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Reading comprehension: critical reading in the primary grades

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READING COMPREHENSION: CRITICAL READING
IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

CARDINAL STRITCH COLLEGE
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Milwaukee, Wisconsin

by

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(Advisor)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today we live in a space age, filled with technical revolution of television, radio, and motion picture where little emphasis is given to the media of the word, that is critical, thoughtful reading. According to Nila Banton Smith, "the most imminent danger of mass communication lies in its potency as a molder of public opinion."¹ This necessitates a strong emphasis on critical reading, listening, and thinking.

Statement of the Problem

It is with this in mind that the writer wishes to study through recent research and new materials the need for developing critical reading skills in the primary grades and to establish the necessity of it as an on-going process through the child's development.

¹Nila Banton Smith, Reading Instruction for Today's Children (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1963), p. 18.

Significance and Importance

It is hoped that teachers of the primary levels will find this survey an aid as they choose basal readers and gain a small insight into the "how" and "why" of just a facet of reading comprehension--critical reading. The writer also wishes to challenge teachers of primary level to teach the skills of critical reading, thus diminishing ". . . the fact that very little is being done to develop critical reading in the primary grades and that teachers have not learned to think and read critically themselves."²

Although the review of the literature in recent research and what experts have to say about critical reading in the primary grade levels is not copious, it is hoped the readers of this study will find some enlightenment on these reading skills of the highest level.

In the last decades notable for change in the teaching of reading on the primary level much emphasis has been given to decoding and the mechanics of reading. Critical reading has through these decades been regarded as necessary. Educators and authors have stressed the need of it in the intermediate, junior and senior high, and college level. However, not enough emphasis has been given in the primary level because "beginning instruction in critical reading has often been

²Nicholas P. Criscuolo, "A Plea for Critical Reading in the Primary Grades," Peabody Journal of Education, XLIII (September, 1965), p. 108.

reserved for the intermediate grades, and the ability to reason, question and judge starts before a pupil enters the intermediate grades."³

Limitations

This study is limited to the comparison of six reading programs which are of recent edition. The writer will survey the critical reading skills implemented in the series for the primary grade level.

Primary grade level as used here will include grades one, two, and three, with age groups six through eight years, or the more relevant meaning the beginning levels of the primary school.

In the review of the literature a survey will be made of the authors and experts of these programs, giving their view of the importance of critical reading on the primary level. A somewhat more brief and meager resume will be given on research not so recent, to ascertain the meaning of critical reading.

Definitions

Many researchers define critical reading using different approaches but in the final analysis they usually classify it as a skill in comprehension. Russell G.

³Ibid., p. 108.

Stauffer uses this description on critical reading.

Critical reading is a process of evaluation or categorization in terms of some previously accepted standards. It is a logical examination of writing that avoids the fallacies of judgments on an emotional basis. The test of critical reading is to take advantage of one's decision - compelling experiences, knowledge and values to examine a hypothesis to find proof and to examine the capabilities of an author.⁴

Critical reading invariably represents reading comprehension that involves the facts as presented in the selection and the use of high-level mental processes.⁵

After reading several definitions of critical reading and critical thinking, this writer finds that most authorities in recent years have arrived at a general consensus of opinion placing critical reading as a major heading under comprehension that involves the higher-level thinking skills.

⁴Russell G. Stauffer, Directing Reading Maturity as a Cognitive Process (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1969), p. 474.

⁵Elona E. Sochor, "The Nature of Critical Reading," Critical Reading an Introduction (Champaign: The National Council of Teachers of English, 1959), p. 3.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Current Research

It is apparent that "there are almost as many definitions of critical reading as there are people writing about it. Currently the term critical reading is popular and too inclusive. Perhaps so much so that it is regarded as blanket-like in its concept as the former general term, comprehension. Terms synonymous with critical reading are interpretive reading, evaluative reading, judgmental reading, selective reading, reading for meaning, and recreatory reading."¹

The similarities of terms: critical reading, critical thinking and creative thinking are used interchangeably. Much has been written and researched on critical reading within the last decade because of the important aspects. Some of the aspects most frequently cited are enumerated here:

ability to arrive at the author's main ideas; implies processes of evaluation and the reader's experiential background.

¹Catherine S. Boyan, "Critical Reading What is it? Where is it?" The Reading Teacher, Vol. 25, No. 6 (March, 1972), p. 517.

ability of the reader to analyze the material which he reads and questions the validity of inferences drawn.

ability in a predominately critical type to select and reject ideas, the relationship between ideas, and the organization of information.²

In searching and compiling the meager findings on critical reading on the primary level there is evidence that critical readers can be developed but that time and effort must be directed toward instruction for this purpose throughout the school years.

Research reiterates that critical reading is not taught in primary grades because teachers themselves are not critical readers. Donald Durrell states that "most of the critical thinking techniques are adapted to group or class discussion following reading. All oral work is more effective as the child has the chance to participate freely in a small group of peers. He reaffirms that children must be taught, for they do not become ready but must be readied."³

Marian Gray feels there has been little progress in developing critical reading in the elementary school, although thirty years of research has shown that elementary children

²Ibid., p. 517.

³Donald D. Durrell, Improving Reading Instruction (Yonkers-on-Hudson, New York: World Book Co., 1956), p. 307.

are capable of critical reading and critical thinking development.⁴

According to Dechant the teacher must lessen the difficulties of critical reading.

Knowledge of critical reading is not enough for its application. Training and guidance are necessary. To read critically the pupil must establish certain criteria. Without these criteria he cannot decide what is desirable and what is undesirable.⁵

Many articles, books and lectures laud critical reading and give reasons for its value but not much is offered in the way of direct help for the elementary, primary teachers. Emerald V. Dechant cites two teacher-authors. Huelsmann gives three ways of teaching critical reading:

the direct approach, the incidental approach and the functional approach.

William Kottmeyer experimented with a direct approach. Newspapers, magazines, editorials, and cartoons were read critically.⁶

A further explanation is given of the critical reader, who reads all materials in a questioning way, constantly

⁴Marian M. Gray, "Research and Elementary School Critical Reading Instruction," The Reading Teacher, Vol. 22, No. 5 (February, 1969), p. 453.

⁵Emerald V. Dechant, Improving the Teaching of Reading (2nd. ed., New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), p. 373.

⁶Ibid., p. 373.

asks, is not satisfied with simple statements, thinks with the writer, is sensitive to right and wrong, suspends judgment until the writer has finished his argument. He is consistent, logical, noble of motives, questions facts as true, and conclusions as correct.⁷

An overemphasis has been placed on critical reading or critical thinking as discerning propaganda or checking the factual validity of a statement. What is needed in content areas today is critical analysis defined as a process that involves taking the printed symbol and analyzing it with what the reader knows through actual or vicarious experiences and organizing data in terms of a meaningful set of ideas with which events or data are analyzed through the thinking process, and not stressing just factual memorization.⁸

"Typically, critical reading skills are taught (as is almost everything else) in a sequential and linear fashion which I believe is not only irrelevant but superficial. Howards goes on to say that real meaning exists, not in the words in print but in the spaces between the words and in those unique spaces between a reader as a whole person and the writer as a whole person in a world in which many

⁷Ibid., p. 373.

⁸James A. Dinnan, "Critical Analysis Versus Critical Reading," (Paper presented at the National Reading Conference, Atlanta, Georgia, December, 1969), p. 6. MF ED 040 005.

things occur simultaneously not in sequential or linear fashion."⁹

Critical reading is considered a verbal task. And yet, critical reading should be a blend of the nonverbal and the verbal, for it should be the total immersion of the reader in what is being read. The essence of critical reading is seeing relationships, sensing moods, and tone and being able to bring to bear on all reading situations, verbal and nonverbal, a total awareness of what is occurring.¹⁰

But, ". . . they have learned too well, starting in grade one, that one focuses on specific skills, specific formation, and facts, and that one never gets to the overall, the gestalt, view of what an author is saying."¹¹

Classrooms can become incubators for critical reading only if the teacher is so sensitized and willing to let learning and thinking occur in global, nonsequential, and nonlinear ways.¹²

Basal Authors

Albert J. Harris, senior author of the MacMillan Reading Program, in his review of recent trends in basal readers, states these three trends:

⁹Melvin Howards, "The Conditions for Critical Reading," Fusing Reading Skills and Content, ed. H. Alan Robinson, Ellen Lamar Thomas, International Reading Association (Newark, Delaware, 1969), p. 171.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 172.

¹¹Ibid., p. 172.

¹²Ibid., p. 173.

The first is the insistence of some writers that, in the early stages of reading instruction, decoding should be stressed and comprehension should be soft-pedaled.

A second trend in objectives is increased attention to critical reading and to the development of creative thinking through reading.

A third trend is toward the reformulation of objectives into behavioral terms. A behaviorally objective specifies the particular behavior that a pupil has to display in order to show mastery of it. The emphasis is on what the teacher does to elicit this behavior.¹³

That critical reading is a vital concern he further discusses it as "an important type of critical reading, which involves a comparison of two or more sources of information."¹⁴

"Children are usually amazed when for the first time they find two authorities contradicting each other. An experience like that can serve as preliminary to discussion of such questions as the reputation and prestige of each author, his impartiality or bias, . . ."¹⁵

Marjorie Seddon Johnson, author of *The Read Series*, claims that "from their first contacts with children, teachers must be thinking of not only readiness for any reading, but also readiness for critical or evaluative reading which leads to improved action on the part of the reader."¹⁶

¹³Albert J. Harris, "New Dimensions in Basal Readers," The Reading Teacher, Vol. 25, No. 4 (January, 1972), p. 311.

¹⁴Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (5th ed. New York: David McKay Company, 1970), p. 431.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 431.

¹⁶Marjorie Seddon Johnson, "Readiness for Critical Reading," Critical Reading, ed. Martha L. King, Bernice D. Ellinger, and Willavene Wolf (New York: J.B.Lippincott Co., 1967), p. 208.

In The Read System, Marjorie Seddon Johnson concisely states her philosophy:

Because language is the medium of communication in reading, the effective reader must have a sensitivity to its structure and an understanding of the significance of its varied uses. He not only must be able to decode the visual symbols on the printed page, but he also needs to appreciate the symbols as representing the oral language in which he is already quite secure. He must be aware of the meaningful elements of his experience and the relationships among them.¹⁷

It is very obvious that stress is put on comprehension, as the higher level, critical ability.

He must develop a wide range of comprehension abilities to enable him to manipulate ideas in a purposeful manner, understand the import of what the author has written, and evaluate the results of his reading. Finally, in order to be a truly mature reader, he must come to the point at which he spontaneously and independently charts his own course for reading any given piece of material, applies the abilities which are appropriate to follow that course, and evaluate the effectiveness of the job he has done.¹⁸

Dr. Leo Fay, Dr. Margaret LaPray, Dr. William E.

Hoth, and other coauthors of The Young America Basic Reading Program hold that "mature reading is thinking, not just decoding. The best time to introduce critical reading is in the first six grades."¹⁹

¹⁷Marjorie Seddon Johnson, Roy A. Kress, et al. Each and All, Teacher's Annotated Edition (Cincinnati, Ohio: American Book Co., 1971), p. iii.

¹⁸Ibid., p. iii.

¹⁹Dr. Leo Fay, Dr. Margaret LaPray, et al., "Reading for Young America," Critical Reading, Monograph (Chicago: Lyons and Carnahan, 1972), p. 1.

Critical thinking skills are emphasized, putting critical reading on a parallel because:

One of the values our society is based upon is that of the primacy of reason. It is based on reason in two ways: the technology which makes us powerful is the product of reason; the democratic process presupposes that the individual can think for himself and make intelligent choices. If he cannot think effectively for himself, he will find that his choices are made for him "experts", and democracy will have been lost.²⁰

"The ability to reason is innate in every normal child, but too often it is stifled rather than developed."²¹

Paul R. Daniels, coauthor with Dr. Leo Fay, maintains that "our goal in reading instruction should be the development in children of an attitude that reading helps solve some of life's daily problems."²²

To accomplish this goal, children must be helped to manipulate the ideas and the language that express these ideas as they are found in books. This is, of course, comprehension. Through the questioning process, learning can be encouraged and thought processes extended.

The five-step progression of these processes seems to be: (1) factual recognition, (2) factual recall, (3)

²⁰Ibid., p. 4.

²¹Ibid., p. 4.

²²Paul R. Daniels, The Art of Questioning, Young America Basic Reading Program, Monograph (Chicago: Lyons and Carnahan, 1972), p. 4.

justifying another's inference, (4) making an inference, (5) making and justifying an inference.²³

It must never be forgotten, however, "that eventually each child must do this for himself. Setting the stage for the procedure and purpose is designed only to lead the child more and more to do this independently."²⁴

William K. Durr in his research as author of The Houghton Mifflin Reading Program says:

Since the ability to read with literal comprehension has sometimes been found to be relatively independent of the ability to read critically we cannot assume that critical reading skills will automatically develop without direct instruction in those skills.²⁵

He answers his question, how research shows that elementary children can be taught to read critically.

An extensive study has shown that they can learn critical reading abilities. Teaching children to apply logical reasoning to printed materials not only significantly increases their abilities to read critically; it does so without interfering with their growth in other basic reading skills. Both boys and girls of all intelligence levels show superior achievement in critical reading skills as a result of instruction.²⁶

Doctor Theodore Clymer, senior author of The Reading 360 Series, states his philosophy in a rather broad but graphic way when

²³Ibid., p. 4.

²⁴Ibid., p. 4.

²⁵William K. Durr, Sound Research Behind the Houghton Mifflin Readers, Monograph (Chicago: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1972), p. 8.

²⁶Ibid., p. 8.

he says, "reading is decoding; reading is understanding the author's message; reading is critical evaluation and reading is using ideas."²⁷

The writer here cites the author's explanation that reading is critical evaluation.

Recently a third aspect of reading has been incorporated more extensively into instructional materials: The critical evaluation of the author's message. This goal of a reading program is some times defined as inferential comprehension. The modern viewpoint maintains that it is not enough for children to understand the author's message, to "read the lines"; they must also be provided with instruction which enables them to assess critically the message of the author, Inferential comprehension is achieved by the student when he uses his personal experiences and judgment in understanding and evaluating the information and ideas explicitly stated by the author.²⁸

Mabel O'Donnell and eleven coauthors of Design for Reading, have adapted their philosophy to the series placing importance on a well-thought-out balance of decoding and comprehension skills. ". . . comprehension is taught through teacher-pupil questions and stimulating, interesting story content. Inferences are evoked and pupil involvement calls for critical reading ability."²⁹

²⁷Theodore Clymer, "What is Reading?" How It Is Nowadays, Teacher's Annotated Edition (Arlington Heights, Illinois: Ginn and Company, 1969), p. 6.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 6-7.

²⁹Mabel O'Donnell, Design For Reading, A Summary of Features in 1972, Monograph, Harper and Row's 1972 Reading Program (Evanston, Illinois: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 4.

The authors of this series are aware of the need for critical reading, and realize the "growing sense of social pluralism in our schools warranted changes in text and graphic content that would effectively mirror the cultural diversity of the American population."³⁰

All the authors quoted find critical reading necessary but A. Sterl Artley, author of the Scott Foresman Reading Systems, holds a very definite principle.

The teaching of critical reading begins when the child begins to read. In fact, on the readiness level as the child is interpreting pictures and picture sequences, the teacher poses questions that stimulate critical reactions. Through this he is developing a readiness to read critically word symbols.³¹

In the Reading Systems, A. Sterl Artley et al., tell us that learning to read is an extension of a child's natural language development, "thus children are taught critical reading and study skills as they acquire comprehension strategies and learn to adjust these strategies to many kinds of reading tasks."³²

³⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

³¹ A. Sterl Artley, "Critical Reading in the Content Areas," Critical Reading: An Introduction, ed. Elona Sochor, et al., National Council of Teachers of English (Champaign, Illinois, 1959), p. 20.

³² A. Sterl Artley, Manual Level 4, Scott Foresman Reading Systems (Glenview, Illinois: Scott Foresman and Co., 1971), p. 28.

Experts on Critical Reading

There isn't a wealth of research on critical reading in the primary levels and not much more for the upper elementary levels. However, an effort is made here to quote some of the more recent experts in the field of critical reading skills.

Robert Karlin finds some problems and some conclusions.

One of the problems in teaching critical reading has to do with the learner and the influence of teaching upon him. A second problem revolves around the issue of determining what kind of attitudes shall be fostered by the schools and who has the ultimate responsibility for deciding which these shall be.³³

Several conclusions have been reached: (1) Some children have learned to think critically before entering school, (2) Critical reading has its earliest beginnings in the primary grades, (3) The level of critical reading achieved is controlled not so much by the nature of the process as it is by the experiences of the reader and his ability to deal with them.³⁴

Here is a summary of the problems and conclusions.

To read critically is to read intelligently. Evidence which has been accumulated over the years reveals that such reading does not occur through osmosis nor does it result from chance. Efforts to develop this ability must be made by each teacher at every level of instruction. Only determined teachers can alter the reading behavior of students by helping each to become a thoughtful, careful, and critical reader.³⁵

³³Robert Karlin, "Sequence in Thoughtful and Critical Reaction to What is Read," Critical Reading, ed. Martha King, Bernice D. Ellinger, and Willavene Wolf (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1967), p. 177.

³⁴Ibid., p. 197.

³⁵Ibid., p. 182.

Edgar Dale regards critical reading as "an involving, and participatory experience, as independent reading, problem-centered, analytical and judgmental, creative, imaginative, non-conformist, and appreciative. He further classifies a critical reader as sensitive to words, a reader who remembers, a disciplined reader, and a reader who associates with the best minds of all generations."³⁶

Helen Huus finds that "Creative reading calls into play the child's imagination, his flow of ideas, his ability to see comparisons where no obvious one exists, to relate what he is reading to his own peculiar background of remembered activities, and to make the new learning so much his own that it has always seemed a part of him. The skills of critical reading require skills of synthesis, and organization, and interpretation."³⁷

It is an interesting statement made by David Russell that "critical reading does not exist in a vacuum by itself but can be thought of best as closely related to critical thinking, that some children have acquired abilities in critical thinking before they enter school. Critical thinking depends less upon specific techniques and more upon attitude and experience. Critical

³⁶ Edgar Dale, "The Critical Reader," Critical Reading, ed. Martha L. King, Bernice Ellinger, Willavene Wolf (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1967), p. 26.

³⁷ Helen Huus, "Critical and Creative Reading," Critical Reading, ed. Martha L. King, Bernice Ellinger, Willavene Wolf (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1967), p. 88.

thinking activities begin in the primary grades not with the "rational" adult."³⁸

According to Helen M. Robinson "critical reading is the judgment of the veracity, validity, or worth of what is read, based on sound criteria or standards developed through previous experience."³⁹

She further states that "critical reading is one of the least understood, and most elusive of the reading skills and abilities. At the same time critical reading is reported to be basic to appreciation of literature, to arriving at sound conclusions concerning personal and social problems, to scientific investigation . . . preschool children are capable of critical thinking before they read, thus self-understanding of biases and an independent inquiring attitude may contribute to continued development of critical reading throughout life."⁴⁰

Walter B. Barbe emphasizes the fact that "critical reading should be taught as a formal reading skill". He

³⁸David H. Russell, "The Prerequisite Knowing How to Read Critically," Critical Reading, ed. Martha L. King, Bernice Ellinger, Willavene Wolf (New York: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1967), p. 136.

³⁹Helen M. Robinson, "Developing Critical Readers," Dimensions of Critical Reading, ed. Russell G. Stauffer, Proceedings of the Annual Education and Reading Conferences, Vol. XI (Newark, Delaware: University of Delaware, 1964), p. 1.

⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 10-11.

also cautions teachers "to demonstrate to the students that 'critical' does not necessarily mean 'negative'". Too often students have the feeling that when they are expected to criticize something, they must say what is bad about it. More than merely getting likes or dislikes, agreements or disagreements, require answers to such questions as, "Why do you like or dislike it?" or "Why do you agree or disagree with it?"⁴¹

Many writers and educators refer to critical reading as the "higher order comprehension". Richard W. Burnett makes a good point when he says "Classroom teachers should give considerable attention to the nature of the questions they use to direct reading activities of their pupils, since questioning appears to have the greatest impact on the outcomes of reading. The challenge to develop capable readers, confident in their ability to understand and critically evaluate what they read, has never been greater."⁴²

Josephine Piekarz reports and states a definite opinion on critical readers.

Critical readers are those who, in addition to identifying facts and ideas accurately as they read, engage in interpretive and evaluative thinking. They project the literal

⁴¹Walter B. Barbe, Educator's Guide to Personalized Reading Instruction (14th printing, Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), pp. 206-207.

⁴²Richard W. Burnett, "Research and Reading Comprehension: Implications for the Elementary Teacher," Reading Methods and Teacher Improvement, ed. Nila B. Smith, (Delaware: International Reading Association, 1971), p. 48.

meanings of what they read against their own background of experience, information, and knowledge, reasoning with and reacting to the stated facts and implied ideas. Noncritical readers, on the other hand, are those who restrict their thinking to the identification of the clearly stated facts and accept these facts literally . . . critical reading is the most difficult of all reading skills to teach.⁴³

"Critical reading cannot be done without knowledge. Through knowledge, the reader is able to make the comparisons and judge the relevance. If the knowledge on which judgments are made is not valid, the conclusions will not be either." Miles V. Zintz goes on to say that "social studies programs offer teachers excellent chances to develop critical reading skills . . . detecting emotionally charged words that tend to bias the reader are all tasks of the critical reader. Teaching critical reading skills is possible only with adequate library resources."⁴⁴

In summarizing this chapter, the writer finds that current research, the experts, and authors of basal readers all realize the need of critical reading, but current research does not offer too much at the upper elementary level and very little at the lower elementary level. This

⁴³Josephine Piekarz, "The Improvement of Critical Reading Skills," Problem Areas in Reading--Some Observations and Recommendations (Coleman Morrison, Editor, Oxford Press, Inc., Providence, Rhode Island, 1966), p. 5.

⁴⁴Miles V. Zintz, The Reading Process--The Teacher and the Learner (5th printing, Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1972), pp. 246-247.

then would leave it up to the experts and authors of the basal readers to find ways and means of presenting materials for the early elementary levels here and now. It is hoped that Chapter III of this paper in its survey of six basal readers of the early 1970 editions will be able to provide helpful aids for the teacher's use at the early levels.

This chapter has given an explanation of what critical reading is and what it is not. It is hopeful that the "how" and "when" of critical reading will be clarified in the following chapter.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPING CRITICAL READING SKILLS

Plan of Study

To this writer it was encouraging to find that the authors of the six basal reader series surveyed in this chapter all have the same basic philosophy. The definitions for reading are not concise but appear to be broad. Doctor Theodore Clymer pleasingly refers to his definition of reading as broad, but it serves to focus attention on the main underlying requirements fundamental to reading, which are decoding, understanding the author's message, a critical evaluation, and using ideas.¹

In this comparative study it was obvious that the authors were cognizant that the pace of technological and social change quickens, the schools are challenged as never before to prepare youngsters for a world that does not yet exist and a future only partly predictable.

¹Theodore Clymer, "What Reading Is," An Overview Reading 360 (Arlington Heights: Ginn and Co., 1971), p. 6.

Within the last decade decoding has been stressed to recognize numbers of words, and it overshadowed meaning. A child who sounds out words but does not understand them is not reading; who derives only literal meaning from the printed page and does not see implied ideas is not reading; who reads related ideas as isolated phenomena and cannot see how they form a whole is not reading.²

These six recently revised basal readers still use decoding, with a welcome emphasis placed on inferential comprehension, but the modern view point maintains that it is not enough for children to understand the author's message to "read the lines" but must also be provided with instruction which enables them to assess critically the message of the author, to "read between the lines."

Survey of Basal Readers

The Young America Basic Reading Program--authored by Dr. Leo Fay, Dr. Ramon Royal Ross, and other co-authors--places a definite stress on Critical Thinking Activities and Critical Reading as described in the Series' Scope and Sequence Chart on the Primary Level. Primary Level or Level as used throughout this survey is equivalent to the traditional grades one through three. Concepts in Comprehension Skills

²Dr. Leo Fay, et al. Reading for Young America, Monograph (Chicago: Lyons and Carnahan, 1972), p. 2.

begin with Interpretation subdivided into Literal and Creative Skills. The skills are further developed by using Critical Thinking through the media of Character Analysis, Logical and Inferential Thinking, Seeing Relationships and Literary and Language Skills.

The Young America Basic Reading Program--
Development of Comprehension and Critical
Reading Skills

Level 1

Readiness

Develop ability to recognize words and sentences through picture clues.
Practice completing sentences and rhymes and develop a basic recognition of sequential order.
Develop ability to think logically and interpretively.
Recognize that many words have opposites.
To make simple inferences.
To distinguish between fantasy and reality.
Develop listening skills, noting the effect of intonation.
Discuss pictures, poems, and stories.

Level 2 - 4

Preprimers

These levels introduce children to the world of reading through stories emphasizing one-to-one relationships; a boy to his pet, to his mom and dad, and to individuals who enter his world.
Understand the function of the Contents page.
Develop awareness of types of books: anthologies: single-storybooks; realistic, humorous, animal, picture books.
Understand differences between monologue and dialogue.
Summarize main events and characters of the book as preparation for reading future stories.
Practice recall of content as a basis for inferential thought.
Identify and understand the main ideas of a story.
Identify speakers through context.
Perceive characters' moods through their statements and actions.
Grasp concepts of cardinal directions, map and globe reading, paragraphs, time.

Use imagination and inference to predict story outcome.

Develop respect for others through awareness of what they do.

Understand social responsibilities of community and volunteer helpers and oneself.

Learn to analyze characters through their statements and actions.

Assess illustrations and note how they add to the development of the story.

Speculate about future events within and without the story.

Solve riddles and puzzles.

Form alternative conclusions and solutions to stories in the text.

Note how illustrations correspond to story content.

Relate human emotions to those of animals.

Understand word meaning through context.

Understand the meaning and nature of symbols.

Understand the importance of syntax.

Level 5 - 6

First Grade

Analyze characters' moods through their facial expressions.

Analyze characters' motives through an understanding of their personalities.

Use inductive thinking to arrive at the identity of a thing through knowledge of its attributes.

Determine relevance of data through factual recall.

Relate events in the story to personal experience.

Become aware of the differences between fact and fiction.

Perceive the relationship between personality and action.

Perceive the relationship between title and content.

Recognize relationships and similarities between stories.

Level 7 - 10

Second and Third Grade

Practice arriving at logical conclusions.

Deal with prejudice by examining the object of prejudice.

Understand the significance of logical sequence of events.

Understand humor in story situations.

Acquire practice in understanding figurative language.

Determine which events in an excerpt are logical and relevant.

Analyze abstract ideas such as fear and magic.

Find appropriate terms to convey specified concepts.

Learn to support personal opinion through a kind of argumentation.

Practice reasoning deductively by arriving at conclusions not specifically stated in situations.

Evaluate the practicality of ideas.

Analyze fact within a fictional framework.

Understand differences between generalities and specifics.

Analyze qualities of direct answers and acquire practice in answering directly.

Analyze stereotyped ideas.

Acquire practice in recognizing and understanding author's opinions.

Continue use of research skills and a variety of information sources: articles read by the teacher, information from guest speakers, a class trip, or personal experience, independent reading in general reference books and special subject books.

Continue with selections illustrating various literary forms and review literary forms; factual articles, drama, poetry, fairy tales, and fiction.

Extend ability to list and categorize information.

Continue to practice using the dictionary, concentrating on working with dictionary respellings.³

The following is an example of how the authors hope to attain their objective.

Children are encouraged to think not only about characters and events in stories that may be far from their experience but, they are asked also to think about important matters that affect their lives and everybody's life. They are asked to think about and talk about the environment and how it is affected by things they see people do every day:

³Dr. Leo Fay, Scope and Sequence Chart--The Young America Basic Reading Program (Chicago: Lyons and Carnahan, 1972).

Mrs. Jones throws garbage in the alley. Mr. Jones drives to work. Jimmy Jones throws paper on the street. Mr. Green burns paper in his yard. Mr. Smith goes hunting. . . .⁴

Other activities at Levels 9 and 10 involve reading newspapers critically, asking critical questions, distinguishing fact from opinion, checking evidence, and being aware of bias.⁵

Dr. Theodore Clymer, senior author of Reading 360, and E. Paul Torrance, who is widely recognized as a pioneer and a leading authority in developing the creative potential tells us that "it is not enough to read and react critically to the author's ideas, the ideas that pass the critical tests of the reader's scrutiny must become a part of the reader's thinking and actions."

Although Reading 360 has a strong, systematic, linguistically--sound word--study program based on the phonemic and structural features of American English, it is designed to develop creativity--sometimes through specific exercises, sometimes by the captivating visuals, sometimes by leaving things unsaid.

The skills enumerated here show at what Level in the program they are formally introduced and how there is continued practice in succeeding Levels.

⁴Dr. Leo Fay, et al. Summary of Critical Thinking Activities as Developed in the Teacher's Editions, Monograph (Chicago: Lyons and Carnahan, 1972), p. 2.

⁵Ibid., p. 2.

Reading 360 Development of Comprehension
and Critical Reading Skills

Level 1

A Kit of Readiness

Recognizes sequence.
Uses picture clues.
Recognizes and recalls details.
Uses pantomime to express moods and actions.
Predicts from limited information.

Level 2

Discovers that words can be combined into sentences.
Demonstrates ability to read sentences with picture clues.
Associates picture clues with specific words and sentences.
Predicts, anticipates outcomes.
Draws conclusions from use of clues.
Identifies the speaker and his message.

Level 3

Interprets motives, behavior, feelings, reactions of story characters.
Recognizes cause-and-effect relationships.
Uses picture clues to supplement information.
Recognizes the significance of graphic art.
Infers character traits from actions, words, events.
Recognizes the main idea or infers it.
Infers cause-and-effect relationships.
Uses clues to supply missing information.
Infers meanings.
Estimates the time for action to take place.
Observes details to establish the setting.
Makes judgments of reality or fantasy.
Reads and follows directions.
Compares words that have similar meanings.
Summarizes information and writes a story.

Level 4

Visualizes inferred action.
Uses clues to indicate lapse of time.
Makes comparisons.

Classified information, ideas.
 Recognizes realistic and fanciful aspects of a story.
 Compares story elements in various versions of an
 old folk tale.
 Recognizes and makes analogies.

Level 5

Finds details to support a conclusion or a generaliza-
 tion.
 Recalls the sequence of steps in a process.
 Notices the sequence of the introduction of charac-
 ters in a story.
 Considers the literal meanings of the names of games.
 Notes the specialized meanings of common words.
 Makes judgments about events in a story.
 Compares personal experiences with those of story
 characters.
 Reads to discover the outcome of a problem situation.
 Recognizes family customs and relationships in a story,
 compares with personal experiences.
 Proposes possible or alternative solutions to problems.

Level 6

Uses imagination to predict alternative outcomes.
 Can remember and classify events.
 Can list items in order.
 Infers details not stated in the story.
 Knows the importance of accuracy in reporting obser-
 vations.
 Realizes that scientists make guesses but do not
 state conclusions until much careful experimenting
 is done.
 Relates objects and characters with phrases which
 describe action.
 Sees how typographical technique can affect meaning.
 Is able to locate and state details of sequence.
 Understands hidden meanings.
 Is able to remember directions.
 Identifies ideas that do not belong.
 Analyzes ambiguities and uncertainties.

Level 7

Understands that conclusions drawn from assumptions
 may be inaccurate.
 Can predict outcomes on the basis of altered circum-
 stances.

Can draw inferences about the credibility of an illustrated situation.
 Notices the difference between what is actually said in a story and what is implied.
 Can summarize paragraph details.
 Can make inferences from clues related to probable experiences.
 Responds to situations requiring decisions.
 Is aware that personal experiences affect emotional response to content.
 Is able to distinguish between realistic and unrealistic solutions to problems.
 Has acquired insight into the steps involved in solving a problem.
 Understands that personal feelings differ among individuals.
 Draws inferences from comparisons in a story.
 Recalls comparisons in a story.
 Locates information in a story.
 Interprets the lesson implied in fables.
 Makes judgments of adequacy.
 Uses synonyms to make more interesting reading.
 Substantiates statements as fact or opinion.
 Can determine the relevancy of subordinate ideas to the main idea.

Level 8

Understands story concepts.
 Understands the four cardinal directions.
 Can incorporate details.
 Can express a sequence of events in comic strip form.
 Discriminates between true and false statements based on story content.
 Follows written directions.
 Recalls story facts and records them in outline form.
 Can associate characters' names with specific details.

Level 9

Recalls story settings.
 Creates subtitles for stories.
 Enjoys jokes, limericks and riddles.
 Forms judgments about a story.
 Can conceptualize in order to state common meanings.

Level 10

Reads non-fiction material with understanding.
 Recognizes phrases which tell how, when, where.
 Infers plot development.
 Applies factual knowledge to creative writing.

The above Levels 1 to 10 included are primary. These are applicable in a graded and in a non-graded program.⁶

Harper & Row Design for Reading

The Harper & Row Design for Reading authored by co-authors, Mabel O'Donnell, Lois R. Lemley and other co-authors, is patterned in twenty levels. Levels 1 through 12 are designed for the primary levels or more conservatively for grades one through three. Critical Reading in the programmed studies in the Language Arts is stressed in Levels 19 and 20, grades seven and eight. This concludes that Critical Reading in the primary Level is categorized under Comprehension, leaving much for the teacher to develop in Critical Reading.

Skills listed here are broadly applied to all levels of the primary, with details listed in the teacher's manuals as the reading and development level is found in the text.

⁶Dr. Theodore Clymer, E. Paul Torrance, Reading 360 Development of Skills (Arlington Heights: Ginn and Co., 1972), pp. 21-25. (Brochure of these skills unpublished at this writing. Preliminary work of this received through the courtesy of Miss Raymonde Pelland.)

Design for Reading Comprehension Skills
grouped "notionally"

Levels 1 - 3

Readiness

Based on Piaget's findings concerning the intellectual development of four-, five-, and six-year olds.

Seriation skills and oral language development.

Use of the story-building kit for language development and in thinking skills.

Builds awareness of printed language, while at the same time extending growth in relating, classifying, and seriating.

Levels 4 - 5 - 6

Preprimers

Simple fact recognition--knowledge of specifics.

Skimming and discussion to develop the ability to make a simple oral statement indicating his idea of what the story-unit is about.

Levels 7 - 12

Further development of Specifics--Main idea, Details, Sequence, Recall, Word meaning, Context, Sentence Meaning.

Relational Knowledge

Classification--identify and group characters, events, concepts, and objects as they belong to a particular class, and suggest new members of that class.

Comparison--comparison and contrasting of particular classes of things, comparison and contrasting individual members of the particular classes.

Relationships

Identify relationships among story characters, concepts and objects and events.

Cause/Effect to identify group, and seriate characters, events, concepts, and objects as they function in a cause and effect situation.

Part-Whole to identify, group, and seriate characters, events, concepts, and objects as they function in a part-whole situation.

Size, Time, Space.

Relating illustrations to the text.

Generalization.

Summarizing.

Inferential Knowledge

Characterization, Forecast, Foreshadowing,
Conclusions, Inference, Judgment.

Affective Knowledge

Empathy, Personal Reaction, Personal Evaluation,
Relating Previous Knowledge.

The format of the lesson plans in the Teacher's
Manual note all skills taught in marginal notation.⁷

The Houghton Mifflin Reading Program

Designing The Houghton Mifflin Reading Program has
been the work of Dr. William Durr, the two coordinating
authors, and a group of advisory authors. The understandings
and skills essential to the achievement of Behavioral Ob-
jectives 1 and 2 are nearly all introduced and mastered
in the Primary Levels of the program, namely: Decoding
and Comprehension Skills.

Sequence of Skills and Understanding
Literal Comprehension Skills Introduced
at this Level and continued

Level 3A - 3C

Preprimer

Reading to follow directions.
Reading for Details.
Noting Correct Sequence.
Using Punctuation Marks.
Recognizing Pronoun and Adverb Referents.
Understanding Sentence Structure.
Getting the Main Idea.

⁷Mabel O'Donnell, et al., Patterns in Design for Reading
(Evanston: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972), p. 1.

Drawing Conclusions and Making Inferences.
 Making Generalizations.
 Relating One's Reading to One's Experiences.
 Evaluating Author's Qualifications.
 Using Table of Contents.
 Deciding on Paragraph Topics.
 Understanding and Appreciating Poetry.

Level 4 - 5

First Grade 1 - 1¹

Using Special Type.
 Distinguishing Between Fiction and Nonfiction.
 Recognizing Elements in a Play.
 Reading Maps.
 Recognizing and Evaluating Author's Choice of Words.

Level 6 - 7

Second Grade 2 - 2¹

Using Context to Get Meaning (of words).
 Using Context to Get Meaning (of figures of speech).
 Using Affixes to Get Meaning.
 Getting the Meaning of Compound Words.
 Recognizing Different Types of Fiction.
 Recognizing Story Elements: plot, setting, characters, theme.
 Visualizing Important Story Elements.
 Recognizing and Evaluating Author's Use of Nonliteral Language.
 Using Context to Get Meaning (of idioms).
 Distinguishing Between Fantasy and Realism.
 Recognizing Different Types of Nonfiction.

Level 8 - 9

Third Grade 3 - 3¹

Using a Dictionary to Get Meaning (of words).
 Locating Words in a Dictionary.
 Recognizing Different Types of Poetry.
 Identifying Author's Point of View.

The Houghton Mifflin Reading Program does not emphasize Critical Reading at the Primary Level. It prepares the pupil for critical reading which is stressed on Level 10

(Fourth Grade), at sixth grade level an entire paper back book of fourteen lessons and achievement tests in the Reading Skills Lab is given to Critical Reading.⁸

The Macmillan Reading Program

The Macmillan Reading Program for the Primary Grades (Harris/Clark) has a broad and comprehensive set of objectives, as can be seen in the Outline of Behavioral Objectives: decoding, with much attention given to the development and sharpening of comprehension skills, both literal and inferential, with more emphasis on evaluative, critical reading in the intermediate levels.

Chart of Skills in the Macmillan Reading Program

Level 1 - 2

Readiness

Developing awareness of sequence in picture stories.
 Recognizing and recalling sequence in picture and printed stories.
 Following the sequence of related stories.
 Identifying words that relate a main story idea through self-help reference.
 Interpreting story characters through pictures and discussion.
 Predicting outcomes through discussion of pictures and stories.
 Recalling story details.
 Noting specific details in illustrations.
 Understanding the language patterns becoming familiar with syntactic cues.

⁸Dr. William Durr, et al., Behavioral Objectives: Sequence of Skills and Understandings (Geneva: Houghton, Mifflin, 1971).

Using more complex language patterns by adding
 modifying words and phrases.
 Developing independence in study through use of
 self-help references.
 Hearing and following oral directions.
 Learning to handle a book.
 Learning to follow oral directions through use of
 self-help references.
 Recalling sequence in a picture story.
 Discussing the main ideas of a picture story.

Levels 3 - 7 Preprimer Primer First Reader

Recognizing and recalling events of time and place
 in sequence.
 Recognizing the cause-effect relationship.
 Seeing time and place relationships.
 Relating stories to a central theme.
 Recognizing the main idea in a story.
 Interpreting a title as a clue to the main story idea.
 Identifying supporting details.
 Relating supporting details to the main idea.
 Determining the main topic of a page or paragraph.
 Learning that words can have overtones of meaning
 as well as literal meanings.
 Making inferences from given facts.
 Interpreting story facts by finding answers to
 specific questions.
 Supplying implied conversation.
 Making deductions from given facts.
 Evaluating actions and ethical problems of story
 characters.
 Interpreting emotions and attitudes of story char-
 acters.
 Predicting outcomes and checking the predictions by
 reading.
 Distinguishing fact and fantasy.
 Evaluating relationship of material to a specific
 topic.
 Evaluating story title.
 Interpreting figurative language through hidden
 meanings and figures of speech.
 Reading silently for main summarizing ideas.
 Improving comprehension through silent reading of
 entire selections.
 Reading for details.
 Locating specific information.
 Reading to prove a point.
 Skimming to find answers to specific questions and
 story parts.

Developing understanding of fictional plots.
 Recognizing humor.
 Using the table of contents to find stories.
 Understanding and formulating tables of contents.
 Reading independently in library and supplementary readers.
 Learning to follow written directions through use of self-help references.
 Reading directions independently.
 Grouping material according to time and place relationships.
 Summarizing events through oral discussion.

Levels 8 - 9

Second Readers

Organizing steps of a process in logical sequence.
 Organizing main ideas in sequence.
 Increasing skill in understanding time sequence.
 Perceiving related cause and effect.
 Determining causes for specific action.
 Using text to enrich picture interpretation.
 Using illustrations to enrich text interpretation.
 Locating related details.
 Making inferences from implied facts.
 Making inferences from illustrations.
 Drawing conclusions from related facts.
 Evaluating and analyzing character motives and traits.
 Evaluating and comparing predicted outcomes.
 Distinguishing true statements from false.
 Distinguishing relevant information.
 Noting and understanding idiomatic expressions.
 Recognizing descriptive words and colorful language.
 Interpreting figurative language through understanding of colloquial expressions and use of similies.
 Verifying answers and opinions through reading.
 Locating evidence.
 Skimming to plan dialogue reading.
 Understanding a play format, and fables.
 Noting story subtitles in table of contents.
 Noting story authors.
 Understanding and interpreting charts, maps, globes.
 Evaluating and locating multiple sources for one topic.
 Following two-step oral and written directions.
 Reading phrases for directions. Writing directions.
 Learning to develop an outline.
 Organizing main ideas and details.

Summarizing through skimming, summarize main points.
 Selecting summarizing sentences.

Levels 10 - 11

Third Readers

Developing concepts of time and distance.
 Understanding references to definite and indefinite periods of time.
 Locating story scenes.
 Recognizing sequential presentation of information in a factual article.
 Comparing and contrasting events and plots. Interpreting cause-and-effect relationships.
 Extracting and interpreting information from graphic materials.
 Evaluating relative importance of story details.
 Understanding purposes of introductory and concluding paragraphs.
 Noting and interpreting the author's point of view.
 Interpreting feelings of characters through dialogue.
 Interpreting reader's feelings toward story characters.
 Recognizing advertising techniques.
 Evaluating solutions to problems.
 Distinguishing between fact and opinion.
 Developing understanding of scientific attitudes and methods.
 Applying problem-solving techniques.
 Evaluating differing points of view.
 Distinguishing constructive criticism.
 Interpreting idiomatic and figurative expressions.
 Interpreting descriptive passages.
 Interpreting figurative language as depicted through sarcasm.
 Recognizing that different types of materials are read in different ways.
 Extracting facts from a fictional setting. Following printed directions.
 Skimming to locate information to prove a statement.
 Using word clues as an aid in skimming.
 Interpreting type style and punctuation. Distinguishing the language patterns.
 Noting the folk tale as a literary form. Distinguishing between fiction and non-fiction.
 Recognizing author techniques for maintaining interest.
 Understanding an author's use of descriptive terms.
 Comparing and contrasting different types of reading material (reference, instructive, entertaining material.)
 Noting and correcting erroneous details.

Developing understanding of biography, historical fiction.
 Utilizing an encyclopedia and map key.
 Comparing purposes of resource material.
 Following multiple steps in oral and written directions.
 Developing skills in expanding an outline.
 Learning to outline stories, information, and problem-solving techniques.
 Learning to select main topics and subtopics for an outline.
 Extracting and organizing notes of story facts.
 Learning to evaluate summaries. Learning to summarize stories.
 Summarizing from outlines and from notes.⁹

Although the Macmillan Reading Program does not refer to the term "to read critically" or "critical reading" it can very well be discerned as stated "Comprehension skills are never learned to perfection, but must be refined and applied to increasingly more complex and difficult material at each higher level of the program . . . provides opportunities for developing inferential skills as well as literal comprehension; these opportunities are pointed out in the marginal notes in the Guide and Teacher's Annotated Edition."¹⁰

The authors Ira E. Aaron, A. Sterl Artley, Charlotte S. Huck, and others kept in mind what so many primary teachers of reading realize that critical reading skills do not just

⁹Albert J. Harris and Mae Knight Clark, The Macmillan Reading Program: A Chart of Skills (Indianapolis: The Macmillan Company, 1971), pp. 14-19.

¹⁰Albert J. Harris, Behavioral Objectives (Indianapolis: The Macmillan Company, 1972), p. 1.

blossom of their own accord. Scott Foresman Reading Systems includes a carefully worked-out program to nurture the development of these skills from early levels.

Scott Foresman Reading Systems - Critical
Reading and Study Skills

Level 1 Beginning Readiness

Recognition of story problem and solution.
Listens to stories read aloud; reacts to story problem.
Recognition of traits and motives of characters.
Discusses actions and feelings of characters.
Recognition and use of reference aids and tools.
Alphabetical order (Alphabet); table of contents; dictionary.

Level 2 Preprimer

Recognition of main idea and supporting details.
Is aware of main idea and supporting details:
 picture, sentence, paragraph, selection.
Reacts to stories heard and read.
Repetitive refrain.
Is aware of modern fantasy, realistic fiction,
 and informational article as types of literature.
Reads to enjoy a story: for information; to answer
 questions, to verify responses, and to check de-
 tails; to follow directions; read orally; re-
 reads for various purposes.

Level 3 Primer

Listens to stories; discusses story problem and
 solution; creates story with problem and solu-
 tion; answers questions about story problem;
 identifies word or phrase that tells who, what,
 when, where.
Discusses fanciful tale and realistic story; is aware
 of how-to article and folk tale as types of lit-
 erature.
Discusses actions and feelings of characters; relates
 own emotions to characters' feelings; reads de-
 tails to support answers to questions about
 characters' actions and feelings.

Level 4

Book 1

Categorizes by kind; charts ideas; lists; makes generalizations; describes processes.

Identifies story problem and solution; uses implied meanings to infer story problem; compares story problems in similiar stories; marks sentence that identifies story problems; marks sentence that identifies story solution.

Personification.

Discusses characteristics of folk tale, informational article, realistic fiction; is aware of poetry as a type of literature.

Reads to locate information, reads to follow directions, rereads to substantiate statements.

Talks about story characters' actions and feelings; pantomimes characters' actions and emotions.

Level 5 - 6

Book 2/1

Recognizes main idea (moral of fable) and supporting details; uses implied meanings to grasp main idea; uses implied meanings to answer questions; recalls details to make inferences.

Organizes ideas by time and place relationship.

Recognizes that books are read for different purposes; recognizes title as a clue of purpose for reading; reads title, notes illustrations and captions to establish purpose for reading; reads to select a favorite book; reads to think and feel as characters do; reads to answer specific questions.

Discusses why characters behaved as they did.

Discusses what kind of person a character is.

Point of view, imagery, personification, flashback.

Reads to locate answers to specific questions; reads for detailed information; reads to note traits and motives of characters; rereads to locate specific information.

Infers characters' motives from words and actions; discusses relationship of story events to characters' traits and motives; marks paragraphs that show traits of character; describes what sort of person a character is.

Level 7 - 8

Book 2/2

Recognizes main idea and supporting details (both stated and implied).
 Classifies information by function.
 Answers questions about story problem and solution.
 Figurative language.
 Discusses characteristics of fable, fantasy, informational article, play, poetry, realistic story.
 Compares purposes for reading different types of literature: newspaper, directions, poetry; reads to answer questions; reads to find out.
 Answers questions about how characters felt.
 Imagines what characters might do in different situations; matches character with trait;
 Writes answers to questions about characters' traits.
 Is aware of biography as a type of literature (biographical poem, biographical sketches, biography).
 Uses title, introductory paragraphs, and illustrations to establish purpose for reading; reads to answer specific questions; reads to find out.
 Marks multiple-choice endings for sentences describing characters.

Level 9 - 10

Book 3/1

Classifies information; charts facts for comparison; organizes ideas from different sources.
 Figurative language, point of view.
 Discusses characteristics of biography, folk tales, informational article, poetry, realistic fiction; is aware of newspaper article and historical fiction as types of literature.
 Reads annotated bibliographies to select books; scans books to make selections; reads card catalog cards; reads for information.
 Organizes ideas from different sources; arranges ideas by function.
 Discusses purposes for reading about an author.
 Is aware that authors write for different reasons: to inform, entertain, explain, or persuade.

Level 11-12

Book 3/2

Discusses story problem and solution; reads to find solution.
 Is aware of science fiction as a type of literature.

Reads to compare with own experiences; skims to pick out details.

Uses implied meanings to infer characters' motives; classifies characters by their likes and dislikes; writes why characters feel as they do; show feelings; lists words to describe characters.

Is aware of how author delineates characters; description of characters, character's conversation.

Charts information chronologically; organizes information by function; organizes ideas from different sources.

Is aware of myth as a type of literature.

Increases ability to recognize purposes for reading and of ways of reading for different purposes.

Uses implied meanings to infer answers to questions about traits and motives of characters.

Is aware of author's delineation of characters; actions and thoughts of characters.

Discusses why authors collect folk tales; discusses information an author chose to include.¹¹

Perhaps the format of the Comprehensive Critical Reading Skills as summarized here, from the six surveyed Reading Programs is not too attractive, nor is it light reading. The writer wished to provide an opportunity to show that reading is effective thinking and the very necessary introduction of the Critical Reading Skills at the early Levels is a challenge and requires ingenuity on the part of the primary reading teacher to encourage and not to stifle the creative ability.

Although the purpose of this chapter is a survey of Critical Reading Skills as they have recently been incorporated

¹¹ Ira E. Aaron, A. Sterl Artley, et al. Scott Foresman Reading Systems - Critical Reading and Study Skills - Skills Cluster Chart (Glenview: Scott Foresman and Company, 1971).

in the basal readers, the writer has not made a competitive comparison but found that each Program had placed special emphasis on activities to encourage and evoke critical thinking and to read critically at the early level when children are beginning to conquer decoding.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

Conclusions

The teams of authors, co-authors, advisors and editors of the six basal reading series which were surveyed for Critical Reading in this research, have created programs from which one can conclude that primary grade children are capable of learning more, and with greater profit than was ever before thought possible.

The development of a mature reader, who finds the act of reading a satisfying experience that will ultimately link him with many dimensions of his past, present, and future, has been a main purpose of putting in helpful Critical Thinking and Critical Reading Skills on the primary level. This has been done with the hope that the developmental reading process begun will create a successful reader capable of bringing certain understandings, feelings, images, and attitudes to the material read.

It is conclusive that even though the process of decoding the message is recognized as an essential aspect of

learning to read, the job at hand here for the primary grade level teachers as the skills have been introduced, though at times not too explicit, is to create and maintain the child's interest. This is accomplished by using the familiar, true-to-life happenings, natural language experiences, and involvement beyond just word recognition. Playlets, field trips, stories of varied content to encourage thoughtful interaction, will be an incentive to communicate, and through their own verbal expression convey intelligent messages. These are ways of initiating Critical Reading.

Implications

Since the Skills of Critical Reading and Critical Thinking are developed very early in the teaching of reading, it is clear that the authors of the basal readers of the 70's in this study, are increasing attention to Critical Reading and developing Creative-Critical Thinking through reading with less emphasis on the literal and the phonetics. This, then, has done away with the more artificial and contrived sentences where much emphasis was on the linguistic and phonic readers used prior to this decade. Since 1960 the trends have been toward richer vocabulary.¹

¹Albert J. Harris, "New Dimensions in Basal Readers," The Reading Teacher, Vol. 25, No. 4 (January, 1972), p. 311.

In the present 1970 editions vocabulary is established through the use of natural language and language experience as a form of communication. Knowledge and understanding goes beyond the printed symbol for we act; we think and reason; and we feel. It is through delightful stories and characters that primary children can utilize their feelings, thinking and actions, when they learn what is make-believe and what is real.

These reviewed programs have a wealth of basic, interesting, well organized, and sequenced skills for teaching Critical Reading and are so stated that the teacher puts to use the literary and attractive literature for children. Some of the programs challenge the primary teacher to make wise selections of the skills because they are not so obvious and clearly stated. It is the writer's hope that teachers implement them so that the primary child of the 1970's will be the future "mature reader" because he has been taught Critical Reading.

Lynette Gaines, as an advisor for the Harper and Row Design for Reading leaves this thought. "Fundamental to growth in reading is a willingness to master necessary skills in order to discover things we want to know."²

²Lynette Saine Gaines, "For All of Them," In Sunshine and Shadows / Level 9 (Evanston, Illinois: Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. T24.

It is the "want to know" of the primary child and the enthusiasm properly motivated by the primary teachers of 1973 that will establish successful Critical Reading on the Primary Levels.

APPENDIX

LIST OF BASAL READERS USED IN SURVEY

The Young America Basic Reading Program

Lyons & Carnahan
Educational Division
Meredith Corporation
407 E. 25th Street
Chicago, Illinois 60616

Ginn Reading 360

Ginn and Company
A Xerox Education Company
450 West Algonquin Road
Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005

Harper & Row Design for Reading

Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc.
Evanston, Illinois 60201

The Houghton Mifflin Reading Program

Houghton Mifflin Company
1900 South Batavia Avenue
Geneva, Illinois 60134

The Macmillan Reading Program

The Macmillan Company
539 Turtle Creek South Drive
Indianapolis, Indiana 46227

Scott Foresman Reading Systems

Scott Foresman & Company
1900 East Lake Avenue
Glenview, Illinois 60025

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