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# TEACHER EDUCATION IN THE FIELD OF READING\*

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For too long a pervasive idea in the field of teacher education has been that primary teachers only, and more especially those primary teachers who are concerned with the education of the very young, have the sole responsibility for teaching the students who are moving through our educational institutions how to read. The beginning and the end of the process of learning to read effectively have been left almost entirely in the hands of the primary teacher, who, up until recently, has experienced only minimal courses in the field of reading as part of his pre-service training. One of the main purposes of this paper will be to attempt to dispel this limited and educationally naive idea; more than lip service must be given to the truism that the development of the individual's ability to read is a continuous process.

Throughout this paper the term teacher is used to refer to any person who is charged with the responsibility of causing students to learn at any level of education. The term student refers to any individual pursuing learning at any educational institution.

## **The need for teacher education in the field of reading**

It is not difficult to find reasons why we should provide pre-service programmes in the study of reading for our potential teachers. Although the available evidence indicates that the students in our schools, colleges and universities are reading slightly better than ever before, the evidence would also indicate that these educational institutions still contain far too many students who are failing in reading, students who are reading well below their potential level. Significantly, investigations conducted by Austin et al (1961), Adams (1964), Komarek (1962) and others in the United States indicate that teachers feel inadequately equipped to deal with the diagnosis and treatment of reading problems and ways of meeting individual differences. Austin (1968, p. 363) suggests that these findings indicate a lack of confidence and competence on the part of teachers in these important areas of reading instruction.

Although similar surveys have not been conducted in New Zealand,

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\* A paper given by D. B. Doake, Senior Lecturer in Education at the Christchurch Teachers College (Primary Division), at the Third New Zealand Conference of the International Reading Association, Auckland, 1972.

a decade of experience in tutoring teachers taking the Diploma in Teaching course in the Teaching of Reading, and numerous formal and informal discussions with teachers, leaves me with a belief that many of them suffer from similar uncertainties. In order, therefore, to contribute to a reduction of the incidence of reading failure in our schools and to increase the confidence and competence of our teachers, we must provide them with substantial courses in the field of reading. These courses should equip teachers with the ability to use diagnostic teaching procedures as an integral part of their daily reading programmes in ordinary classrooms.

The recent Report of the Curriculum Review Group of the New Zealand Post Primary Teachers Association "Education in Change" gives another compelling reason for providing teachers with adequate courses in the study of reading. In the section of the report dealing with "Learning and Enquiry" the committee records that:

The thesis of this section is the development in young people of the urge to enquire. The following statement summarises this thesis simply:

that  
enquiry  
promotes the ability  
to learn how to learn.

This ability subsumes all other competencies discussed in this report. (1969, p. 39)

That such a statement could emanate from a group of teachers, most of whom have for years been responsible for presenting a curriculum aimed at having students absorb tremendous amounts of relatively useless factual information for the major purpose of retrieving it at examination time, dramatically demonstrates the direction of a highly significant and much needed change in secondary education at least. The emphasis in education is shifting from *product* to *process*, from having pupils memorise large amounts of inert information, to the processes involved in learning and enquiry; from pupils being constantly taught what to learn, to pupils being stimulated, encouraged and taught how to learn.

As this happens the emphasis will shift from teachers being, as Anderson (1968, p. 10) suggests, "primary sources of information" to books being one of the major resource materials used by pupils. If our secondary teachers are not trained in the use of soundly based methods of guiding and teaching their students how to read these

books, “the learning how to learn” philosophy will stagger along like an engine starving for the want of fuel.

Far greater demands than ever before are being placed and will be placed on our students for critical reading. Serious issues, relevant to our students’ futures, pervade our daily life. Students should become involved with them, and many have already expressed a desire to do so. Should the French be permitted to continue their nuclear testing at Mururoa, or anywhere else? What are the arguments for and against the proposed white South African rugby tour of New Zealand? How and why does a situation such as exists in Northern Ireland at present, develop? And what about the problems in the two major conflict areas on the globe—the Middle East and the Indo China peninsula? How and why have these situations been developed and prolonged?

The answers to these questions do not come easily. Maybe there are no definite answers to some of them. And our news media does not always help. It is almost impossible to read news items on major issues that are not slanted in some way. The biases of the reporter or the commentator have to be identified clearly and his credentials established; the reader must have the ability to read critically, and not become emotionally involved too early; he must be able to form opinions on the basis of objectively evaluated evidence. These skills and intellectual processes seldom develop of their own accord “. . . although certain higher mental processes may be important in reading, they are not always present in every pupil’s reading act. In fact, the more advanced reading habits, such as we speak of in critical reading may never appear unless the student is specifically trained for them.” (Spache, 1969, p. 29)

And to see this kind of training stopping once the student enters a tertiary institution is to ignore again the principle of the ongoing nature of the development of the reading process. Our tertiary level teachers have a vitally important and responsible educational role to play here which, unfortunately, they do not always acknowledge or accept.

#### **Who Should be Trained?**

Any teacher who uses books as aids to learning needs to be trained in the ways of making the best use of these extensive and usually reliable resource materials. Teachers at kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education all use books. Teachers at all these levels of education therefore should be taught how to make best use of them.

Quality teacher education programmes in the field of reading which ultimately lead to the more effective use being made of books as a means for learning, may not provide a panacea for the improvement of our educational practices, but they are a necessary prerequisite.

Who then should be trained to teach reading, what are some further reasons for this training being provided, and what are some of the appropriate skills to be learned at the various levels of education by both students and teachers?

#### **Kindergarten Teachers**

The kindergarten teacher should be trained to a high level of competence in detecting the presence of any deprivation in the language development of her pupils. She should be trained in selecting, planning and providing specific follow-up reinforcement activities to improve the quality of children's language usage. Perhaps more importantly the kindergarten teacher should be trained to identify each child's specific language needs and to provide special programmes, similar to those used by Malmquist in Sweden, in an attempt to correct any deficiencies. This diagnostically oriented observation and teaching would require an expertise which few of our present kindergarten teachers possess.

Through the skillful and seemingly incidental use of suitable stories, poems, jingles and games involving language, the kindergarten teacher should be able to make a significant contribution to each child's perceptual skill development, especially in the area of auditory discrimination. Training in seeing similarities and differences in shapes of various kinds, including letter shapes, could be introduced at kindergarten.

The child's fundamental conceptual understanding of books and pictures as listed by Marion Monroe (1964) should be developed. Special emphasis should be directed towards the gradual growth of an understanding as to "what reading is." I would advocate, even at this early stage, distinguishing between reading aloud and reading silently, in order that a beginning can be made in establishing for the child a realization that reading is not only an oral process, but that it is even more importantly essentially a silent process. Our kindergarten teachers already make a major contribution in leading young children towards discovering the enjoyment to be obtained from books, and the interest and information contained in books. The importance of continuing, and if possible, extending this contribution cannot be over-emphasized.

With these few observations I have only touched on some of the areas in language and reading through which our kindergartens can make a significant and vital contribution to the ability of children to learn to read, without losing the wonderful developmental atmosphere which pervades these educational institutions.

#### **Primary Teachers**

It is now accepted in our primary teachers colleges that specific courses in the teaching of reading should be provided for all students. These courses range in lecture contact hours from thirty to approximately seventy clock hours, with some colleges providing additional courses for some students. It must be pointed out however that courses of any substance in reading at our primary teachers colleges are only a recent innovation. Until the introduction of the three-year period of training almost all primary teachers trained in New Zealand colleges would have undertaken courses in reading of no more than eight to ten clock hours. Many of those courses were directed at the teaching of reading at the infant (5- and 6-year-old) stage.

It would be interesting to determine how many teachers, trained before the three-year period of training commenced, could remember studying the teaching of reading while at teachers college. Would there be many of these teachers in our primary schools who have never attended an in-service or refresher course of any substance in the teaching of reading? It would be interesting also to discover how many primary teachers have actually studied an authoritative textbook on reading. How many primary teachers could actually describe the reading process with a definition that goes beyond simple word perception and comprehension? What is the effect on reading teaching in our schools when we have teachers who have never been trained to teach reading, who are working too often from a basis of intuition, incidental learning and on how they think they were "taught" to read? The outcomes of these important questions require objective answers. I cannot provide these but I can make brief comment based on my teaching experience in the field of reading.

Over the past decade I have examined in excess of three thousand reports from student teachers, of diagnostic reading conferences they have conducted with individual children at various levels of our primary schools. The result of a careful examination of these reports is the realization that far too many of these children could be classified as retarded or seriously retarded in reading. They are usually inadequately equipped to analyze independently unknown words. If the beginning sound and context does not give it to them, then they

take their attempt no further. Perhaps even more importantly they do not seem to want to. The ability to demand and obtain meaning from the printed page at anything above a superficial, literal level, appears too often to be seriously lacking. Again they appear neither to see the need to interact with the author's ideas, nor to have the desire to do so.

Even more seriously, when reports are examined of ten-, eleven- and twelve-year-old children who are failing in reading, a number of things become apparent. Many of these children are all too frequently disabled readers from what appears to be the same causal factors that in all probability started them on the road to reading failure when they were five-, six- and seven-year-olds. Their basic sight vocabularies have remained undeveloped, their word recognition skills are minimal, their ability to obtain meaning from reading is severely restricted. Reading has often been seen by these pupils as something difficult, something that they can only fail in, something that is not for them. They have by this stage become educational cripples whose main goal usually is to escape as soon as possible from the verbally loaded learning environment of the school.

We appear to have reached the ludicrous stage where we accept retardation in reading as a normal condition for a number of children. The stage appears to have been reached where teachers expect to have disabled readers present in their classrooms and where they expect to have children fail in reading. The so-called "remedial reading teacher" is now an expected part of the school staffing schedule. The self-fulfilling prophecy has entered the field of reading.

I would surmise that the majority of our primary school teachers could easily point out to us their retarded readers who were achieving below their expectation level and below their chronological age. However, they would seldom identify the child who was reading above his chronological age level but several years below his expectancy level, the child of above average ability who is not reaching his potential, who is all too often supposed to be able to develop competence to an advanced level in reading without the teacher's guidance. These pupils are our really serious reading failures.

The picture I have painted then is a black one. It is meant to be. Too many of the causal factors in reading disability have an instructional base which is frequently the outcome of inadequate teacher education in the field of reading. Many of our teachers do a wonderful job of teaching our children to read, but too many of them actually promote failure rather than prevent it by some of their classroom practices involving reading. "At the base of every failure there is the

contributing factor of the teacher's inability to recognize the pupil's peculiar needs and handicaps, to adapt procedures accordingly." (Spache, 1969, p. vi)

In-service and refresher courses, reading advisors and diploma in teaching courses, handbooks of suggestions and comprehensive syllabuses of instruction, can help to overcome in part this serious gap in the background of too many of our teachers, but unfortunately the mesh of the net is far too large and the net itself not sufficiently wide. There are still too many of our teachers who have only a superficial base from which to begin to teach their pupils to read.

Even with the development of the three-year courses in our teachers colleges too frequently reading is seen as a relatively minor course, when compared with other subject areas. The study of reading, despite its extensive scope, is still not recognized as a subject discipline. The colleges are required to provide courses in the eight traditional subject fields, so that a percentage of their students each year hopefully can go out into schools with an "in depth" knowledge in at least one of these fields as a result of three years of study in their "selected" subject. But not so in reading. Substantial courses for the pre-service training of even a percentage of our teachers in one of the most important facilitating skill and process areas of the curriculum are still not a reality in the majority of our teachers colleges. Reading is probably the only subject taken at our teachers colleges where it is not considered essential for the teaching staff to have any particular qualifications or expertise in their subject field. As long as you have been a primary teacher you can not only teach others to read but you can teach others how to teach reading. This idea that "if you can read you can teach others to read" takes on another even more alarming dimension!

Against this background of reading still not being recognized as a subject discipline in our teachers colleges, against the background of past two-year teacher education programmes in reading being grossly inadequate, and of some of our existing three-year reading teacher education programmes being only minimal in time allocation, what should be the content of pre-service programmes in reading for potential primary teachers?

It is not difficult to find agreement among authorities as to what the scope of these programmes should be. Such essential topics as the following are almost invariably included in any recommended prescription: the nature of the reading process, readiness in reading (the assessment and promotion aspects at all levels), the skills of reading, (vocabulary, word recognition, comprehension, content reading skills,



oral reading), measurement, evaluation and diagnosis, the causes of reading failure, organizing and teaching reading at the different levels of the school, instructional reading materials and the broad field of children's literature. All these topics to be studied in depth.

It is also now generally accepted that student teachers should have extensive, concurrent, supervised practice in diagnostic testing and teaching procedures. This should initially be with individuals, then move through to small and then large groups of children. Some of this teaching should be of the micro-teaching kind. It is also usually recommended that part of this controlled teaching experience should be with children at both ends of the reading achievement continuum, as well as those who are making normal progress.

How much time then would be needed for a programme of this nature to be implemented? My experience, based on six years of taking courses involving this kind of content and methodology for sixty lecture contact hours, is that this period of time is the absolute minimum to provide student teachers with merely a basis from which to begin to learn the complex task of teaching children to read effectively. I would consider that the students who graduate from the Christchurch Teachers College each year have been only introduced to the study of reading and the teaching of reading—even with a sixty lecture hour commitment!

#### **Secondary Teachers**

In 1948, the Committee on Reading for the National Society for the Study of Education stated, with reference to the reading required of secondary school and college students, that "The need is urgent on the part of many students for guidance which will aid them in acquiring greater competence in reading, in adjusting to the varied reading demands made upon them, and in securing essential types of understanding and interpretation." (1948, p.2) It would appear logical to assume that the time to start teaching children how to read effectively in the subject fields, is when they begin to study in these areas. It is not enough to be efficient in literary reading and general reading skills common to all reading activities. Regardless of what level of education we look at, the teacher is the person responsible to guide students' development of the full range of the reading skills relevant to the kinds of reading tasks they have to carry out.

But even if the situation was perfect in our primary schools and pupils progressed through to the secondary schools without suffering from any disability in the field of reading, the need for secondary teachers to guide the further development of their students' skills must

always be present. Unfortunately however, "Too often teachers assume that students already possess what they have come to receive: skills and ideas related to a given body of knowledge. One must not assume students' competence; one must assure it. And the assurance comes when students are guided by teachers." (Herber, 1965, p.9)

If there is an urgent need then to upgrade still further the courses in the study of reading at our primary teachers colleges, there is an even more urgent need to develop and implement courses in this field for all potential secondary school teachers. Recommendation 9 of Mary Austin's authoritative study on the training of teachers of reading in the U.S.A. states, ". . . that a course in basic reading instruction be required of ALL (her emphasis) prospective secondary school teachers." (Austin, 1961, p.147)

That we have reached the year 1972 without basic courses in the study of reading being an essential part of a secondary teacher's training, is a clear indication that despite "the impetus provided" for change by the publication of "Education in Change," the emphasis in too many of our secondary schools continues to be placed on the product of education rather than the process. And as Anderson suggests, all too frequently the teacher has been the producer of the information and the information processor rather than the student. The student's task has been that of listening to the teacher and copying his summaries, and one of the unfortunate outcomes of this kind of "teaching" is that if ". . . a pupil is taught rather than encouraged to learn, then the reading skills he requires are minimal and not much beyond word recognition." (Anderson, 1970, p.10)

If a basic course in reading were studied by our prospective teachers for our secondary schools, what might be some of the possible effects of the knowledge and understanding that should develop from this study? How, for example, would the full understanding and acceptance of the concepts of independent and instructional levels in reading alter the use made and the selection of the textbooks for study in the secondary school? What is the effect of having pupils constantly read at their frustration level?

And if our secondary teachers learned and applied the principles of the directed silent reading type lesson to any reading they required their students to do, how would this affect current classroom practice? If, for example, they developed their students' readiness for their required reading by ensuring that they each possessed an adequate background of knowledge and experience to deal with any new concepts met during their reading; that their interest in the subject matter to be

read had been stimulated to such a stage that they actually wanted to read the material; that relevant and realistic purposes had been established so that each student understood clearly why he was reading the material and what he was expected to find out from his reading and retain. How would the application of these simple but basic principles of directing reading change current practice as to the use made of books in our secondary schools? Boyd's (1965, p.15) investigation with Dunedin sixth form students disclosed that for these pupils reading for set purposes was a new idea.

The complaint that subject-teachers usually make in response to the suggestion that they should be "teachers of reading" is that they do not have sufficient time to "teach everything." They seem unaware, as Austin and Morrison (1963, p.50) suggest, that a dichotomy need not exist between content and process. They seem to be unaware of the principle that ". . . the teaching of a particular subject is the teaching of the study of that subject; and that makes inescapable the fact that every teacher is a teacher of reading and study." (Artley, 1969, p.433)

Even more important, however, is the apparent continuing failure on the part of the staffs of our secondary schools to recognize and accept that they have an even greater range of reading ability (and disability) to contend with than their primary counterparts. A study was made of the reading ability of students attending a university secondary school who had an average Wechsler-Bellevue I.Q. score of 119. It was found that ". . . irrespective of the general level of intelligence and reading ability in a given high school, the range of reading ability levels in each grade is at least eight and may run as high as thirteen." (Ketcham, 1959, p.249) The continued development of reading as a tool at least for the academic success of our secondary school students is crucial. That this development is still left almost universally to chance forms the basis of a serious criticism of the curriculum planners of this level of education.

A ray of light has, however, recently appeared on the Christchurch scene where an optional, developmental reading course was oversubscribed with third form students for two semesters at Hagley High School. Under the guidance of the headmaster, Mr. I. D. Leggatt, the staff of the school offered a series of optional courses for third formers including reading. The head of the English department of the school, Mr. Harris, was prepared to "learn on the job" as far as the teaching of reading was concerned, so the course was commenced after an extensive period of planning and consultation. As a result of a recent

visit to the class taking the reading option, I was able to witness a sense of purpose and involvement on the part of both the teacher and the students.

Whether reading is taken as a “subject” or taught as an integral part of the subject areas of the curriculum, substantial teacher education courses in reading are an urgent necessity for all students at our secondary teachers colleges. The content and duration of these courses would need to be similar in many respects to those provided in our primary colleges, but with more time being devoted to the area of the study skills. The International Reading Association’s publication compiled and edited by H. L. Herber (1965), “Developing Study Skills in Secondary Schools” would provide a sound base from which to begin in this important specific area of reading.

These then are some of the more important reasons why pre-service secondary teacher education courses should include the study of reading as a mandatory course to be taken by all students. Mary Austin’s criticism of the situation in the United States with regard to the lack of training of secondary teachers in the field of reading, appears to be applicable to the New Zealand scene. “Because the student entering secondary schools from the elementary grades needs to expand his reading power in order to master the reading skills essential for success in the junior and senior high school, it seems unfortunate that few prospective secondary school teachers receive any instruction in the teaching of reading that will enable them to provide adequate guidance for their pupils” (Austin, 1961, p.146).

#### **Tertiary Level**

Teachers in our tertiary institutions frequently operate on a number of false assumptions concerning their own teaching responsibilities and their students’ academic and skill achievements. Two of the most important, relevant to reading, are the assumption that the students taking their courses can read their required textbooks effectively, and the assumption that they have little or no responsibility to assist these students in reading these required texts. This is Herber’s “assumptive teaching” (1970, p.29) at its worst as the available evidence will show.

It is not difficult to find studies which have been conducted in countries other than New Zealand which demonstrate that a high correlation exists between reading ability and scholastic success at the tertiary level. One of the few reported studies in New Zealand in the area of reading conducted at this level of education, however, was made by Small at the University of Canterbury. He was able to report “It can be clearly seen that, in respect of the reading skill measured in

this test, the completely successful students were as a group, markedly superior to failing students. . . . The disparity in reading ability between the successful and unsuccessful students is quite apparent.” (Small, 1966, pp.16-18). Witty, in summing up the results of research into the importance of reading as an aid to learning in secondary schools and colleges was able to draw the conclusion that “Scholastic progress is influenced definitely by the extent and nature of the reading competence of students.” (Witty, 1948, p.11) Reading skill then is an important component of most students’ successes at the tertiary level of education.

What then are some of the findings of research directed at determining the quality of these students’ reading abilities?

Unfortunately, despite the obvious importance of reading at the tertiary level, an examination of the literature reporting studies in reading conducted in New Zealand at this level of education reveals a paucity of relevant investigations. It will therefore be necessary to refer almost exclusively to the overseas literature and research findings in this particular field. Frequent discussions with students concerning their reading abilities, individual remedial work with students and from the results of reading achievement testing conducted over a period of eight years involving the processing of approximately 3,000 protocols, have led me to the conclusion that if similar studies were conducted in New Zealand the results obtained could well be comparable to those reported here.

From the results of an extensive investigation into students’ reading and study deficiencies conducted at DePaul University in the United States over a period of eight years, Halfter and Douglas (1958) reached some important conclusions. They reported that two-thirds of their entering freshmen lacked the reading skills required for academic success. They found that the chief reading difficulties experienced by college students lay not in the basic skills of word recognition and comprehension, but in the higher order thinking skills involved in most reading activities.

Hadley, in a similar extensive study at the college level, estimated from the results of his investigations that “95 per cent of college students lack adequate study skills and that a relatively small percentage have reading speeds and comprehension skills adequate for handling all college assignments.” (Hadley, 1957, p.353).

In a paper presented at the 1968 conference of the Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, Anderson reported from his experience with university and adult reading im-

provement courses that most university students and adults exhibited a number of unsatisfactory reading characteristics. He found, for example, that they were word-by-word readers who regarded all words as essential to comprehension. He found little evidence of their setting useful purposes before their reading and as a result of this their reading was characterized by a lack of flexibility. "The pattern used was that of a slow, intensive reading, with an effort, usually unsuccessful, to read for long term recall of all information, irrespective of its possible usefulness . . . (and that) . . . in the main, readers were unaware of their inefficiency." (Anderson, 1968, p.12).

It is not difficult then to discover studies which report the presence of widespread and serious reading and study disability at the tertiary level of education. But as it was with the transition from primary to secondary education, so it is with the transition from secondary to tertiary level education. Even if the students come through a relatively perfect "system," the tertiary level teacher would still have reading and study teaching responsibilities. In the Sixtieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Shaw asserts that ". . . the proper teachers to train college (university) students to develop their reading ability are instructors of lower Freshmen." (Shaw, 1961, p.344).

Most of us have attended a tertiary educational institution at some time where we would have been required to read text books or parts of text books. How many of us can remember being given guidance for doing our assigned reading? How was our reading usually assigned? By page numbers or chapters? Did our "teachers" ever give us specific purposes for our reading? Did we know what they wanted us to find out in terms of information and understandings? What kinds of ideas did they want us to develop? What were we expected to retain from our reading? Were we expected to read the whole book and remember everything in it? Some of the effects of the lack of guidance and purpose given to students for their required reading should be noted.

Over two decades ago Burton was strongly critical of the prevailing practices in secondary schools in the United States with regard to the manner in which students were directed to their required reading. His rather pungent remarks could well be directed at many of our tertiary level institutions today. He observed that "The meager, vague, unanalyzed, wholly inadequate type of assignment predominates in the secondary school practically to the exclusion of all other forms. . . . Despite fifty years of attack by competent critics armed with unlimited valid evidence there persists the wholly unexplained assignment aimed

at “covering the text.” . . . It would be difficult to devise an educational practice so grossly ineffective, so certainly calculated to interfere with learning, as a page assignment to a single text followed by a formal verbal quiz. Yet this is the practice used by the great majority of secondary school teachers (Burton, 1950), p. 277).

At the end of 1969 as part of a “College Reading Questionnaire,” 175 first year Christchurch Teachers College students described how they were usually directed to any required reading in their college textbooks. Eighty-three per cent of them reported that they were simply given page numbers or chapters as directions, 2 per cent reported that they were directed to specific topics, 9 per cent said that they were given page numbers or chapters to read “for a test” and 2 per cent were told to look for certain points relevant to a topic. Only 3 per cent (5 students in all) were able to report that they were usually given questions as guides for their required reading.

During 1971, I asked 22 New Zealand university art and science graduates if, during the course of their studies for their various degree units, they had received any guidance in the form of study guides incorporating the use of questions and directions, for their assigned textbook reading. Only one student was able to report that she had received guidance of this nature and this was in one subject area. No student could recall receiving any other kind of assistance aimed at guiding their required reading!

While it could be agreed that guiding students’ reading by questions and directions is not the only method of assisting them to do their assigned textbook reading more efficiently, it is one of the simplest and most effective ways. As part of an investigation conducted by this writer in 1969 and 1970, 458 first- and second-year teachers college students who had been required to make extensive use of questions and directions in completing their assigned reading, were asked to indicate what advantages they saw in using these. The following table summarizes their opinions.

**TABLE 1**

What values for improving your reading do you see in the type of directed reading where you were asked to record answers to questions? You are asked to ring any of the following list that apply, in the light of your experience with this kind of direction for your reading.

|  | Percentage |
|--|------------|
|  | N = 453    |
| a. Helps you to make your reading more purposeful. | 76         |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| b. Motivates you to read your text.   | 45 |
| c. Aids your understanding of what is being read.                                       | 60 |
| d. Helps you to find key ideas and supporting details.                                  | 86 |
| e. Assists you to become interested in what you are reading about.                      | 20 |
| f. Stimulates your thinking about what is being read.                                   | 41 |
| g. Reduces “verbalism” (slipping over words and ideas not understood).                  | 48 |
| h. Increases your knowledge of the subject matter being studied.                        | 62 |
| i. Helps you to prepare for tests and examinations.                                     | 56 |
| j. Makes you more aware of the intense concentration required for “study-type reading.” | 52 |
| k. Stops your mind “wandering off” on to other things.                                  | 21 |
| l. Causes you to read your text more than you would usually do.                         | 74 |

A great deal of our tertiary level students' time must surely be wasted in trying to “read their teachers” rather than in trying to read their textbooks. A great deal of our tertiary level students' time must be spent in what Perry calls “obedient purposelessness” (1959, p.193), in doing their required reading.

Over forty years ago Washburne (1929) established that question-guided reading was superior to a generalized page assignment. The results of the majority of the recent studies concerned with the characteristics of questions that influence learning from textual materials have been summarized in reviews published by Pyper (1968), Weintraub (1969), Frase (1968 a, 1970) and Rothkopf (1970). The results of my own unpublished research, and the conclusions reached by other researchers in this area, support Washburne's general finding as to the superiority of question-guided reading in facilitating learning and retention from textual materials. Careful attention needs to be given, however, to such factors as question type, placement, frequency, and the contiguity of the questions and the related content. These factors must be considered in the preparation of any reading guides involving the use of questions or directions for required reading.

Shaw, in his chapter in the Yearbook already referred to, outlines the reading teaching responsibilities of those responsible for the education of first year tertiary level students. “Each instructor of lower Freshmen should:

1. Help his students increase their ability to read textbooks and reference materials in his particular field,
2. Lead his students to develop their vocabulary in his field,



3. Aid his students in developing other skills leading to proficiency and scholarship in his field,
4. Anticipate the special needs of his deficient students.
5. Induce his students to utilize their precourse experiences in his field,
6. Create in the minds of his students a strong impression of design in his courses, and,
7. Cultivate his students' interest in voluntary reading.”  
(Shaw, 1957, pp. 345-52).

Is it too much to ask that all our tertiary level teachers accept these responsibilities with regard to their students' reading abilities and their students' urgent need for guidance in reading their texts, especially those students who are just beginning to learn how to learn at this advanced educational level?

If our tertiary level teachers are to continue in their vitally important role of educating our future teachers, they have an inescapable responsibility to provide sound models of excellent teaching practices themselves. It is my belief that too many teachers at this level fail in this important responsibility. And the most visible area of their failure is in the field of reading teaching. Herber forcibly reminds us of our responsibilities here when he points out that “If we accept the thesis that the essence of good teaching is showing students how to do what they are required to do then . . . students must be guided as they read . . . The crucial factor is how one guides his students in the use of materials required in the course. (Herber, 1970, pp. 24-5.)

#### **What is Needed?**

As with most urgently required, important and radical changes in any field, the major problem of instituting a change in teacher education in reading lies in the first instance with the number of people available with sufficient expertise to institute the desired and required change.

Although the provision for the study of reading and for the pre-service education of teachers in New Zealand are still looked upon by some, as being catered for adequately by the existing situation, the fact is that there is no way in this country of anyone advancing his knowledge, understanding and expertise in reading beyond the introductory level, other than by pursuing a course of independent study, research and practice. Mary Austin lists in her book *The Torch Lighters* the views of college instructors as to the barriers which they believed were blocking the accomplishments of their course objectives. These are: the lack of time, the burying of the reading course in a language arts and other subject matter areas, inadequate observational

facilities, the placement of the “reading methods” course too early in the pre-service training period, and a total educational environment in some associate schools which was not conducive to effective teacher preparation. Significantly, Austin observes “. . . that not one faculty member admitted deficiencies in his own professional competence . . .” (Austin, 1968, p.384). And yet as her survey of the qualifications of those teaching courses in reading showed “. . . that undergraduate courses in reading instruction were being taught by those whose own preparation had been in education generally rather than in reading specifically.” (Austin, 1968, p.383). This situation is strikingly similar to that existing in New Zealand today.

Not only, then, do we have a major problem in the lack of qualified and experienced personnel with the knowledge to institute the needed change, but we are probably faced with the even greater problem of convincing those who are involved in providing for the professional education of teachers that the change is needed. Change means more work, change means more money, change means uncertainty.

Despite these problems of personnel and climate, professional educational administrators cannot surely go on ignoring reports and papers such as Austin’s *The Torch Lighters*, already referred to, her scholarly and comprehensive chapter entitled “Professional Training of Reading Personnel” in the Sixty-Seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the study of Education, *Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction*, and Marion Jenkinson’s “New Developments in Reading: Implications for Teacher Education” recorded in the proceedings of the Second Invitational Conference on Elementary Education in Canada (1967). The gap between the recommendations of these two leaders in the field of education in reading and what is provided in New Zealand today is chasmatic.

The problem of the availability of qualified personnel can be overcome in part, I believe, by the New Zealander’s characteristic capability of “learning on the job.” Provided we are aware of it, and provided we are prepared to make allowances for initial mistakes and a slower rate of implementation of change, I have an inherent belief in the “do-it-yourself” capacity of the average New Zealand teacher. Initiative and intuition, energy and enthusiasm backed up by the available local knowledge and overseas experience should allow the following summarized needs in the field of teacher education in reading to be implemented.

#### I. The Immediate Needs: Pre-Service Education.

The outline presented here refers especially to the pre-service edu-

cation in reading of teachers for the kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. The content of suggested courses for each of these levels has already been referred to in the body of this paper and this will not be repeated here.

- A. The preparation of reading instructors for teacher education institutions.
  1. In-service course for the purpose of *education in reading* for those responsible for presenting reading courses.
  2. In-service course for those responsible for presenting reading courses at different levels of education for the purpose of *co-operative planning* of basic content and methodology. (In November 1970, representatives responsible for reading courses from each primary college and the department met at Lopdell House for the main purpose of reporting what each college was doing in the field of pre-service teacher education in reading and examining the departmental syllabus. This was the first occasion reading personnel from the colleges had ever met. "What we should be doing in the field of reading" was the subject of only one paper.)
  3. National committee be set up involving representatives from all four levels of education to co-ordinate the content and emphasis for teacher education courses in reading at each level.
- B. The preparation of student teachers taking the basic course in reading.
  1. Students should be verbally fluent, sufficiently flexible so that they are open to behaviour change, and be capable, interested readers.
  2. Provision should be built into teacher education courses for those students suffering from reading and other language disabilities to receive corrective treatment. Students who do not respond to corrective teaching should be excluded from the institution with provision made for their return in the future if adequate improvement is demonstrated.
  3. Reading courses for student teachers should always be good models of sound reading practice.
  4. Courses for student teachers in other subject areas should be good models of reading teaching in each subject field.
- C. The content of a basic course in reading.  
Content should be of sufficient depth and breadth to allow students to develop:

1. A thorough understanding of the nature of the reading process, its psychological base and development.
  2. An adequate mastery over the skills of reading.
  3. The skills and abilities necessary to implement a diagnostic approach to the teaching of reading.
  4. A comprehensive understanding of the interrelationship of the language arts in order that they may use every available opportunity to integrate their reading instruction in their future classrooms.
  5. A sufficiently flexible approach to teaching reading in order that they can implement a variety of approaches where necessary.
  6. A detailed knowledge of the field of children's literature, instructional reading materials, and suitable content materials.
- D. The presentation of a basic course in reading.
1. A course of study in the field of reading should involve the student in both theory and practice, with a minimum lecture hour commitment of 80 hours. The initial stages of the course should involve the student in gaining mastery over the content of reading and in studying methods of skill teaching.
  2. Diagnostic teaching experience should be obtained through a sequence of experiences arranged in consequently more complex situations:
    - a. Experience gained in teaching reading with one child.
    - b. Experience gained in teaching reading with a small (2 to 3 children) relatively homogeneous group involving minimal individualization.
    - c. Experience gained in teaching reading with a small (3 pupils of same age) heterogeneous group, involving maximum individualization.
    - d. Experience gained in teaching reading with a larger (6 to 7 pupils) group at the same instructional level but with varying skill needs.
    - e. Experience gained in teaching reading with a whole class over a continuous period of time.
  3. Concurrently with these teaching experiences students should be:
    - a. Reporting, explaining and justifying their teaching experiences to other students and to the teacher.
    - b. Involved in micro-teaching occasionally for the purposes of:

- i) developing an awareness of the effectiveness of their teaching activity.
    - ii) being initiated into the art of self-criticism.
  - c. View video-tapes of actual teaching situations for the purpose of:
    - i) learning to conduct diagnostic testing sessions,
    - ii) learning teaching techniques,
    - iii) the analysis of lesson plans, and
    - iv) analyzing classroom organization.
  - d. Continuing their study of the theory and content of reading.
  - e. Involved in the concurrent study of the other language arts; listening, speaking and writing.
  - f. Involved in the concurrent study of children's literature, including graded instructional reading materials.
- E. The content of selected study in reading of two and/or three years duration.

The need is urgent to send at least some students out into schools with an "in-depth" background in the study of reading. The following list of topics is not to be taken as definitive:

1. The reading process.
2. The nature of language development and reading at various stages of growth.
3. Measurement, evaluation and diagnosis including reading test construction of various kinds.
4. The content of reading. The learning processes involved in skill development.
5. Reading disability. A study of the whole field leading to an in-depth study of some specific learning disabilities hindering reading growth. Related clinical observation and experience.
6. The whole field of reading materials including book selection.
7. Research in reading. The conducting of researches individually and collectively in selected areas. Learning the relevant research techniques.

## II. The Immediate Needs: In-service Education.

There is a pressing need for massive in-service teacher education programmes in reading for teachers at kindergarten, primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Austin reports on a study conducted by Komarek of 52 school systems to learn how the deficiencies of retarded readers were met. The findings of this study would, I am sure, be repeated in this country if it were conducted.

Komarek found that classroom teachers were responsible for all the help given to poor readers in 70 per cent of the systems studied. She found that most of the teachers had received no training in determining reading retardation and had had no formal course work in the diagnosis and treatment of reading disabilities. Austin comments: "Clearly a dilemma exists: many teachers are fully aware of their inadequacies as they try to discharge the responsibilities which schools impose on them, but they have not taken the initiative to remedy the situation. Nor can the school administrators (headmasters) be absolved completely of blame. They frequently have permitted unqualified personnel to work with disabled readers . . ." (1968, p.364).

This dilemma already faces New Zealand teachers. To whom can they report their inadequacies in the diagnosis and correction of reading difficulties? Is it characteristic of our teachers to admit their inadequacies to departmental inspectors so that they can receive help? Can *one* reading advisor for each Education Board district meet these needs?

1. In-service programmes should not be limited to a few teachers. There is an urgent need for an extensive re-education programme that eventually reaches all teachers. The programme should be re-cycled every five years.
2. In-service programmes should become more of a co-operative venture between university, teachers college, Education Department and teachers. Reading Advisors should be based in teachers colleges, both primary and secondary. Reading teaching staff in colleges should be increased to administer and teach in regular in-service programmes.
3. The content of in-service programmes should always be geared to the specific needs of the teachers and the children they teach.

### III. The Needs of the Future.

1. Professional courses for basic and advanced study in reading should be extended to allow for continuous study leading to advanced degrees in reading. Reading should become a "selected study" in our teachers colleges.
2. Reading clinics as joint university and teachers college ventures should be established on campuses for three major purposes:
  - a. To provide corrective work with students.
  - b. To provide opportunity for clinical experience for those involved in the teaching of reading courses.

- c. To provide opportunity for clinical experience for those involved in studying reading.
3. Experimental programmes should continue to be encouraged leading to beneficial innovations in the teaching of reading and developing a climate of investigation and research in our schools.
4. Information retrieval resources need to be developed in the field of reading.
5. Opportunity should be provided for the release of teaching staff at the various levels of education to carry in-depth researches in the field of reading. The example of the benefits derived from extensive studies of this kind are to be seen clearly in the outcomes of the work of Dr. Marie Clay in Auckland.
6. Opportunity should be provided for those involved in the pre-service education of teachers to observe their students teaching in the field of reading in their own classrooms, through some form of intern programme.

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