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# In the Process of Change

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*Eastern Illinois University*

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IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

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BY

Claudia Denise Cox

**THESIS**

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF

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IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL, EASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY  
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## CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

### Purpose of Study and Thesis Statement

The purpose of this paper is to report and discuss experiences surrounding the process of adoption of a new reading curriculum in the elementary school located in Pesotum, Illinois. There will be a background review of contemporary literature pertaining to individualized instruction and reading, a report on the characteristics of the Ginn 360 reading program, and an elaboration of the first seven months of the revised instructional program at Pesotum Grade School.

The thesis of this study shall be that students should score higher on standardized achievement tests when taught by individual programs than they would be expected to do if taught by the conventional group process. There was no attempt to control the observations for anything other than method of reading instruction.

Much of the initial work of the selection of this program had already occurred when this writer became principal of the Pesotum Grade School. Thus, information which is reported to bring this report up to September of

the current school year had to be gleaned from a limited set of historical files and interviews of staff personnel who were present at the inception. There was also a new unit superintendent hired during the summer preceding this school year so his information would have been hearsay also.

### A View of Individualized Instruction

An interesting parallel to reading in school today is a school wrestling program in which the participants are not weight classed. Pictures taken of a 76 pound wrestler in competition with a 180 pound opponent look ridiculous and a teacher observer may laugh at the spectacle. Yet these are the same teachers who have the student reading at third grade level and another reading at eleventh grade level "wrestling" with the same text in class.<sup>1</sup>

For years some teachers have tried to cause the child to conform to the school. A more logical alternative would be to modify the program to fit the child, that is, individualize his instruction to meet his needs. The teacher will often oppose this on the basis that there is not enough time to properly provide for a class of 35 students.

### Personnel and Material Needs in Individualization

Teachers cannot properly individualize instruction on their own efforts exclusively. There are many sources for assistance. Consultants are available from publishers,

state education departments, etc. Some schools provide aides. Volunteers sometimes are available. Junior and senior high school students and even upper elementary children can be a valuable source of assistance. Even the average student or one who has difficulty may help most in some cases because of having experienced emotions similar to the frustrations of the low achiever who may need the most attention. Parents, senior citizens, and other community volunteers may also be willing to devote some of their time. Support from the building principal and the school librarian is very important.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond the personnel needs, the individualizing teacher should also have appropriate materials such as books, magazines, tape recorders, teaching machines, projection devices, etc. With appropriate assistance and material support the next limiting factor appears to be the teacher's creativity. Most of all there must be an adequate source of reading materials in appropriate levels of difficulty. It is argued that instead of teachers not having time to individualize, they could more aptly say they do not have time not to do so. It is thought that repetitious coverage of material for the slower students takes about as much time as "giving the group a diagnostic test, teaching the information to small groups, and evaluating pupil progress frequently."<sup>3</sup>

### Range of Differences

Cutts and Moseley tell us that pupils differ in a number of ways which affect their achievement and adjustment. It is known that the more help a child is given, the better he may be expected to progress. However the differences are so great and so varied that the problem of organizing the classroom program to provide for individual differences may seem impossible. In actuality the other polarity of regimentation is beyond acceptance. Even in the early grades there will be great differences in intelligence, physical development, and emotional adjustment. At higher grades the range of those differences becomes even greater. Even in a class that is grouped by ability the teacher must still be prepared to encounter wide variations in other aspects. A quoted example was that a fifth grade class had an achievement battery range of 7.5 to 11.1 in May. In the following October they ranged from 7.9 to 11.6. As a group this did not reveal the individual changes within the students which actually revealed losses for some of as much as 2.3 years and gains of 1.1 for others. However, knowledge of the individual cases suggested possible reasons for most of the changes. Thus they should be seen both as a group unit and also as a conglomerate of individuals.<sup>4</sup>

### Rational for Individualization

In a democratic governmental system all children are equally worthy of our care and concern. All deserve equal

opportunity to develop within their unique composite of characteristics. In school, children learn not only in subject matter but also in ways of behaving and perceiving. If a child is to exercise the freedom to make the most of himself he must be helped to gain strengths that will free him from his personal negative characteristics and enable him to capitalize on his assets. A program which takes each child at his present level and challenges him to do his best provides him an opportunity to progress at his personal optimum rate. Providing for individual differences should not be seen as an effort to raise all students in a class to some desired standard level. Rather one might expect the range of difference to increase as instruction continues if learning occurs according to ability level. It is assumed quite naturally that there were originally different personal endowments.<sup>5</sup>

#### Some Hypotheses about Children and Learning

Teachers continually search for more effective ways of helping children learn. We accept that there is no one best way nor is there any general educational method which can categorically be labeled as being wrong. The challenge of provision for uniqueness in students is to find a better fit for each student when planning an educational program. Anzalone and Stahl give us the following set of hypotheses about children and learning.

These seem to the writer to be applicable to the new curriculum which has been adopted in Pesotum Elementary School.

1. There are many patterns of learning and no one teaching method meets the varied needs of all children. It is vitally important to provide alternatives in the educational program.
2. The teacher cannot tell a child how to think, but must provide him with the freedom, the encouragement, and the opportunity to do so.
3. Learning is an active, not a passive, process and must involve participation in a task rather than mere absorption of information. As a result of learning there should be a change in pupil behavior or no learning has taken place.
4. Children are consistent in their need for success experiences, but vary greatly in their levels and rates of achievement.
5. Discovering and developing uniqueness in individuals is a major goal not to be thwarted by ignoring or minimizing differences.
6. Children bring to each new experience varying amounts of information and misinformation, which may clarify or distort concept formation.
7. Setting goals and evaluating progress are the privilege and the responsibility of the child, and are essential to long-term learning. Teachers must not let a marking system distort evaluation.
8. The unstructured and inductive experiences which occur in a child's life are often the most profound and influential activities of childhood.
9. Children learn from each other, through observation, imitation, and cooperative consideration of a mutually challenging task.



10. Learning is both positive and negative. When the activity does not fit the child's unique personal need, negative learning is certain to occur.
11. It is more important for children to appreciate and practice self-control than to be controlled by an adult authority figure.
12. Intrinsic motivation makes children capable of meaningful self-selection and self-correction of appropriate learning activities.<sup>6</sup>

Of course it should be held that ideals of individualized instruction must be retained in proper perspective. It may be agreed that complete service to students in strict accordance with their characteristics is desired. Practicality suggests that attention should now be given to setting the stage for a realistic approach to instruction.

#### Educational Ideals in Perspective

The thesis of American education appears to stem from the idealistic proposition set forth in "the Great Didactic" by Comenius in 1632. The education he proposed "includes all that is proper for a man, and is one in which all men who are born into this world should share." He specifically said that the first desire should be that none should be excluded for reason of age, social or economic status, or sex so that all human beings may become educated. His second wish was that all persons should become "wholly educated, rightly formed not only in one single matter or in a few or even in many, but in all things which perfect human nature..."<sup>7</sup>

We may project from the foregoing ideal that it was felt that all people should benefit from similar educational experiences. It may also be assumed that when it was written, most people were more likely to attain similar life experiences. It may also be assumed that when it was written, most people were more likely to attain similar life experiences other than through formal educational procedures than is possible in the varied contemporary life styles.

In 1969 Goodlad appraised the schools as being "conspicuously ill-suited to the needs of at least 30 per cent of their present clientele." He expressed that day's dual view of the state of education in that we, "put on one pair of glasses and the schools appear to be moving post-haste toward becoming centers of learning marked by concern for the individual. Put on another, and they appear to be mired in tradition, insensitive to pressing social problems, and inadequate to the demands of learning."<sup>8</sup>

Further discontent with the educational scene comes from Leonard's Education for Ecstasy. He said,

The wonder is, when you think about it, how long our schools have managed to stay the same. Since 1930, even such staid institutions as banks have changed almost beyond recognition. And yet, the average second-grade classroom today resembles nothing so much as the classroom in which I day-dreamed my way through second grade back in 1930.

He expressed surprise that schools had not taken retreat as has their predecessors: the farm, village, church, and guild

and that they have made no significant changes in the substance and style of their teaching. He compared the most common mode of present day instruction to the Renaissance classroom which had a teacher sitting or standing before a student body in a single classroom, presenting them with facts and techniques or a "verbal-rational nature."<sup>9</sup>

It is generally now agreed that education is an unending growth of knowledge gleaned from all life experience of the individual. It should be established here that future references in this paper to "education" will be limited to that formal, planned exposure which students receive in the classroom. This should not be taken as an effort to limit the effect of the mass media, churches, libraries, etc. in all of which it has been estimated that students may even learn more basic information than they do in schools.<sup>10</sup> It should be accepted here that education is more than the skeptical view issued by J. B. Conant that education is what goes on in schools and colleges. Silberman expresses education more narrowly as "the deliberate or purposeful creation, evocation, or transmission of knowledge, abilities, skills, and values."<sup>11</sup>

#### Education for Fallibility

Idealism or Utopianism has frequently provided the basis for proposition of social change. It is argued here that acceptance of less than perfection is more probably the

only method of achieving practical changes in any major social process such as public education. Ideals assume that man can have knowledge of a perfect society. This may be accepted as a gross social goal if it is accepted also that no one individual or group may be expected to achieve it. Most theorists seem willing to agree that nobody is perfect and we all make mistakes. This is the basis for a "Fallibilist Theory," presented by Perkinson. He says that effort in social analysis should not be directed toward the actual change or reform. Rather, primary attention should be on the identification of social evils. Efforts to reform in this posture are seen as probes or trials which we can criticize or as experiments which we can hope to learn from. The fallibilist would hope that proposed changes will remove a social evil such as inadequate "appropriate" education for all; however he accepts the fact that people will in time view those efforts as inadequate. He continues to be confident that through criticism we can improve anything. Thus the theorist should retain awareness of his own ignorance of the totality and be prepared to modify his position constantly.<sup>12</sup>

Our educational history leads to the thought that men have regarded education as the way to improve the quality of life. They have longed for life in an educated community from which ignorance could be banished. The fallibilist accepts ignorance as being eternal and infinite

and thus trades the dream of the educated community for another dream of the possibility of building an educative society in which people attempt to advance incomplete knowledge and improve the quality of life via critical analysis. This approach to life makes all of us as individuals responsible for ourselves and our society. Although education is not seen as the cure for all evil, the fallibilist does feel that it can help us to assume our responsibilities via the teaching for the acquisition of critical reasoning powers, the potential for which are assumed to be inherent in all mankind. There would be a change away from seeing education as a positive force that molds or shapes the learner to some ideal. The direction would be toward a new, negative view of education which would reveal ignorance, mistakes, errors, and inadequacies. It would demonstrate the way to improvement and advancement through becoming aware of our faults. Further, it would be an education to allow children to make mistakes, detect them, and modify actions to create anew. Major emphasis would be on the advancement of knowledge rather than on the acquisition of the same.<sup>13</sup>

Although the foregoing is not wholly acceptable to this writer, it is believed to be worthy of examination prior to adoption of student and system objectives for an education unit. Recent emphasis on individualization may be closely related to that philosophy for social systems.

There is one reservation which might be that distinct attention should be directed toward not becoming excessively idealistic about not being idealistic.

Goodlad offers an appropriate comment to innovators in that before we criticize present society for not providing what we would like, we should first ask fundamental questions about where we are. Specifically he asked:

To what extent is each individual being provided with opportunities to develop his unique potentials? To what extent is each individual developing a deep sense of personal worth-the kind of selfhood that is prerequisite to self transcendence? To what extent are our young people coming into critical possession of their culture? And to what extent are our young people developing a mankind identity-an identity that transcends all men in all times and in all places?<sup>14</sup>

Education today must have active and ordered evaluation systems to study both processes and products. Careful conception, continuous evaluation, and willingness to modify should become keynotes of all innovations as well as giving a philosophically progressive look at all contemporary programs.

#### An Argument for the Future

Recent criticisms of public education calling for school accountability report that we are failing in one out of four cases. It seems that deficiencies are becoming more evident as a result of increased technological demands, but it is assumed that they have always existed. In the

past, students who became disenchanted with education could drop out and still find an occupation for which they could qualify through on-the-job experience. Thus extensive education was not absolutely essential to being self sustaining. Dissident voices are becoming more prominent and parents are no longer willing to accept the statement that their child just cannot learn. Demands are made on educators to assume a revised commitment that every child shall learn. Further, educational systems must adopt a commitment to change from nonproductive effort and to seek causes of failure within the system and its personnel rather than just blaming the shortcomings on the students.<sup>15</sup> This seems to be in agreement with the prior statement by Goodlad and could be held as a basis for his questions in the preceeding paragraph. It is paramount to saying that schools must be held accountable for the end product of their services. The fact that one-fourth of our students leave school somewhere between the fifth and twelfth grade suggests graphically that we have not previously acted effectively to arrest that rate of social and economic fatalities.

#### Review of Selected Literature on Reading

If the foregoing has established a realistic view of ideals in education it may now be possible to propose another. All people in an educative society should learn to read. Unfortunately this is not yet true. We are told

that today in the United States almost everyone is literate. It is reasonable for us to say that more people should read but contemporary life styles leave reading as a matter of individual choice. Harris informs us that only 17 to 25 percent of the adult population is likely to have read a book in the past month.<sup>16</sup>

As compared to other mass information sources reading has a distinct advantage. Variety is virtually unlimited and it may be pursued at any time the participant finds convenient rather than being tied to a schedule as is true in the case of radio and television. A reader can go at his own pace where, when, and how he pleases.

#### Social Significance of Reading

Reading becomes even more important when one considers what happens to the poor reader in present day society. He is likely to either repeat grades in school or be administratively promoted along with age mates who then are no longer peers with respect to academic skills. If he gets into high school he is likely to drop out prior to graduation unless special provisions are made for the non-reader. (This too is an unrealized ideal in many school systems.) Many occupations will be closed to him. To a large extent he may be culturally and socially isolated. Frustrations experienced in school often lead to truancy which develops



further into juvenile delinquency. From that point there is an easy transition into an adult life of lawlessness. It may be held that the delinquency causes poor reading rather than the inverse relationship, but it is a common occurrence to find both conditions simultaneously. Even when poor readers manage to avoid delinquency, the frustrations thus experienced through unequal competition tend to create feelings of inferiority. Thus normal personality development is impeded. Reading disability alone caused hundreds of thousands of men to not be minimally acceptable in the World War II Army. That literacy standard was set at <sup>17</sup> fourth grade competence.

#### Goals for Reading

One of the main long term objectives of the school is to develop mature readers. This is defined as being children who show in their reading "interest, purpose, the recognition and construing of meaning, reaction to and use of the ideas read and kinds of materials read." Apparently this presumes that the individual will make continuous progress through his entire reading instructional experience. Therefore it should follow that there must be reading materials available which will be appropriate to the broad spectrum of individual differences. Lee and Lee report Emmett A. Betts' list of objectives of reading. These are substantiated in research and are established as the three major goals of reading instruction.

1. The development of worthwhile interests which take the child to reading and which are satisfied through his increasingly effective reading-study skills.
2. The acquisition of phonic and other word-learning skills to the point where they are used automatically.
3. The maturing of thinking and related comprehension abilities needed to solve problems and to get genuine satisfaction from reading-study activities. <sup>18</sup>

Progress toward a best method of reading instruction has been slow and is impeded by misdirected efforts. Even though erroneous, those approaches which look promising must be pursued until they are found more inadequate than existing measures for the same situation. There seems to be at least a general agreement on desired goals for reading learning outcomes in children. They are:

1. Each child reads widely and enthusiastically on his own initiative because he enjoys it and it serves his many and varied purposes.
2. Each child is aware of the purpose for which he is reading at the moment and varies his procedures accordingly.
3. Each child has a broad background of experiences from which he can bring meaning to the printed page for adequate understanding of what he reads.
4. Each child is able to locate desired information, select, evaluate, and organize it for his own purposes.
5. Each child reacts to the ideas, which he reads and uses them to aid his critical thinking in the area.
6. Each child increases his personal and social growth through his reading.

7. Each child enjoys sharing his reading both through discussion of it and through reading to others for their information and enjoyment.
8. Each child moves forward toward each of the above goals as far and as fast as his stage of development and ability permit.<sup>18</sup>

The last of the above list seems to lead logically into an argument for an entire program of individualized instruction in reading. La Pray tells us that all "people are created unequal and that reading is an equalizer of limitless potential." All children react to reading. She places a requirement on the teacher to become so sensitive to the child's attitude toward, and curiosity about reading, that these two predictors of future achievement may be measured through direct observation of the child's behavior or indirectly by standardized measurements.<sup>20</sup>

Negative reactions toward reading can occur in a child because of excessive pressure or dull content. There are many other causes. A specific problem is that children may have been accepted as having skills which they in fact have not yet developed. Although it may appear that some children are born readers, most of them require specific instruction in varying degrees before they develop reading skills.<sup>21</sup>

La Pray proposes the philosophy that if given an opportunity, every physically normal child can learn to read regardless of whether he is a gifted, average, or

slow learner. She says that the student must start by learning that it is more profitable to read than to not read. Beyond that the teacher's daily diagnosis should become the formula for building on what is known and provide a focus for teaching what is missing. By becoming keenly aware of each child's rate and pattern of learning the teacher can utilize time efficiently through appropriate instruction. The focal point of a reading program should be the student and his particular learning patterns. Consequently an individualized program for one student may be entirely inappropriate for any other. An adequate program should require the child's participation in planning future learning based on his knowledge of his own skill deficiencies.<sup>22</sup>

We are told that the teacher who chooses to teach all children by a particular method adopts the advantage that even the slowest child in the class is not likely to fail. But there is the disadvantage that the more able students will be held back. Consequently they are less likely to develop a joyous association with reading and may even come to dislike it. This teacher will channel all children through identical materials. Conversely the teacher may make a commitment to teach from a variety of methods by the one most effective from the child's point of view. This is more difficult to administer, but it is most

appropriate for all learners since it aims to match the learner with the approach best suited to him. This teacher will simultaneously run several instructional channels with different materials. The first is identical for the entire class with similar expectancy for each student. The second necessitates studying the child in depth and developing a learning prescription for him. Wherever possible the child should assist in selection of materials. Obviously this program is more difficult to administer but it appears most likely to present opportunity for success for all students.<sup>23</sup>

The Ginn 360 reading program is adaptable to such a system as the second described in the preceding paragraph. Students are entered into the program after taking a standardized test of reading skills. They progress through a series of thirteen levels of competency. This is the program which was initiated in Community Unit Seven of Champaign County schools during the 72-73 school year.

## CHAPTER II--INITIATION OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAM OF READING INSTRUCTION

The purpose of this section is to discuss the events surrounding the adoption of a new reading program in Pesotum Elementary School. Emphasis is placed on communication problems in the implementation process.

### Social Influence on Educational Change

It was significant that some of the faculty members were long time residents of the community and seemed to have been capable of influencing community thought along educational lines. It became essential that the administrator of the program gain faculty support or at least concurrence with the methods employed before seeking general community support.

Most persons associated with education are familiar with the tendency of teachers to become repetitive in their yearly teaching tasks. This does not appear to be limited to teachers but it is particularly obvious when one observes the teaching of reading by a teacher with approximately twenty years experience. This is also noted in a community attitude in which it is often assumed by parents that whatever was effective in the past will continue to be so.

A particular problem arises when there is a vocal element of discontent among the parents as they observe the results of their children in reading when measured with a standardized series of achievement tests. There continues to be a large body of citizens who will accept whatever is offered in their educational system with the attitude that the professionals know best. Thus there develops a seed of change which is potentially hazardous for school personnel. This may be considered social and professional inertia and the reaction as the force to cause the inertia to be overcome. More specifically, some teachers will be content to continue indefinitely with their "tried and trusted" program of teaching. Many of the parents may view change as personally threatening as well as being expensive. Ultimately there can develop both social and professional impetus for change and an equally vociferous social and professional objection to the change. Of course there is also the large neutral body of citizens who express no strong interest or emotion with regard to either the dissidents or those who want to essentially remain static.

### Background Report

Much of the foregoing had already been noted in a central Illinois school district when this writer came into one of the elementary schools as principal. Much

of what will be reported in this section must be assumed because there seems to be no concise record of events which led to the present state of affairs and there has been a complete change in district administration.

The first awareness for this writer of an impending change in the district's reading program came when the task of implementation of the new program was assigned at the beginning of the school year. It appears that community interest had been recognized by the prior administration in that there had been a reading committee appointed which received input from both lay and professional persons. The purpose of that committee was to appraise various elementary reading materials and recommend a replacement program to the board of education for adoption. Whatever procedures that committee may have pursued seem to be largely unknown in that the prior principal left no records of their action. Perhaps for the benefit of this writer that was just as well because it provided a basis from which to initiate a form of democratic leadership within the school.

#### Rationale for Position

Since all prior knowledge of educational leadership was theoretical and untried by the writer it was decided upon self-appraisal and study of the task at hand that the democratic principles reported by Campbell could



form a basis for future association with the faculty.

Those principles of democratic administration were:

1. To facilitate the continuous growth of individual and social personalities by providing all persons with opportunities to participate actively in all enterprises that concern them.
2. To recognize that leadership is a function of every individual, and to encourage the exercise of leadership by each person in accordance with his interests, needs, and abilities.
3. To provide means by which persons can plan together, share their experiences, and co-operatively evaluate their achievements.
4. To place the responsibility for making decisions that affect the individuals.
5. To achieve flexibility of organization to the end that necessary total enterprise with the group rather than with one or a few adjustments can readily be made.<sup>24</sup>

It was hoped that a greater degree of faculty involvement could be beneficial also in gaining citizen support because of the status of the teachers in this community; several of them have been residents more than ten years. De Witt reports conflicts which engulf school principals may likely spring from failure of the principal to fully involve teachers in innovative processes such as curriculum modification. He further suggests that principals should become more people oriented and service motivated, and that they should be more able to relate and communicate. He also said that a future of harmonious relations was primarily a matter of opening the mind, being flexible and

willing to change, and of being unwilling to polarize with either extreme.<sup>25</sup> It is felt that this innovative attitude when coupled with the principles of democratic leadership previously reported here could provide for potential professional growth of the entire faculty and the principal.

The position herein assumed is that since the school is a social institution its personnel must strive to serve the interests of the community which established it. McCloskey provides an argument for citizen involvement in educational policy and program which is heartily endorsed by this writer and which appears to have been accepted by the prior administration of this school district. He reports that there must be greater pupil benefit when the parents are involved both in philosophy and program. Certainly at least at the elementary level the parents should be well informed of any new educational practice which is being adopted. It is agreed that even professional educators may find difficulty in maintaining an informed state and with all other contemporary pressures one must expect the parents to be ill-informed or even completely misinformed regarding school changes.<sup>26</sup> This is especially probable when vociferous and influential teachers have assumed a negative stance toward an impending change.

#### Introduction to the Community

A brief introduction to the community may provide a basis for understanding the implementation procedure. It

is dominated by agricultural interests. The people generally appear to be devout Christians with approximately equal Methodist and Catholic influence. The school seems to serve as an action center for involvement along with the churches. There is a Catholic elementary school in the district which frequently has unofficial influence on public school programs and practices, especially in scheduling of events so as to limit conflicts of interest. The public and parochial schools' programs are integrated to the point of sharing some classes and lunch facilities. Furthermore when it was decided to change the reading materials in the public schools the parochial school adopted the same program. Obviously, as a result of someone's leadership, there was community involvement, at least at the inception of the change as evident in the formation of the committee to study the need for change. Thus we see a community which appears to be both interested in and cooperative with the schools' activities; one with church influence which might tend to define the purpose of schools as an institution to train youth to read, interpret, and apply the concepts of the Bible as they see it.

### Implementation

By definition of the purpose of social organizations it becomes an obligation upon the school to respond to the district dissatisfaction with results of reading achievement.

A study of the situation after assuming the responsibility for one of the elementary schools revealed a need for attention to community information concerning difference in materials and philosophy of the new program when compared to prior practices. Hoke, et. al. provided evidence that the greater number of people who are involved, and committed to educational goals, the greater the chance for success.<sup>27</sup> Other studies indicate that preparing parents as educational change agents can be more beneficial and in some cases more economical than other efforts.<sup>28</sup>

Ruffin tells us that the school is still a source of pride to the community and it is a place, but not the only place, in which to learn from the experiences of others. Although many may hold the school responsible for all learning needed to survive in today's world, parents should not be allowed to shirk their responsibility in the total learning process. Education starts in the home and spreads out from there. Since home attitudes become personalized in youth it is essential to maintain home and school cooperation if appropriate attitudes toward learning are to be developed in our young people. It is also contended that the idea that education may be ineffective is largely contributed to by teachers. Educational leaders must therefore accept the challenge to

communicate effectively with students, teachers, and the community at all available opportunities.<sup>29</sup>

On the basis of similar arguments and considerations it was decided to embark upon an informational program with two emphases at the beginning of the 72-73 academic year, one aimed at the teachers and the other at the parents. The goal was to install the new reading program which had been selected prior to the writer's arrival in the district with as much harmony as could be developed for all concerned. The writer of this paper felt that it was also significant for her professional future that this, her first major project as a principal, be successfully concluded.

#### Comparison of 71-72 Reading Program to Ginn 360

A brief introduction and philosophical comparison of the two reading programs should provide a basis for understanding the issue as it was seen by the faculty.

The "old" program was published in 1957 with each grade having two texts and two workbooks. There were skill tests associated with each text which the teachers could use if desired. The only approach to individualization was through "redbird-bluebird" grouping in a grade but in the final summary all members of the groups were required to proceed at the group rate. Obviously this led to strife for some and boredom for others, but it was convenient to prepare teacher plans or an evaluation of students

"learning" in that approach because everybody did the same things. It appears that the instruction was directed toward the ability of the low average student in the class. As reported by some teachers and students alike, this created dissatisfaction for many and a general dislike for the reading class. It would seem also that that system should have produced an ever increasing difference in student reading abilities within the group when it is considered that some advanced very little and others as much as their motivation could carry them beyond the instructional and organizational limitations. It seems that the philosophical basis was that everybody needed the same experiences for appropriate life preparation.

The newly adopted system, as applied in the plan for the Pesotum Grade School, is aimed at as nearly complete individualization as possible. Each student at the beginning of the program was appraised with respect to his reading development and assigned to one of the thirteen levels inherent with the program. During the reading period each teacher was designated as a teacher of reading rather than a teacher of first or second grade, etc. In accordance with the publisher's recommendation that teachers not cover more than three levels, the teachers were not assigned all of one large level nor were they assigned consecutive levels when it could be avoided.

The desire was prevention of repetition for the student merely by being present when other groups were reciting. Teachers were encouraged to constantly evaluate students to determine adequacy of the contemporary level of effort. The purpose was to recognize the time when a student should be advanced to a higher level and thus maintain his interest and effort through the constant challenge of appropriate material. The philosophical view is that each student will in some way differ from his peers, those differences should be recognized by educators, and future instruction should originate from contemporary experiential deficiencies insofar as the school district is capable of providing for them.

#### Informing the Community

Introduction of the new material to the parents was undertaken via four methods; a direct letter to each household, oral communication to the entire student body, open discussion with room mothers, and an open house meeting at the school. It was assumed that there would be further dissemination by the teachers in their social contacts; however, it was also noted that this source could be both positive and negative depending upon the stance of the particular teacher.

The intent of the letter to parents (copy attached hereto as appendix) was to excite the curiosity of all who had not been contacted in any prior publicity of the

previous administration. It was hoped that those who were personally involved in their children's education would either visit the school or at least call and thus open the door for future communication. Discussion with the student body was first an attempt to prepare them for the new organizational structure. Secondly it was also to get more information to the parents in the desire that any negativism from teachers or other educationally inert citizens in their social contact might be counteracted if possible. At the same time positive community attitudes could be thus strengthened. The room mothers' involvement is apparent in their physical presence in the educational milieu. It was assumed that they might also be involved in other activities which would give them an opportunity to act as interpreters of the new program. Therefore it was felt that they could become effective change agents and should receive as much accurate information as possible. Although the expressed purpose of the open house for parents was to comply with district practice it was also recognized as having great potential for gaining their support in the curricular change. This occurred subsequent to the letter and student orientation and so it was also seen as an opportunity to answer questions and clarify any vague interpretations of the prior releases.



Thus the people were to be presented a sequential barrage of information which it was hoped would not only gain their support of the change but would also help them to more adequately help their children adapt to the new materials.

Concurrently there was extensive effort exerted to help the faculty internalize the philosophy of the plan of instruction. In the first teachers' meeting the program was presented and explained in principle. Their aid was sought in planning the assignment of instructional levels and application of the program. Individual contact was used thereafter along with additional group meetings to further elicit their cooperation. Substantial benefit was realized through cooperation of several of the teachers who had recently received university or workshop exposure to methods of teaching reading which emphasize the individual. However, not all was positive. Maternal instincts of some teachers were rapidly unveiled when one most vocal member expressed a desire to keep "her children" under her control. This had been anticipated. Fortunately enough faculty support had already been gained that the issue did not develop at that time, and it seemed to draw the majority of the teachers more firmly toward supporting the entire package. At that time it was not known how much of the opposition should be attributed to the age difference between the principal and the teacher. It was apparent

that a faction did exist which could be expected to yield future problems.

The parent reaction began promptly after the publicity program was commenced. Many of the parents either called or visited the school to gain further understanding or offer favorable commentary concerning the change. Nothing was noted which was considered negative to the new material or methods. Approximately 75% of the families were represented at the open house; most of them made passing remarks and many asked detailed questions. After seven months of operation positive comments continue to be received, including written notes requesting that if they have a choice that their children continue to receive reading instruction from teachers other than the home room teacher. These included specific statements that the choice was not derogatory toward the home room teacher and it was expressed that the change in daily routine was seen as valuable experience for the students.

Teacher reaction has been varied from the beginning. Some were strongly in favor, some passive, one registered concern over the added work, and one registered opposition to the procedure but accepted the materials. Unfortunately for the harmony of the system, the opposition came from one of the more mature teachers who has lived in the community many years and is thus able to be a potentially negative influence on the community attitude. That same

potential could become an asset if the teacher could be swayed to a positive stance. Consequently much attention has been given to all sincere criticisms in the hope that the entire program may thus be improved. There was an element of confusion at the outset for some of the teachers which could be expected with any major procedural modification such as this. As they gained greater familiarity, the original passivity gradually changed through general acceptance and into distinct favor. It is recognized as a growth experience for most of the teachers in that they now appear more versatile in working with a broader age spectrum than at the beginning, and it is felt that they display a greater sense of personal security. Visible and vocal conflicts seem to have disappeared and there now appears to be at least surface cooperation from the entire staff.

A limited survey of the older student attitudes was taken. The expressions were both positive and negative but a majority of them favored the change. Student growth in reading ability has been at least equal to that achieved via the old program. Significant gains have been noted for the older students, especially those who might have been considered slow learners. Student interest has been higher and vocal discontent is increasingly less as the program advances. Some who rejected reading at the beginning of the year now look forward to it each day.

During the first semester all students advanced at least a full semester in reading as measured with tests prescribed by the publisher.

### Chronological Report of Major Activities and Events

#### Introduction

Specific day to day occurrences throughout the period of this observation would be a laborious task to report and would be of little interest to the reader. A day to day log of noteworthy problems and achievements was kept. Notations were made whenever students were moved within the various levels, usually to a higher one but in a few cases it was necessary to reverse a prior placement. Particular attention was paid to teacher reaction. Parent contacts were also duly recorded. From this study it is hoped that future years in using this program may be improved for the benefit of both the student and the school. A guide will be developed later for the indoctrination of new teachers into the use of individual reading instruction. Many cautions may be generated, especially for working with the experienced teacher who has always worked with a traditional basal reading series. A calendar to major steps in the transitory year is reported along with a brief explanation of surrounding events.

## Diary of Events

8-23-72

Two sixth grade teachers who had not previously worked in a departmentalized system were invited in to the school for a pre-opening conference. The intent was both to gather ideas for the implementation of the reading program and to establish rapport with the teachers. It was also hoped that support for the new program could be gained prior to the initial confrontation of the entire faculty. A favorable reaction was generated, <sup>it</sup> however the teachers exhibited the expected hesitancies which frequently occur at the outset of so vast a change in methods.

8-28-72

This was a scheduled district teachers' work day preceding the first day of school. The first teachers' meeting was used for presentation of the new program and an exchange of ideas. The principal's intent was to lay a foundation for a democratic administration thereafter. Implementation date for the new program was established for 9-5-72. A paucity of records had been maintained by the prior principal. To establish new records all teachers were requested to provide data from the Ginn initial screening tests which had been administered in the preceding spring. Teachers were requested to refer new students who had not been tested in the spring.

9-1-72

At an after school teachers' meeting an open discussion was held to establish implementation procedures. Specific attention was given to: student induction into the system, assignment of students to classes, proficiency advancement within the system, color coding of student groups to prevent social stigma of numerical assignments, and distribution to all teachers of a composite sequence for introduction of decoding skills.

9-5-72

The student program was commenced. A principal's letter was sent to each student's home. (See Appendix A) A meeting was held between the principal and a group of sixth grade students who were to be taught at Level 8 by a primary grade teacher. This was in response to a difficulty experienced by their reading teacher. Student motivation for individual progress was established.

Period of 9-5 to 18-72

Individual testing of students who had been identified by teachers as having been possibly malassigned initially. It was decided that all proficiency testing would be performed by the principal to relieve the teachers of having to assume proficiency on the use of the evaluation instruments. Also this was accepted as a method of maintaining the same degree of subjectivity for all tests.

9-18-72

Principal's meeting with the faculty was held to review the first two weeks student progress. Teachers were presented a final opportunity to recommend reassignment of students to a different entry level. (Appendix B)

9-20-72

Principal's meeting with room mothers was held to further disseminate information about the Ginn 360 program. Favorable impressions were established.

9-25-72

In preparation for a visit by the publisher's consultant all teachers were requested to prepare questions which they felt to be unanswered to their satisfaction. (Appendix C) Some disfavor with the program became evident among the older teachers who felt they were losing a portion of their customary control of "their" students. From this date on through the rest of the year student evaluations were performed at the teachers recommendation for reading level advancements.

10-4-72

District teachers' meeting was held for conferences with the Ginn Publishing Company consultant. She reported satisfaction with the progress to date in the entire district.

10-9 through 31-72

Upper grade teacher objection to teaching lower grade students led to reassignment of students in levels 10 and 11 to another upper grade teacher who was immensely pleased

with their performance. The principal assumed teaching duties for a four member group of sixth graders who were achieving at a level subordinate to their actual grade placement. This writer recommended to the Unit Superintendent the adoption of a standard progress reporting system which would more adequately inform parents of their child's achievement. A committee of three principals was appointed to develop the system displayed in Appendix E. All teachers but one accepted the reporting system cooperatively. From this start there was a complete revision of the unit grading practices.

11-1-72

The Ginn reading consultant visited Pesotum Elementary School and held individual conferences with each teacher. She reacted favorably to the progress of the entire school. An opinion was taken of sixth grade students. (See Appendix G) It is noteworthy that a majority of the negative comments from the students coincide with expressions from their reading teacher who by further coincidence has been the objector since initiation of the new reading program.

11-10-72

New reading progress reports were issued. Parents particularly approved of the section for teacher's comments. The same teacher who had previously, repeatedly expressed



discontent with the revised report system performed according to expectations and again experienced difficulty in using it effectively.

11-13-72

Parents visitation night brought approximately 75 percent of the families of Pesotum Grade School students into the school. In addition to the customary classroom visits they were invited to observe a display of the entire reading program. A group explanation was made which was followed by an individual parent and teacher interaction period. No parental discontent with reading instruction was detected.

11-14-72 through 1-21-73

District emphasis on reading instruction led to a complete unit wide special reading program being developed by the writer for grades K-6. This was prepared in accordance with Title I and approved for use with all students found qualified by exhibiting a one year or greater retardation in reading as measured on standardized achievement tests.

1-22-73

Title I reading program staffed and initiated in the Unit Seven.

1-22-73 through 4-30-73

Reading system progresses satisfactorily. Student evaluations and advancements have become routine. Data is

being gathered and recorded. Parental reaction remains favorable. Faculty support remains strong with exception of the one negative element. There was a district decision to adopt the Iowa Test of Basic Skills for spring evaluation of grades 3 through 6 reading progress and the Stanford Reading Test for grade 2. (See report of test results in the next chapter)

5-1 through 14-73

Administration and analysis of evaluation instruments is being performed.

## CHAPTER III - SELECTED ACTIVITY ANALYSIS

### Measurements by Ginn 360 Placement Tests

Tables I, II, and III were compiled from data obtained from measurements on standardized tests provided by the publishers of the Ginn 360 reading program. Table I is taken from the initial screening examination conducted in the spring of 1972. Only those students who were enrolled in the fall of 1972 are reported for the purpose of this study. Table II information was gathered in accordance with the publisher's recommendation. The students had received two weeks instruction in the new program as of the test administration. The purpose of this measurement was to assure that the students had been appropriately placed at the outset of the year. Table III was developed from data collected on 4-15-73. It is used to show total progress between levels over a period of seven months instruction.

The publishers do not delineate a specific grade placement for an instructional level. The individualized nature of the program dictates that reading proficiency rather than chronological age be the basis for level assignment.

TABLE I

## GINN 360 READING INITIAL SCREENING TEST

## Placement of Students-Grades 2-6

<u>Level</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
Kindergarten	15												
First Grade		12											
Second Grade		5	0	4	2	6							
Third Grade						2	4	3	1	5	1		
Fourth Grade						2	2	2	9	5	7		
Fifth Grade						2	2	0	2	11	12		
Sixth Grade (Z)								1	4	7	11	2	
Sixth Grade (Y)						1		5	2	7	11		
Totals =	15	17	0	4	2	13	9	13	18	35	42	2	= 170

TABLE II

## ACTUAL PLACEMENT IN GINN 360

September 1972-Pesotum

<u>Level</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
Kindergarten	15												
First Grade	12												
Second Grade		5		6		6	2						
Third Grade						2	4	3	1	5	1		
Fourth Grade						2	2	2	9	5	6		
Fifth Grade						2	1		3	11	15		
Sixth Grade (Z)						0	0	2	3	3	12	3	
Sixth Grade (Y)						1	0	5	3	7	9	2	
Totals=	15	17	0	6	0	13	9	12	19	31	43	5	= 170

TABLE III

## ASSIGNED LEVELS AS OF APRIL 15, 1973

<u>Level</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>
Kindergarten	15												
First Grade					12								
Second Grade					4	6		8					
Third Grade								5	3	3	3		
Fourth Grade								3	3	13	7		
Fifth Grade								1	1	6	16		
Sixth Grade (Z)										7	10	4	3
Sixth Grade (Y)								1	0	8	9	4	3
Totals =	15	0	0	0	16	6	0	18	7	37	45	8	6 = 158

It may be noted that twelve members of the group had left the school district in the period of observation. No attempt was made to control the data for personnel changes. These tables are designed to show a group picture of progress rather than individual growth, although that could have been developed also.

It may be noted from comparison of Table I and II that the initial screening and the actual placement agree very closely. In the application, a few moved downward as evident in the total for levels 4 and 5. In actuality no student moved either up or down more than one level by the re-evaluation. It is not known how much progress may be attributed to test-retest familiarity; however approximately four months elapsed between the dates of analysis. This represents approximately two weeks of reading instruction.

Growth during the experimental period may be inferred from comparing Tables II and III. The movement of first graders level 2 to level 5 may tend to indicate mass instruction, however it is easily seen that second grade progress was not patterned. Here the individuality is more apparent. As may have been expected there was a general movement throughout the study period into the higher levels. Increased difficulty and thus greater time requirement causes bunching to occur in the higher levels in the upper grades.

Generally it may be assumed that the total body of

students above the kindergarten level has improved significantly as measured on this test instrument.

#### Measurement by Standardized Reading Tests

Grades 2 and 3 were also measured in the fall of 1972 and the spring of 1973 on achievement tests. There was an actual period of instruction of .6 of a year between the measurements. The second grade was tested with the Standford Reading Test at both times and the third grade used the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) on both dates. Both instruments yield data in vocabulary and reading comprehension. The third grade was tested for intellectual ability with the Otis alpha I.Q. test in the spring of their first grade. The second grade used the Lorge Thorndyke Intelligence Tests. These data were taken from the cumulative student files and were not gathered specifically for this study. It is assumed in this report that both tests are equally accurate in definition of student potential. The mean I.Q. for the second grade was 105 and the third grade mean was 120.5.

In the 0.6 year of elapsed instruction time the second grade measured an average class gain of 0.55 in vocabulary and 0.53 in reading comprehension. The third grade gained 0.27 in vocabulary and 0.65 in reading comprehension.



TABLE IV  
 SECOND GRADE ACHIEVEMENT IN READING 1972-1973

<u>I.Q. Range</u>	<u>No. of Students in I.Q. Range</u>	<u>Average Gain in Vocabulary</u>	<u>Average Gain in Reading Comprehension</u>
131-136			
126-130	2	.65yrs.	.45yrs.
121-125	2	.10yrs.	1.15yrs.
116-120	2	.70yrs.	.65yrs.
111-115	2	1.20yrs.	.90yrs.
106-110	1	.50yrs.	.20yrs.
101-105	2	.80yrs.	.65yrs.
96-100	2	.10yrs.	.60yrs.
91-95	2	.40yrs.	.50yrs.
86-90	3	.80yrs.	.90yrs.
	<hr/> 18=total		

TABLE V

## THIRD GRADE ACHIEVEMENT IN READING 1972-1973

<u>I.Q. Range</u>	<u>No. of Students in I.Q. Range</u>	<u>Average Gain in Vocabulary</u>	<u>Average Gain in Reading Comprehension</u>
136-140	1	-.10yrs.	-.40yrs.
131-135	3	.23yrs.	.47yrs.
126-130	2	.40yrs.	.80yrs.
121-125			
116-120	3	.20yrs.	.13yrs.
111-115	4	.10yrs.	1.50yrs.
106-110	1	1.90yrs.	1.70yrs.
101-105	1	-.30yrs.	-.20yrs.
96-100			

---

15=total

It may be noted that in neither class was there a concentration of I.Q. at any level. The second grade especially does not suggest a normalized distribution. Rather it is a flat presentation across the range of I.Q. scores. The third grade is a somewhat more normal group but in neither case could it be said to follow a normal pattern throughout. Comparison of achievement data and I.Q. data for the second grade leads to the belief that for this group one or the other measurements must not have been a valid predictor of academic success.

Neither does the third grade yield a source of predictability. It is noted that at both extremes of I.Q. there is a negative gain reported during the study period. Thus no generalizations are drawn from the information reflected here except that they do not appear to accurately predict.

Achievement data for the fourth through sixth grades is collected from the I.T.B.S. All students in tables VI through IX were measured with the Lorge-Thorndyke Intelligence Test in grade 4. As with the lower grades, it may be noted that a normal distribution of I.Q. scores is not reported here. It is also noteworthy that the lowest I.Q. score in class 6Y has been identified by a qualified psychological examiner as eligible for a special class for the educable mentally handicapped.

For these classes also there has been an academic period of 0.60 year. The average gain in 1971-1972 school year is calculated on the basis of 60 per cent of their measured gain for that year in order to more accurately provide a reference for comparison of the gain in 1972-1973 while under the individualized reading program.

Table X suggests that those with lower I.Q. scores have an equal opportunity for reading achievement as do the higher scoring classes.

TABLE VI

## FOURTH GRADE ACHIEVEMENT IN READING 1971-1972-1973

I.Q. Range	No. of Students in I.Q. Range	Average Gain in Voc.*71-72	Average Gain in Reading Compr. <sup>+</sup> 71-72	Average Gain in Voc.* 72-73	Average Gain in Reading Compr. <sup>+</sup> 72-73
126-130	4	0.77yrs.	0.76yrs.	0.60yrs.	0.40yrs.
121-125	2	.56yrs.	-.065yrs.	.25yrs.	.65yrs.
116-120	1	.72yrs.	.46yrs.	.90yrs.	1.00yrs.
111-115	1	.26yrs.	.79yrs.	1.10yrs.	.10yrs.
106-110	7	.68yrs.	.61yrs.	.17yrs.	.74yrs.
101-105	3	.308yrs.	.66yrs.	.70yrs.	.20yrs.
96-100	1	.59yrs.	1.32yrs.	.60yrs.	.70yrs.
91-95	2	.43yrs.	.46yrs.	.75yrs.	.60yrs.
86-90					
81-85					
76-80					
71-75	1	0.33yrs.	0.72yrs.	0.50yrs.	0.90yrs.

\*Voc. =vocabulary

<sup>+</sup> Compr. =comprehension

## FIFTH GRADE ACHIEVEMENT IN READING 1971-1972-1973

I.Q. Range	No. of Students in I.Q. Range	Average Gain in Voc.* 71-72	Average Gain in Reading Compr.† 71-72	Average Gain in Voc.* 72-73	Average Gain in Reading Compr.† 72-73
131-135	1	1.32yrs.	0.86yrs.	-.3yrs.	0.2yrs.
126-130	3	.28yrs.	.96yrs.	1.35yrs.	.23yrs.
121-125	3	.89yrs.	1.27yrs.	.43yrs.	.83yrs.
116-120	4	.63yrs.	.93yrs.	1.30yrs.	-.10yrs.
111-115	2	.53yrs.	.33yrs.	-.40yrs.	-.10yrs.
106-110	1	.26yrs.	.19yrs.	2.50yrs.	1.20yrs.
101-105	5	.23yrs.	.49yrs.	1.08yrs.	.30yrs.
96-100	1	0	.79yrs.	.60yrs.	.10yrs.
91-95	2	.46yrs.	.07yrs.	1.25yrs.	.20yrs.
86-90					
81-85					
76-80	1	0	0.40yrs.	0.80yrs.	1.00yrs.

\*Voc. =vocabulary

†Compr. =comprehension

## SIXTH GRADE ACHIEVEMENT IN READING 1971-1972-1973 (Class Z)

I.Q. Range	No. of Students in I.Q. Range	Average Gain in Voc. * 71-72	Average Gain in Reading Compr. <sup>+</sup> 71-72	Average Gain in Voc.* 72-73	Average Gain in Reading Compr. <sup>+</sup> 72-73
131-136	1	0.46yrs.	0.66yrs.	1.1yrs.	-.10yrs.
126-130	1	.66yrs.	.79yrs.	.70yrs.	.40yrs.
121-125	2	.39yrs.	.23yrs.	1.05yrs.	.05yrs.
116-120	4	.14yrs.	.76yrs.	.85yrs.	-.30yrs.
111-115	4	.56yrs.	1.04yrs.	.60yrs.	.28yrs.
106-110	1	1.12yrs.	.79yrs.	.70yrs.	-.10yrs.
101-105	3	.72yrs.	.42yrs.	.33yrs.	-.06yrs.
96-100	3	.33yrs.	.79yrs.	.40yrs.	-.57yrs.
91-95					
86-90	2	.30yrs.	.43yrs.	-.10yrs.	.30yrs.
81-85	1	1.12yrs.	.99yrs.	-1.80yrs.	-.50yrs.
76-80	1	1.25yrs.	1.32yrs.	0.60yrs.	-3.00yrs.

\*Voc.=vocabulary

<sup>+</sup>Compr.=comprehension

TABLE IX

## SIXTH GRADE ACHIEVEMENT IN READING 1971-1972-1973 (Class Y)

I.Q. Range	No. of Students in I.Q. Range	Average Gain in Voc.*71-72	Average Gain in Reading Compr.+71-72	Average Gain in Voc* 72-73	Average Gain in Reading Compr.+72-73
136-140	2	.525yrs.	.725yrs.	.45yrs.	.30yrs.
131-135	1	-.06 yrs.	.53 yrs.	.80yrs.	.40yrs.
126-130					
121-125					
116-120	3	.28 yrs.	.19 yrs.	.90yrs.	.93yrs.
111-115	6	.65 yrs.	.54 yrs.	.75yrs.	0
106-110	3	.28 yrs.	.24 yrs.	.53 yrs.	.63yrs.
101-105	1	.33 yrs.	.86 yrs.	1.00 yrs.	.50yrs.
96-100	2	.92 yrs.	.39 yrs.	.30 yrs.	.20yrs.
86-90					
81-85					
76-80	1	-.99 yrs.	.86 yrs.	.70 yrs.	-.10yrs.

\*Voc.=vocabulary

+ Compr.=comprehension



TABLE X

THE AVERAGE READING GAINS OF FOURTH, FIFTH, AND SIXTH GRADE CLASSES

Grades	Average I.Q.	Average Voc.* Gain	Average Compr.+ Gain
4	108.0	0.62	0.41
5	112.5	0.92	0.30
6Z	111.0	0.49	-0.20
6Y	108.3	0.67	0.34

\*Voc. = vocabulary

+Compr. = comprehension

Few if any conclusions can be definitely established as a result of the information in Tables VI through X. It is noteworthy that in direct opposition to the thesis of this study, the students in class 6Z showed a general decrease rather than increase in reading comprehension according to this measurement. Students in 6Z with higher I.Q. scores appear to have benefited most in the gain in vocabulary while the students in the middle ranges of 6Y appear to have been more productive. Data for grades 4 and 5 do not appear to have predictive potential.

#### CHAPTER IV-SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ideally it should have been expected that these students as a group would have benefited more under individualized instruction than they had done under group instruction the previous year. The fact that the achievement test study does not yield predictable evidence of that gain might raise questions as to the validity of the tests used. Moreover it could raise questions about idealism in education. A realistic approach to the local situation leads to thoughts that perhaps the district testing program should be reviewed for adequacy of content measurement.

A review of the data collected from the Ginn tests suggests that the thesis may be acceptable but may require restatement. It may be assumed that those tests were designed specifically to measure the material which is taught in the Ginn 360 program. At best an achievement test can only be a sampling of the total learning experienced by the child.

A review of the achievement data presented in Chapter III would lead one to believe that the thesis of this paper was not acceptable.

By way of expansion, it is shown by student analysis

performed subsequent to these tables that there is a strong possibility these students may not have been tested under desirable test conditions. Thus it is suggested that further study may yet support the thesis.

A recommendation by this writer is that this reading program should be continued in its present context for another year and further data gathered on which to base a more thorough evaluation. It is suggested that, at least insofar as the elementary years are concerned, there should be a philosophy adopted which names every teacher as a teacher of reading.

Continuous attention should be directed toward gaining the full support of teachers associated with the program. In their contact with students they are each, individually, in a position to be either a positive or negative force on the future of such a project. Although this is felt to have been moderately achieved, there remains the probability that it can be improved and thus pave the way for a more quantifiable second year.

Specific effort should be exerted to the psychology of test administration. Attention should be given to placing the student in an appropriate frame of reference for optimum achievement prior to a testing cycle. Since there is no presently published test known to this writer

which is liable to be more effective in measuring the student's learning experience it is recommended that the present battery of tests be maintained but that search for more appropriate instruments be initiated along with a study of results obtained via the present tests.

A further recommendation is that all teaching personnel should be encouraged to seek further understanding of the principles of individualized instruction. We are told that academic success in most contemporary schools is directly related to reading ability. Thus it should then be apparent that life preparation of the district students must be closely related to the extent to which they are provided appropriate reading training in their early educational years.

Gillett informs us that teachers can make changes. He proposes establishment of a series of steps in the change process as

- (1) Determine what needs to be done;
- (2) Identify the groups or individuals who will support the change;
- (3) Identify those resistant to change;
- (4) Examine existing avenues for implementing the change; and
- (5) Resort to other effective measures. <sup>30</sup>

In the opinion of this writer 1 through 4 of the above have been achieved in the first year of operation in the Ginn 360 program. If thus far it has not been totally successful it may now be time to look at the possibility of change in gaining the support for change.

It was specifically noted during the final measurement that one of the students' favorite teachers felt a necessity for a general oral reprimand of a large portion of the student body. A presumption may be that the psychology of the situation predisposed many of the students to perform less well than they might have otherwise done.

It is hoped that future analysis of student results within this level reading instructional program will be more accurately measured. It should be possible to provide a student mental set on "test day" which will allow them to more completely display their gains.

Although the thesis of this study was not completely supported, it is recommended that the program be continued with definite administrative attention to development of positive attitudes in all teachers, parents, and students.

## APPENDIX A

September 5, 1972

Dear Parents,

This letter is for the purpose of explaining to you something about our new reading program that we are now beginning at Pesotum Grade School. This new program, published by Ginn and Company, is being used for the first time this year throughout Unit 7 Schools. Last year a committee of educators from Unit 7 studied a large variety of reading books from various publishing companies. This group decided on the materials from Ginn which were purchased for our use.

Your next question is probably how will we use these new materials and of what do they consist. At a special time each day we at the Pesotum Grade School will have reading. During this reading time we no longer have 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 6th grade teachers. They are all reading teachers. So it is possible for a 6th grader to be assigned to Mrs. Schroeder, our 1st grade teacher, for reading instruction. This does NOT mean that this 6th grader is in 1st grade again. He is simply reading from the materials that Mrs. Schroeder has been asked to teach.

Now you are probably wondering how we have decided where your child should go for reading instruction. Last spring all of our students were tested to see which materials they were ready to start to read in the fall. The results of these tests along with their classroom teachers evaluation of their performance during the 1971-72 school year were considered carefully before the individual student's reading assignment was made. If you child was new this fall in our district, he or she was tested last week to see where they should be placed.

On the first day of using the Ginn materials your child received a slip of paper informing his of what color his group was, <sup>and</sup> the name of his reading instructor. He then went to his assigned room for reading. A bell will ring at the close of the reading period and he will continue with his usual schedule.

## APPENDIX A (cont.)

This material was designed and assigned so that hopefully each child can succeed in his color group. When he has met the requirements and has accomplished the skills involved in the materials he is using, he may move on to another color group. Such movement can occur whenever during the school year, that his reading teacher feels that he has completed his work in his assigned color group. This should be a tremendous advantage to every child-for as they progress they can move on not having to wait until the school year is over or until their fellow class members are ready to go on to another more exciting book.

In addition to this advantage of moving forward as the individual child is ready to do so, this new program is considered to be very exciting and challenging. Its main goals are 1) decoding (which is the process of teaching the child to translate printed symbols in speech sounds); 2) grasping the author's meaning; and 3) critically assessing the author's message.

Maybe this brief description will answer some of your questions and give you some knowledge of what your children are taking to you about when they discuss their reading classes. If you have further questions please feel free to contact us.

Sincerely,

---



APPENDIX B  
 READING CLASS WORKSHEET  
 Ginn 360

Pesotum Attendance Center

Teacher's Name		Date	
Pupil's Name	Initial Assigned Level	Assigned Level After 2 Weeks	Comments
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
16.			
17.			
18.			
19.			
20.			

## APPENDIX C

## Ginn Reading Consultant

What should be done with children who are 8 or 9 years of age in groups 10 and 11 when their language skills are so poor that they can't spell or write well enough to keep up with 10 and 11 year olds? (I have two groups with children in each group who are doing very poorly with their language skills.

I have 30 minutes to spend with each group. Is that enough time when there are two groups in the room at the same time? I have 10 in group ten and 14 in group eleven.

Wouldn't it be better to have 24 in one group than to have two groups at the same time in the same room? (I'm sure that I could do a better job with one group although the group would be larger.)

How long should an average student remain in a given level?

How long should the reading period be when you are teaching two levels at the same time in the same room?

Why aren't the dittos complete--for instance in level seven "Concluding Activities"-- there are only two dittos out of 4 pages of activities--the rest the teacher must type herself.

If pupils should progress from level to level as soon as ready, do they fall in with the group in the higher level or start at the beginning? The latter course of action would require him to work individually and make an extra group for the teacher.

How well are pupils expected to do on evaluation pages to continue at a given level?

What are the possibilities of individualizing the material to be covered in the manual? It seems that much of the material to be presented to the student requires the presence of the teacher which seems to minimize this possibility.

Where children are tested and moved on, at what point do they go in the next level? If they are to start at the beginning, wouldn't a teacher soon have children at all different places?

## Ginn Reading Consultant-con't

If there are children at so many different places in a given level it would seem to render the situation unworkable because the material to be presented seems to require so much teacher presentation.

Or, is testing done at regular intervals (e.g., 3 weeks or 4 weeks) to eliminate some of this scattering?

How does one work with a child who tests high initially, leaving him with so few levels to go? For example, a boy in third grade scored and was placed in level 11. The boy has 4 gradeyears to go and only 11, 12, and 13 levels?

APPENDIX D

(letter)

66

SUBJECT: Reading 360

TO: Ginn Reading Consultant

FROM: Denise Cox, Principal of Pesotum Grade School

This is a short description of our Ginn 360 Reading Program since you won't be in our building prior to the assembly, October 4, 1972. As you visit the elementary schools in Unit 7, you will realize that we have a large range of unique situations existing as far as Ginn 360 is concerned. We vary accordingly in size of enrollment, number of teachers and their distribution, etc.

Here at Pesotum, our program is set up for 170 students. Each teacher except for the Kindergarten teacher has been given two levels with which to work. Reading is scheduled for one hour each day with students moving to different rooms according to their reading assignments. I see Ginn 360 as an opportunity for individualizing reading instruction; therefore to avoid "mass reading" as I will call it-- meaning everybody on the same page at the same time-- teachers were not assigned all of one large level nor were they assigned consecutive levels when it could be avoided. Hopefully students won't be exposed to so much repetition simply from being present in the classroom hearing others participate. I have attempted to encourage my teachers to be constantly re-evaluating their students. If the student is capable he should be moved forward instead of waiting simply because the rest of the class hasn't finished their materials or it is the wrong time of the year for movement.

I am handling the testing procedures to free my teachers so that they can concentrate on reading instruction. We have a system established where teachers refer a child to me for testing if the child in their opinion is ready to move forward or has been misplaced. All tests results are available in a central file. I am also doing the record keeping involved with such a file. I was afraid that my teachers would have been overloaded with record keeping. I see their role as that of instruction.

All things considered, I believe that my teachers are making a valiant attempt to do their best to give Reading 360 an opportunity to work as it is designed. Hopefully some of your suggestions will aid them in taking additional steps forward toward our goal of a more successful reading program.

APPENDIX E

INTRA-SCHOOL COMMUNICATIONS

\*\*\*\*\*

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: MISS COX

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Your reading assignment is the color \_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ is your reading teacher.

\*\*\*\*\*

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: MISS COX

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ has been assigned to your \_\_\_\_\_ group. \_\_\_\_\_ has successfully completed the materials in \_\_\_\_\_. Contact \_\_\_\_\_ if you would like further information on this child's reading experiences thus far.

\*\*\*\*\*

SUBJECT: READING ASSIGNMENT

TO: \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: MISS COX

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

Your reading tests indicate that you should remain in your present reading group until your reading teacher feels that you have gained enough strength in certain areas to make re-evaluation necessary. Please continue to do your best in reading.

\*\*\*\*\*

## Parents's Signature

## UNIT #7 SCHOOLS

Tolono, Ill.

Education requires cooperation and communication between home and school. Please feel free to request a conference with your child's reading teacher. Your signature signifies communication not necessarily your approval.

## READING PROGRESS REPORT

First Quarter: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

for

Parent Comments:

Second Quarter: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

1972-73

Parent Comments:

## Philosophy of Evaluation

Third Quarter: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Parent Comments:

Fourth Quarter: \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Parent Comments:

We believe that each child is unique and that learning must be adapted to meet his individual needs and abilities and to allow him to progress at his own rate and individual level of learning. In accordance with this belief we have initiated a reading program in which each child begins working at a level in which he can be successful; he then moves forward to more advanced material as he develops additional skill. It seems only fair, that each child whatever his abilities or talents, is entitled to recognition of his own achievements, regardless of the accomplishments of others. The method of reading evaluation used in Unit #7 is based on each child's own performance

PROPOSED AND APPROVED

APPENDIX F

TEACHER COMMENTS

First Quarter

Reading Teacher

\*\*\*\*\*

Second Quarter

Reading Teacher

\*\*\*\*\*

Third Quarter

Reading Teacher

\*\*\*\*\*

Fourth Quarter

Reading Teacher

\*\*\*\*\*

Quarter	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Level				
1. Uses Word Attack Skills				
2. Is Developing a Larger Voc.				
3. Reads Well Orally				
4. Reads with Understanding				
5. Uses Reference Skills				
6. Reads Library Materials				
7. Shows Continued Growth in Reading				
*****				
Pupil's Effort				
Parent-Teacher Conference Needed				

KEY

O=Outstanding  
S=Satisfactory

X=Does Not Apply  
N=Needs Improvement.

READING LEVELS

- Level 1-Learning about Sounds and Letters
- Level 2-My Sound and Word Book
- Level 3-A Duck is a Duck
- Level 4-Helicopters and Gingerbread
- Level 5-May I Come In?
- Level 6-Seven Is Magic
- Level 7-The Dog Next Door and Other Stories
- Level 8-How It Is Nowadays
- Level 9-With Skies and Wings
- Level 10-All Sorts of Things
- Level 11-The Sun That Warms
- Level 12-On the Edge
- Level 13-To Turn a Stone

TEACHER COMMENTS

APPENDIX F (cont.)  
Quarter

1st 2nd 3rd 4th

First Quarter

Level

1. Uses Word Attack Skills

2. Reads Well Orally

3. Reads with Understanding

\*\*\*\*\*

Parent-Teacher Conference Needed

Reading Teacher

\*\*\*\*\*

Second Quarter

KEY

E=Excellent  
G=Good

S=Satisfactory  
N=Needs Improvement

Reading Teacher

\*\*\*\*\*

Third Quarter

READING LEVELS

Level 1-Learning about Sounds and Letters

Level 2-My Sound and Word Book

Level 3-A Duck is a Duck

Level 4-Helicopters and Gingerbread

Level 5-May I Come In?

Level 6-Seven Is Magic

Level 7-The Dog Next Door and Other Stories

Level 8-How It Is Nowadays

Level 9-With Skies and Wings

Level 10-All Sorts of Things

Level 11-The Sun That Warms

Level 12-On the Edge

Level 13-To Turn a Stone

Reading Teacher

\*\*\*\*\*

Fourth Quarter

Reading Teacher

\*\*\*\*\*

APPROVED



## APPENDIX G

11/1/72

SIXTH GRADE POLL ON THE NEW READING PROGRAM HAD THESE RESULTS:

I like the new program because:

1. It is a lot easier than last year.
2. The work is not too hard nor too easy.
3. You get to move around and can stop to get a drink.
4. You don't get so tired of the same old teacher all day.
5. It is more enjoyable.
6. We get to put on a puppet show for the second grade.
7. It gives the little kids a chance to switch rooms.
8. The stories are more interesting.
9. Sometimes we do fun things like games.
10. It is more fun than having to listen to slow old readers.  
I like all the kids in my group.
11. It gives us an idea of what Jr. High is like.
12. I like it because my reading room is air-conditioned.
13. We get to read what we can read, not what we can't read.
14. I get better grades in it.
15. I think we should have started it a long time ago.
16. I like my reading teacher.
17. I learn more.
18. I learn things I never heard of before like similies and idiomatic expressions.
19. I like it because we read silently more.
20. I pay more attention to a different teacher.
21. We get to know how other teachers teach.

11/1/72

## SIXTH GRADE POLL (con't)

I do not like the new program because:

1. I don't like my reading teacher.
2. I am smarter than the others in my group and they won't retest me.
3. It is too much work-about five worksheets each day.
4. The other group won't be still.
5. I don't like to change rooms all of the time.
6. I lose my pencils and pens and get pushed around.
7. I don't like to draw pictures.
8. My reading room is hot most of the time.
9. I think reading should be in a child's own room so he won't feel bad.
10. We can't talk enough in my reading room.
11. We don't read aloud very much. It is mostly other work.
12. The teacher spends too much time with the other group. She thinks the "reds" are more important.





FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> McBeath, Marcia, "Teachers Who Individualize", Today's Education, Volume LXII, Number 4, (April, 1972), p. 43

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Cutts, Norma E & Mosley, Nicholas, Providing for Individual Differences, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1960.), pp. 1-3.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. pp. 4-11.

<sup>6</sup> Stahl, Dona K. and Anzalone, Patricia, Individualized Teaching in Elementary Schools, (West Nyack, New York: Parker Publishing Co., Inc., 1970), pp. 23-24.

<sup>7</sup> Silberman, Charles E., Crisis in the Classroom, (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. pp. 7-8

<sup>9</sup> Perkinson, Henry J., "Fallibilism: An Alternative for Now", The Educational Forum, Vol. XXXV, Number 2, (January, 1971).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Goodlad, John I., "The Schools vs. Education", Saturday Review of Literature, (April 19, 1969).

<sup>12</sup> Stenner, Jack, "Accountability by Public Demand", American Vocational Journal, (February, 1971), pp. 33-37

<sup>13</sup> Silberman, op. cit., p. 9

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21 Ibid, p.22.

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23 Ibid., pp. 24-26.

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25 De Witt, Gerald, "School Conflict Engulfs the School Principal", The North Central Association Quarterly, (1971), pp. 349-355.

26 McCloskey, Gordon: Education and Public Understanding, (New York: 1967), pp. 1-18.

27 Hoke, Fred A.: et. al. "How to Improve Community Attitudes", Phi Delta Kappan, (1971), pp. 30-32.

FOOTNOTES (cont.)

<sup>28</sup> "Teaching and Parents: Changing Roles and Goals", Childhood Education, (1971), pp. 114-118.

<sup>29</sup> Ruffin, Santee C., Jr.: "The Principal As A Communicator", NASSP Bulletin, (1972), pp. 33-38.

<sup>30</sup> Gillett, Thomas D., "Teachers Can Make Changes", Today's Education, (April, 1973), pp. 44-45.

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