interesting and essential to the student; make it a live issue; inform the student of his progress and praise him but do not overdo it for his good work; vary the studies so that a tiresome learning situation will not ensue; bring variety into the classroom.

Emphasis on and creating an interest in reading will probably lead to wide reading, all of which offers practice; and that practice will probably lead to improvement. Wide reading should encompass vocabulary building which, in turn, will make for better comprehension of what is read.

Comprehension is the most important of all the reading skills, other skills being of secondary value. Comprehension will usually make for improvement in the other reading skills.

Throughout this paper the writer has stressed several salient factors in a specialized teaching field, but it is at this point that

he offers the principal suggestion of this paper. Attempt to initiate a remedial program in your school if one does not exist, applying some of the principles mentioned herein.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blair, G. W., Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching in Secondary Schools, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1946.
- Bruecker, L. J., and Melby, Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching, Houghton-Mifflin Co., New York, 1931.
- Cole, Luella, The Improvement of Reading, Farrar and Rinehart, Inc., Publ., New York, 1936.
- Fernald, Grace M., Remedial Teaching in School Subjects, McGraw-Hill Co., Inc., New York, 1943.
- Gates, A. I., The Improvement of Reading, Rev., The MacMillan Co., New York, 1936.
- _____, Interest and Ability in Reading, The MacMillan Co., New York, 1930.
- Gist, A. S., and King, W. A., The Teaching and Supervision of Reading, Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1927.
- Harris, A. J., How To Increase Reading Ability, Longmans Green and Co., New York, 1940.
- Harrison, Lucille M., Reading Readiness, Houghton-Mifflin Co., New York, 1936.
- Kirk, S. A., Teaching Reading To Slow-Learning Children, Houghton-Mifflin Co., New York, 1940.
- Monroe, M. and Backus, B., Remedial Reading, Houghton-Mifflin Co., New York, 1937.
- "Oregon Manual for the Use of the School Health Record Card," Oregon State Joint Committee for Health and Physical Fitness, Vol. 1, No. 2, Rev., 1944.
- Patterson, S. W., Teaching The Child To Read, Doubleday-Doran Co., Inc., New York, 1930.
- Smith, Nila, American Reading Instruction, Silver, Burdett, and Co., New York, 1934.
- Thompson, R. B., The Administration of Remedial Programs, Educational Administration and Supervision, Vol. 27, March, 1941.