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Ann W. Rode

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THE ACQUISITION OF A SIGHT VOCABULARY
BY A LEARNING DISABLED CHILD

by

Ann W. Rode

A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION
(LEARNING DISABILITIES)
AT CARDINAL STRITCH COLLEGE
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
1977

This research paper has been

approved for the Graduate Committee

of Cardinal Stritch College by

Sister Joanne Marie Klinhan
(Advisor)

Date_____ March 1, 1977_____

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

"Growth in the ability to recognize words in print
is the most basic skill in learning how to read. None of the
other necessary abilities can develop until the child has a
stock of words in his reading vocabulary to read with."[1]

"Sight vocabulary involves the skills of instant
word pronunciation and word meaning. The end goal of a
sight vocabulary is the decoding and association of the
word in a line of print, in a sentence, or in a paragraph
rather than in isolation, for word meaning depends on
relationships with other words."[2] The importance of rapid
recognition of words, rather than to study each word as
though it had never been seen before, cannot be emphasized
too strongly. The child who fails to build a large sight
vocabulary and who does not have the habit of recognizing
these at a glance, cannot hope to become an able reader.
The child will not only be limited in the ability to group
words into units of thought, and to comprehend what is

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[1]Miles V. Zintz, The Reading Process - The Teacher
and the Learner (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company
Publishers, 1970), p. 31.

[2]Robert M. Wilson, Diagnostic and Remedial Reading
for Classroom and Clinic (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill
Publishing Company, 1972), p. 185.

meant by a group of words, but will be encountering diffi-
culty in decoding and identifying new words. Additionally
the reader will be unable to use context clues effectively
because of the large number of unknown words. Unless these
basic skills exist it will be a most confusing experience
as the child is expected to move on to the higher levels
of reading skills.

There are many theories to explain exactly how
words are recognized. Words could be recognized as wholes
or by configuration. They could be recognized by cues from
individual letters such as initial or final consonants.
Some children may associate the phoneme (spoken sound) with
the grapheme (letter as written) in identifying words. Com-
binations of these and many other methods could be used.

"In spite of the quantity of research on this topic,
the bases of word recognition are not yet well understood."[3]
Since the problem is relevant to all beginning readers and
those who teach them to read, it becomes an even greater
problem if the child does not progress as expected.

Children with learning disabilities present special
challenges to the teacher whether it be in the regular class-
room or in a special situation. Each of these children has
learning abilities which require insight, sensitivity and
special planning on the part of the teacher. There is a
need to combine special procedures and specific tasks into
a program which can help the child learn in accordance

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[3]Ellen L. Blumberg, David V. Williams, and Joanna P.
Williams, "Cues Used in Visual Word Recognition", Journal
of Educational Psychology 61 (August 1970) : 310

with his potential.

"Reading demands a high-level development of perceptual-conceptual organization. For a child to comprehend the information presented to him, it is assumed that he is able to deal with ideas and their relationships. But to be able to deal with the symbols, additional assumptions are made about the child's ability."[4] A child's particular deficits may appear to be far removed from the reading process, but our instruction must be wide enough to encompass a good motor and perceptual foundation. The child who is not achieving up to expectancy as a result of impairment in one of the modalities can be reached by other means and using other modalities.

It was the purpose of this paper to review the literature concerning the task of acquiring a sight vocabulary, through reading instruction systems, procedures of evaluating each child's unique pattern of strengths and weaknesses and then to investigate teaching techniques and materials which can be used to meet this goal.

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[4]Georgia Pitcher-Baker, "Does Perceptual Training Improve Reading?", _Academic Therapy_ 9 (Fall 1973) : 43

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

"How shall we teach children to read? No single
approach in 27 years of research on teaching reading has
overcome or eliminated reading disabilities in children at
the first grade level. . . . There is more research on
reading than on any other subject taught in school. In
spite of this there are no important facts about methods
of teaching reading that are incontestably known."[5]

Reading Instruction Systems

"The search for one reading method that is best for
all children has been fruitless. A more realistic approach
is to recognize that individual learners benefit from diff-
erent instructional systems."[6]

Careful analysis of the existing literature indicates
that there are at least four distinct systems of teaching
reading: 1)the Controlled Vocabulary Approach

2)the Language Experience Approach

3)the Programmed Approach, and

4)the Individualized Approach.

The rationale and limitations of each system are discussed.

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[5]Hames H. Bryan and Tanis H. Bryan, Understanding
Learning Disabilities (Port Washington, New York: Alfred
Publishing Company, 1975), p. 231.

[6]Larry A. Harris and Carl B. Smith, Reading Instruction
Through Diagnostic Teaching (New York: Holt Reinhart Winston,
Inc., 1972), p. 48.

The Controlled Vocabulary Approach

The controlled vocabulary approach is a highly structured system which is often referred to as the Basal Reader Program. Controlled vocabulary stories use words which are thought to be a part of every child's vocabulary. Word sources are lists such as the Dolch and the approach is based on the principle, proceed from the known to the unknown. Therefore the content and setting of the stories is based on the same idea, begin with the familiar. Neighborhood, family and pets are then characteristic of the primary grade stories.

The principle of systematic repetition of words is used since repeated exposure to a word is necessary for mastery. Research indicates that the average child requires about 30 repetitions of a word before he or she recognizes it on sight. Readability is controlled with stories requiring more skill from story to story and from book to book.

"The controlled vocabulary approach is not regarded by its proponents as a program that can teach all aspects of reading, but it is decidedly more complete and self contained than any of the other systems for teaching reading."[7]

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[7]Ibid. p. 26

The controlled vocabulary programs fall into two major groups, namely the sound-symbol emphasis approach and the meaning-emphasis approach.

Sound-symbol systems teach children to learn a technique for breaking the English code. The learner must know what symbol is associated with a sound. This system seeks to emphasize the regular aspects of the English language. Proponents stress that children should learn patterns that are consistent and be taught to apply rules or generalizations to new words.

Limitations of this system are that youngsters are taught to read in a manner that may later interfere with understanding. This however, is unsupported by research. Also, "youngsters with learning difficulties or a style of learning not suited to an auditory approach are severely handicapped because of the emphasis placed on the differences among sounds."[8]

"Sound-symbol systems not only fail to help the reader unlock a new word when it is irregular, but they actually mislead and confuse him. This is a limitation of considerable importance, especially for the beginning reader who cannot apply other word recognition techniques."[9]

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[8]Ibid. p. 30.

[9]Ibid. p.31.

The sound-symbol approach is slow and does not guarantee that the student who pronounces the word knows its meaning.

Those persons who would promote meaning emphasis stress that learning to read "does not mean simply to learn the alphabet, make it into words, and learn to pronounce them. It means learning to understand exactly what the words mean, and the earlier the better."[10]

"If children are taught the exact meaning of words, taught to look them up, to define them, when they grow up they will not be easily deceived by words used in the commercial world."[11]

Horace Mann in 1840 introduced a method where instruction in reading began with whole words rather than individual alphabet letters or syllables of 2 or 3 letters. He felt the procedure would be more logical since meaning can be associated with whole words. The approach has been known by several names such as look-say method, whole word methodology and sight word method.

"The existence of words with irregular spellings means that some use will always have to be made of whole word methodology."[12]

The beginning reader has insufficient skills to

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[10]Alexandra Hasluck, "First Things First: Know Thy Words", Reading Teacher 25 (December 1971): p. 232.

[11]Ibid. p. 233.

[12]Delores Durkin, Teaching Them To Read (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1974), p. 192.

deal with identification of sounds. In addition, young children are more interested in learning words since this is closer to their conception of learning to read. It seems that "instruction should begin with whole word methodology and as soon as possible attention should also go to letters and the sounds they record. A result of the combination is that as children progress through school, whole word methodology can be used less and less until the point is reached when words will be iden̦tified only when their spellings are so irregular that even the most advanced knowledge of letter-sound relationships and word structure would be non-productive.[13]

Critics of the approach claim word analysis is ignored and children guess wildly at words with no means of checking guesses. Since stress is placed on the visual, children who learn through other modalities are at a disadvantage.

While no particular method can be considered the best, there is some evidence that a program which includes phonics instruction is better than programs which employ whole word methods only. A study done by Bliesmer and Yarborough compared ten reading programs at the first grade level. Five of the programs used phonics, emphasizing letter-sound relationships and pronunciation methods to decode words. Five programs used the method of teaching many whole words recognized on sight and then children were taught to

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[13]Ibid. pp. 192 & 193

analyze the sounds in the words. Teaching methods were assigned by drawing lots and only experienced teachers were used. Intensive training and supervision of teachers was given throughout the year. No more than 45 minutes was allowed each day for reading. First graders were randomly assigned to rooms and given the Metropolitan Reading Readiness and California Mental Maturity Tests at the start. The Stanford Achievement Test, including word reading, paragraph meaning, vocabulary, spelling and word study skills was administered at the end of the experiment.

Results indicated, "Of the 125 comparisons made, the skill level of the phonically trained children exceeded that of those who received the whole-word method in 93 instances. In no case did the whole-word method show itself to be superior to the phonics technique."[14]

The Language Experience Approach

"Good teaching begins with what is known to the child. The oral language that a child brings to school is an excellent record of his past experiences. . . . Reading instruction that utilizes the language of the child automatically builds on what is known."[15]

The language experience approach uses what children have experienced individually, in small groups or as a whole class. A series of related sentences is organized

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[14]James H. Bryan and Tanis H. Bryan, Understanding Learning Disabilites (Port Washington, New York: Alfred Publishing Company, 1975), p. 233.

[15]Larry A. Harris and Carl B. Smith, Reading Instruction Through Diagnostic Teaching (New York: Holt Reinhart & Winston, Inc., 1972), pp. 32 & 33.

by pupils with guidance from the teacher, and put onto a
chart or the blackboard, These sentences can then also be
copied by the child in his or her own handwriting. The
story belongs to the child or children. The child's back-
ground, experiences and self image are all employed in
teaching the pupil to read.

Skill development follows no particular sequence
but is introduced as the teacher sees the need for it.
Emphasis is placed on reasoning and skills rather than on
memorization. "Especially important in this approach
is the relation that is developed between the spoken word
and its graphic form."[16]

Advantages include, "learning through doing,
integrated learning, which tends to be highly effective
and dealing with experiences that are real to the children
and expressed in words they use in everyday talking."[17]

"To children who have experienced authorship many
times, reading is not lessons, worksheets, practice excer-
cises or a time each day in a time schedule. It is the
continuous discovery of stepping stones to a lifetime
of enjoyment of books."[18]

No particular learning modality is stressed in

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[16]Ibid. p. 33.

[17]Guy L. Bond and Miles A. Tinker, Reading
Difficulties:Their Diagnosis and Correction, (New York:
Meredith Publishing Company, 1967), p. 33.

[18]Miles V. Zintz, The Reading Process, The Teacher
and the Learner,(Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown, Co., 1972),
p. 89.

this type of reading instruction. However, any strength
the child may have can be emphasized and weaknesses can be
circumvented.

The limitations of the program are primarily the
necessary expertise of the teacher to make the system work.
Also, the lack of structure may be troublesome for some
youngsters.

"Children who are taught reading through an
experience approach can make as much or even more progress
in establishing larger sight vocabularies than children
taught through basal reading methods."[19] A study at Park
Avenue Elementary School in New York City, involved 64
third graders reading one or more years below grade level,
who were randomly selected as to race, IQ and sex. The
children were divided into small groups according to grade
level. Half of the groups used experience stories and the
other half used controlled vocabulary materials. Instruction
was divided into three half-hour sessions per week. All
children were exposed to word recognition activities, film
strips, records and pictures. The activities were discussed
with the guide of specific questions. Then the students
were exposed, half the groups to basal readers and the
other half to experience stories. They were given individ-

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[19]Ann Marie Kelly, "Sight Vocabularies and Exper-
ience Stories" Elementary English 52, (March 1975), p. 327.

ual attention by the teacher or an aide.

At the beginning of the experiment, all the children were given the Botel Word Recognition Test Form A. During the fifteenth week of the project, they were retested. The total number of words correctly recognized was tallied and recorded for each child and comparisons were made.

1) In comparison to the Basal Group, the Experience group had a basic sight vocabulary which was 22% greater.

2) The combined mean gain in word recognition of both groups was 20 words. 62% of the Experience Group exceeded the mean. Only 36% of the Basal Group exceeded that mean. [20]

"The dictating and subsequent reading of experience stories apparently accounted for the difference between the two groups. While the statistical computations used in the project were simple, they do indicate that third grade corrective and remedial readers instructed in a language experience approach did as well as and often better than their peers who were instructed with more traditional materials."[21]

The Programmed Approach

"Programmed instruction teaches by taking the student through a series of carefully planned steps, often in the form of statements or questions culminating in some

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[20]Ibid. p. 328

[21]Ibid. p. 328

predesignated terminal behavior."[22]

Success is almost assured since clues are provided
to help the learner. Sometimes just a part of a word needs
to be completed. As the program proceeds, clues become
fewer and the learner must become more sophisticated in
providing the correct answer. There is immediate feedback
in most programmed instruction. The student proceeds a
small step at a time and is immediately rewarded for correct
responses. The program is also self pacing, allowing each
student to progress at a rate that is comfortable for him.
The programs are designed to develop certain skills, so the
teacher can match the student to the skill most needed at
the time the pupil is ready to learn.

Critics of the programmed approach point out that
it can become a monotonous method, especially for the more
able student. Also, the impersonality of the program
and the structure which limits creativity are seen as dis-
advantages. Children who have difficulty with the visual
mode of learning will be handicapped as well as the child
who has poor kinesthetic skills since the approach places
a premium on the visual modality and written responses.

A study at the first grade level compared the
achievement of pupils taught by basal versus the programmed
instructional materials. In the programmed material there

[22]Larry A. Harris and Carl B. Smith, Reading
Instruction Through Diagnostic Teaching (New York: Holt
Reinhart Winston, Inc., 1972), p. 36.

was a high consistency of sound-symbol relationships which
was not found in the basal readers. The study found that
the programmed approach resulted in better achievement in
word recognition and reading comprehension. The conclusion
of this study carried out by Robert B. Ruddell was: "That
degree and control of language ability are significant
components in learning to read, particularly when they
reinforce a program that stresses grapheme phoneme corres-
pondence."[23]

Individualized Approach

The individualized approach allows each student to
progress at his or her own rate. The pupil chooses the book
he or she wishes to read. Conferences are held between the
teacher and the student. Most skill instruction takes place
on a one-to-one basis in the conference with a minimum of
group instruction. It has been felt that given an oppor-
tunity to pursue his or her own interests, the child will
be eager and willing to read. A reading program based on self
selection is more like reading in the adult life. One def-
inite asset of the program is the regular personal inter-
action of student with teacher, through which a unique
understanding can arise.

Some limitations of the program are the need for

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[23]Harry Singer and Robert B. Ruddell, Theoretical
Models of Reading (Newark, Delaware: International Reading
Association, 1976), p. 638 & 639.

a tremendous amount of resources and teachers with the
ability to implement this flexible type of program. "To
fulfill his or her role in the individualized approach, the
classroom teacher must know children's literature. . . . .
guide and upgrade the child's tastes and interests. . . . .
be familiar with the book being discussed."[24]

"The different meanings assigned to individualized
reading programs is one of the problems encountered by
researchers trying to make a serious and careful assessment
of the value of this type of organization in promoting
both high achievement and interest in reading."[25] Because
of the wide variety of approaches to Individualized Reading,
studies have been inconclusive. However, it has opened
the door to something other than whole class instruction.
It brings motivation clearly into the picture and allows for
children's interests as well as achievement.

Assessment of Learning

"Emphasis on how children process information in
their attempt to know the world about them has been the
heart and soul of the field of learning disabilities."[26]

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[24]Larry A. Harris and Carl B. Smith, Reading
Instruction Through Diagnostic Teaching (New York: Holt
Reinhart Winston, Inc., 1972), p. 42.

[25]Delores Durkin, Teaching Them To Read (Boston,
Massachusetts: Allyn & Bacon, Inc., 1974), p. 73.

[26]James H. Bryan and Tanis H. Bryan, Understanding
Learning Disabilities (Port Washington, New York: Alfred
Publishing Co., 1975), p. 138.

Progress in learning to read requires word recognition skills. "The initial inspection of a new word involves identification of its printed or written symbol in terms of its visual appearance, its sound and its meaning. Additional contacts with the word develop recognition. . . . Eventually, through subsequent experience with a word in context, the printed word is grasped immediately, it becomes what we call a sight word."[27] The teacher can learn a great deal about the method of word attack a child uses by observation during oral reading.

Major differences exist in the way children learn. Some children learn best by listening; some learn best by looking; some learn best by touching or performing an action. Many children with learning problems have a much greater facility in using one perceptual modality than in using another. Once an evaluation of perceptual abilities is made, appropriate teaching procedures can improve various subskills of perception or modify the learning process in the light of perceptual deficits.

In reviewing the literature it appears that some of the prerequisites to reading are the visual ability to distinguish among letters and their sequence in words. Also because sound relationships play such an important part in

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[27]Miles A. Tinker and Constance M. McCullough, Teaching Elementary Reading (New York: Appleton Century Crofts, Inc., 1962), p. 138.

reading, the child must be able to perceive similarities and differences in speech sounds and then to blend them together into the meaningful whole.

"Educational analysis seeks difficulties which may be corrected by specific teaching. It is the first and most promising approach to take in all types of learning difficulties. It gives the teacher a specific and orderly plan of remedial instruction."[28]

This portion of the paper provides some suggestions for assessing a child's individual learning mode in regard to the auditory, visual, tactile and kinesthetic modalities.

In speaking of the visual and auditory modalities, this paper is not concerned with acuity. Since acuity denotes the ability of the sense organs to see and hear, the writer considers acuity a prerequisite to the perception discussed.

Auditory Processing

There are a variety of ways to assess auditory perception. Standardized tests of intelligence assess the child's ability to comprehend and express auditorily received material. Most of the subtests on the verbal section on the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC) and many parts of the Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale (Binet)

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[28]Donald Durell, Durell Analysis of Reading Difficulty (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1955), p. 2.

can be checked for this information even though they tend
to measure language rather than simple responses to auditory
signals. Any test which requires a child to respond verbally
taps auditory processes. Evaluation is based on ability to
follow directions, to use words in combination and rote
memory for increasingly lengthy sequences of numbers. The
WISC subtest which would give the best clues is the Digit
Span. The Binet provides a broader sample with repitition
of digits, backward and forward; repitition of sentences;
recall of stories and following directions.

Other tests which are a source of information to
determine the child's auditory processing are reviewed in
the following section.

The Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability (ITPA)
tests auditory reception which is the ability to understand
the spoken word. This subtest requires a yes or no answer
to questions such as; "Do bicycles drink?" or "Do females
slumber?".

Auditory association refers to the ability to relate
spoken words in a meaningful way or the ability to manip-
ulate linguistic symbols internally. This subtest uses
analogies such as; "soup is hot, ice cream is _____." The
child must supply the missing word, in this case cold.

The auditory memory subtest is much like the digit
span on the WISC in that it tests short term, non-meaning-
ful memory be requiring the child to repeat a series of

numbers in increasing length.

Poor results on the grammatic closure subtest could
possibly be traced to an inability to discriminate auditorily.
Auditory closure indicates ability or inability to grasp a
word or conversation when only part is heard. An example
would be da--y, pe--ut bu--er or ho-pi-al.

Sound blending is a much needed skill if the child is
to be successful in a phonics program. It is the ability to
hear isolated sounds and perceive them as parts of the whole.
Examples are: c-a-t; t-a-k-e; t-e-n-t.

In the Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitudes there are
four subtests which can be particularly helpful in finding
auditory strengths and weaknesses. The auditory attention
for unrelated words subtest tests the child's ability to
repeat a series of from 2 to 8 unrelated words. Example:
boat, moon, gate, tree. The student is given credit for
any words he remembers regardless of the order. The auditory
attention for related sentences subtest requires the child
to repeat a meaningful sentence with less than three errors.
The sentences range from simple to very complex.

The oral directions subtest requires the child to
follow a set of directions given orally by the teacher and
a written response from the child. Example: Put a number
one in the circle and an X in the square.
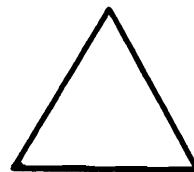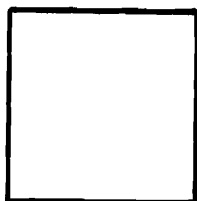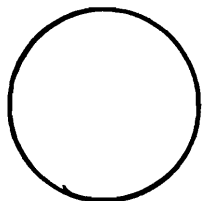
The <u>oral comissions subtest</u> requires a motor response. The child may be asked to go to the table, pick up the pencil, place the pencil on the book and sit down.

The <u>Slingerland Screening Tests for Identifying Children with Specific Language Disability</u> contains three subtests which test auditory processing, particularly <u>auditory memory</u> and <u>perception</u> by dictating groups of numbers, letters and words. After a slight delay, the student is asked to respond by writing what he heard.

Another subtest on the Slingerland checks the <u>auditory discrimination of single sounds</u> within a sequence of sounds in whole words. The child is again required after a slight delay to make a written response. This tests auditory perception, discrimination, sequencing and memory.

In the third subtest <u>auditory perception-memory</u> is tested along with visual discrimination and perception when the child listens to a word and is then asked to locate it among a group of words printed on the test page.

In the <u>Wepman Test of Auditory Discrimination</u> the child must decide whether two words given in pairs are the same or different. The different words have a minimal sound difference or contrast of a single phoneme sound. The child is faced away from the examiner so he does not have the visual cue of watching the speaker's mouth and is asked whether a pair of words is the same or different. Example: "mit / mat" or big / pig or sit / sit".

The <u>Botel Reading Inventory</u> is a group test. The phonics section has the child identify graphemes as the teacher reads words to him. A written response is required but there is little visual discrimination, if any, involved.

Visual Processing

In the assessment of visual processing, clues of the child's skills in visual perception tasks can be obtained from subtests of the <u>Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC)</u>; Picture Arrangement, Block Design, Object Assembly and Coding. Some indications might also come from the <u>Stanford Binet</u> subtests which assess memory for designs, picture memory, memory for objects and copying a bead chain.

Other tests which can be used for assessment of visual processing are discussed in the following paragraphs.

The <u>Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Ability (ITPA)</u> tests <u>visual reception</u>, which is the ability to comprehend the meaning of symbols, written words or pictures, by having the child point to pictures indicating he gets meaning from them.

A second test on the ITPA tests <u>visual-motor association</u> by requiring the child to relate pictures of common objects to each other. Four pictures are presented and the child must pick the one that goes with the stimulus item.

<u>Visual sequential memory</u>, the ability to remember and reproduce a sequence of visual stimuli, is tested by the examiner arranging a set of chips, having a design on

them, in a certain order. The child is allowed to observe the chips for five seconds. They are mixed up and the student must reproduce the exact sequence of chips.

The Detroit Tests of Learning Aptitudes samples aspects of visual perception on four of its subtests. The pictorial opposites test presents a series of pictures to the child. One of the pictures will be the opposite of the sample picture while the others are merely different. The child must choose the opposite. Example: Here is a flowerpot with nothing in it, it is empty and the child must then point to the flowerpot that is full.

The Visual Attention Span for Objects subtest, tests visual memory. A card with from two to eight objects on it, is shown to the child for from two to eight seconds depending on the amount of objects on the card. After the card is taken away the child must tell the examiner what he saw. Credit is given for each item remembered, regardless of the order of the response.

The Memory for Designs subtest is structured so that there are three sections. On the first, the child is required to copy a geometric form on the paper next to the sample. The second section requires that the child be shown a sample. Part of the sample is on paper and after the sample is removed the child is asked to complete his or her design like the one just seen. The third section exposes a figure for five seconds, the card is removed and the child is required to draw the whole figure previously seen.

Visual Attention Span for Letters is the fourth
subtest of the Detroit which tests visual perception. The
child is exposed to sets of letters ranging from two to six
in a group. Four trials are allowed in each set. After
exposure to the stimulus card, the child must repeat in
exact order the letters just seen. The test is discontinued
when the child misses the four trials in any one set.

The Slingerland Screening Tests for Identifying
Children with Specific Language Disability contains three
subtests which test visual processing. Visual perception-
memory and discrimination are tested when the child is
exposed to cards with words, letters or numbers and is
then required to select the correct item from a group
printed on the test page.

The second test presents a sample word printed on
the page with four other words similar in configuration and
with possible reversals or transpositions. The child must
discriminate and choose the same word as the sample.

The third tests visual perception and memory which
is linked to a written response. Words, phrases, letter and
number groups and geometric forms are exposed briefly on
cards. The child must then with no model presented write
his or her response on the sheet.

There are several tests which require the child to
draw designs by copying from a sample or from memory. Two
of these are the Bender-Gestalt Test and the Benton Visual
Retention Test.

The <u>Frostig Developmental Test of Visual Perception</u>
tests five skills; <u>Visual motor coordination</u>, <u>figure ground</u>
<u>perception</u>, <u>perceptual constancy</u>, <u>perception of position</u> and
<u>perception of spatial relationships</u>.

Haptic Processing

Haptic perception refers to information received
through two modalities; tactile and kinesthetic.

Tactile perception is obtained through the sense
of touch. It is the ability to recognize an object by
touching it, to identify a numeral that is drawn on one's
back or arm, to discriminate between smooth and rough sur-
faces and to identify which finger is being touched.

Kinesthetic perception is obtained through body
movements and muscle feeling, the awareness of positions
obtained through bodily position, tension and relaxation.

Compared to auditory and visual perception there
is little information available in books and journals
concerning haptic processing.

Kephart points out, "There is evidence that the
efficiency of the higher thought processes can be no better
than the basic motor abilities upon which they are based."[29]
Johnson and Myklebust say, "Before children can execute the

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[29]Newell C. Kephart, <u>The Slow Learner in the</u>
<u>Classroom</u> (Columbus, Ohio; Chas. E. Merrill Publishing Co.,
1960), p. 37.

complex mental operation of analysis and synthesis, they must
work directly with materials they can manipulate. . . . The
need to see the physical change in experience."[30] Piaget
stresses the importance of pattern formation and object man-
ipulation in the learning process, that reasoning is based on
concrete operation before it can be translated into abstract
ideas.

An instructional method was developed by Segel for
tutoring children in this way. "Through play activity with
concrete manipulative materials with which the child is
familiar, order and pattern are introduced. Then, with
order and pattern still in the forefront, the activity is
extended to include sounds and letters in combinations so
that when the printed page is presented to the child with
learning disabilities, confusion and chaos are replaced with
confidence and understanding."[31]

There seem to be no instruments available for the
testing of the haptic processes, so teacher-made inventories
will have to be used for this assessment.

Cross-modal Processing

A major difficulty in learning is the inability to
integrate one modality of function with another modality.

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[30]Doris T. Johnson and Helmer R. Myklebust, Learning
Disabilities (New York: Grune and Stratton, 1967), p. 185.

[31]Ruth C. Segel, "Improving Perception Through the
Haptic Process" Academic Therapy 9, (Summer 1974), p. 420.

11) Given a series of numbers, letters or words auditorily have child correctly repeat.

   2 - 9 - 7 _____   4 - 3 - 1 - 9 - 0 _____

   c - p - s - o _____   man-hat-sit _____

   jump-goat-mat-basket-tree _____

12) Given a simple set of directions auditorily have the child carry them out correctly.

   Stand up, shake your right hand, hop 3 times on your left foot and sit down.

13) Given a taperecorder, listen to a tape with background noise and a sentence read by the teacher. Have the child repeat the sentence.

   The cat ran up the tree after the squirrel.

   _____

14) Clap or tap a pattern and have the child clap the same pattern.

   XX   XXX   X   XX

Visual Perception
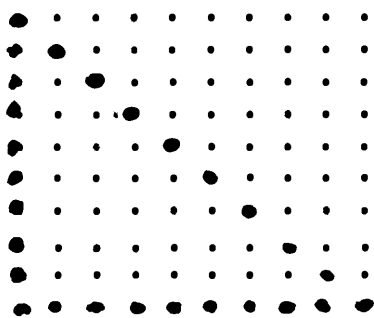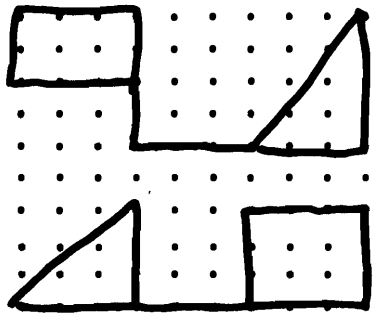
1) Given a set of cards with upper and lower case letters have the child match them.

2) Given a group of words on the chalkboard or a piece of paper and presented a word visually from a card, have the child pick the correct word from the group of words in front of him.

Cards	Paper			
the	the	het	The	eht
look	louk	kool	look	Look
three	tree	there	htree	three
was	wash	saw	was	aws
bed	bed	ded	deb	bad
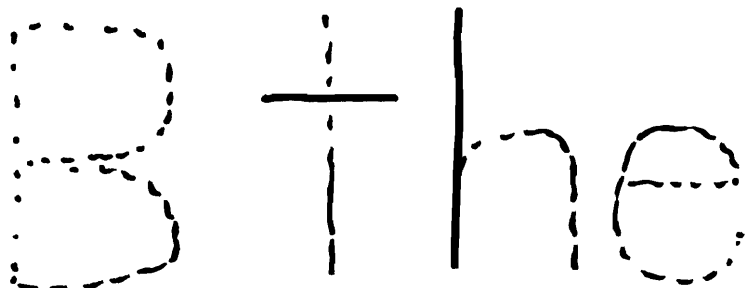
3) Given a worksheet, have the child discriminate between numbers, letters, geometric symbols or words by choosing the one that matches the stimulus symbol.

9	6	9	1	7
42	72	21	42	24
136	613	316	163	136
b	b	p	d	q

was	saw	asw	was	
stop	tops	stop	pots	spot
first	frist	trisf	fisrt	first

4) Given a pegboard or a pegboard type worksheet have the child reproduce a pattern.

Pegboard   Worksheet

5) Given incomplete pictures, letters or words have the child complete same.

6) Place objects or pictures of objects on table. Expose to child's view, cover and rearrange. Have the child put them back in the original order.

7) Given a series of pictures which relate a sequential event, have the child put them in the proper sequence.

8) Shown a word, have the child choose and sequence tile letters to correctly reproduce the word.

9) Given a scrambled word or sentence on cards, have the child sequence it properly.

The boys ran fast .

s t o p

10) Given an incomplete sentence on the chalkboard or paper, have the child choose the correct word to complete a sentence.

The boy sat in the _____.

hand   sand   send

11) Shown a picture for 10 seconds, have the child tell what he or she can remember about it.

12) Given parquetry blocks and a pattern, have the child reproduce the pattern.

13) Given a worksheet with a group of overlapping designs, have the child trace all of one kind of a design.

Trace all of these
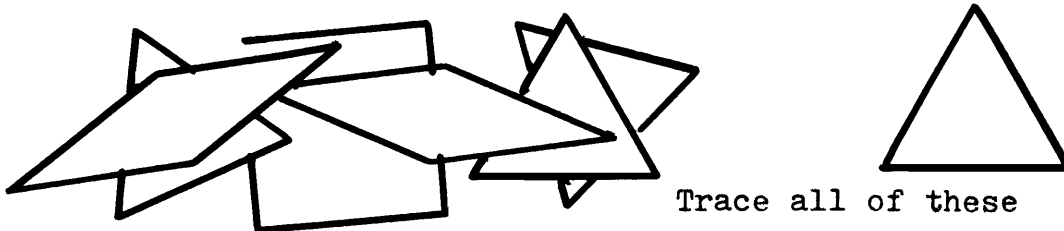
Haptic Perception

Tactile

1) Given a bag of pieces of cloth, sandpaper and various textured pieces, have the child put his or her hand into the bag and pick a piece. Without taking the piece out of the bag, have the child describe its texture and tell how he or she thinks it could be used.

(This same task could be done with familiar objects.)

2) Have child stand with hands behind his or her back. Touch a finger and see if he or she can determine which one was touched.

3) Given sandpaper letters have the child identify the letters by tracing only.

4) Write a letter or word on the child's back. Have him determine what letter or word was traced.

Kinesthetic

1) Shown a letter have the child move his or her body to form the letter.

2) Given a letter, number or word, have the child write it in the air.

3) Given directions like "stand behind the desk","walk in front of the chair", etc., have the child carry out the directions.

4) Have the child show you his or her right arm, shake his or her left foot, etc., to determine whether he or she can distinguish left and right sides of the body.

Cross-Modal Perception

1) Given a word auditorily, have the child choose the correct written word.

Say:	Choose from:			
the	this	that	the	they
come	come	came	cane	cone
pin	pine	pan	pin	pen

2) Given a word auditorily, have the child choose the word

    a) that begins the same:

       Say pass   padlock   basket   vase

    b) that ends the same:

       Say good   bumper   sound   happy

    c) that begins and ends the same:

       Say glad   claimed   glistened   glee

3) Given a blend or digraph sound have child choose the correct word or picture to go with it.

Sight Word Assessment

The <u>Dolch Basic Sight Word List</u> will be used as a basis for remediation procedures. Criteria for knowing a word are:

1) can he pronounce it on sight?

2) can he sound it out and pronounce it?

3) did he correct himself after miscalling word?

No credit for word if child:

1) miscalled or omitted word but went back later to correct it.

2) took more than one trial to sound it out.

3) miscalled word more than once before getting it correct.

4) hesitated more than one second.

Record errors and omissions for evaluation. Scoring is strictly on the number of words missed at various levels.

One word or less	=	Independent Reading Level
Four words	=	Instructional Reading Level
Five words or more	=	Frustrational Reading Level

The child is given a list to read from while the teacher checks another list.

Dolch Basic Word List

PrePrimer Level

a	down	I	make	run
come	here	look	red	said
help	little	play	to	can
jump	one	three	you	go
not	the	yellow	blue	it
see	we	big	funny	my
where	away	for	is	up
and	find	in	me	two

Primer Level

all	brown	got	good	did
black	four	must	new	have
eat	like	out	please	no
into	our	say	she	so
on	saw	they	pretty	too
rode	there	well	this	what
that	was	with	went	be
want	will	at	yes	do
who	are	came	ate	he
an	but	now	ran	white
soon	under			

First Grade Level

after	them	open	by	old
her	could	from	know	his
had	let	again	live	then
may	just	ask	going	once

when	how	any	him	think
were	give	of	has	as
thank	over	walk	am	fly
every				

Second Grade Level

always	both	read	use	first
wish	around	fast	made	buy
read	upon	because	pull	five
its	their	or	before	tell
call	us	would	don't	green
work	been	why	right	best
which	very	many	sit	these
those	wash	goes	off	write
sleep	sing	your	found	does
gave	cold			

Third Grade Level

about	better	bring	carry	clean
done	draw	drink	eight	fall
full	get	grow	hold	hot
if	keep	kind	laugh	light
much	myself	never	only	own
seven	shall	show	six	small
ten	today	together	try	warm
cut	hurt	pick	nine	start
far	long			

Summary

This chapter reviewed four reading instructional systems or approaches which are presently being used in the teaching field. Suggestions for assessing the child's individual learning processes were discussed. Both formal and informal and standardized tests were mentioned. A teacher-made assessment including sections to assess auditory, visual, haptic and cross-modal processes along with a sight word check were presented.

CHAPTER III

TECHNIQUES AND AIDS TO TEACH SIGHT WORDS

"Many children with learning disabilities live in a warped perceptual world. Although they have no basic impairment in their sensory organs, they cannot interpret sensations in a normal manner. They do not hear, see, feel, or integrate sensory stimuli in their environmental surroundings the way other children do. The abnormality is not in the sensory organ itself, but in perception resulting from stimulation of the sensory organ. Auditory perception takes place in the brain--not in the ear; visual perception takes place in the brain--not in the eye. There is ample evidence that perceptual disturbances are important factors in the failure to learn, particularly in the early stages of academic instruction."[32]

Four distinct approaches to the teaching of reading were discussed in the previous chapter. Since no single system is superior for all children, it is necessary to match the preferred learning mode of the student learner

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[32]Janet W. Lerner, <u>Children With Learning Disabilities</u> (Boston, Massachusetts: The Houghton Miflin, Co., 1971), p. 133.

with an appropriate instructional system. Ideally the best of each system is combined so that a teacher draws on the strengths of all systems and avoids emphasis on a single learning mode. Procedures for discovering the mode of learning that is most efficient for each child was also discussed in the previous chapter.

This chapter includes tips for teaching a sight vocabulary and a collection of ideas and activities to aid the teacher in building up the student's sight vocabulary.

Tips for Teaching Sight Words

1) Encourage the child to look closely at a word as it is being identified. By watching the word as it is being written, letter by letter, the child is compelled to view the word from the beginning. This will help to eliminate reversing words--saw for was; or to use incorrect sequencing when reading--felt for left.

2) When working with two words that are very similar-- there and three--have the child identify how they are the same and how they are different.

3) Have the child attend to the detail of a word by spelling and saying the word orally; or writing the word on paper, on the chalkboard or in the air and saying it at the same time.

4) Make sure the child recognizes the word in isolation as well as in context.

5) When teaching the child to use context, do not in any way encourage guessing. Use a question like, "What do you think would make sense?". Encourage the child to use the check method by trying each of the choices in the blank to see if they make sense.

6) When using cues for visual memory, such as writing color words in matching colors or making eyes of the double o in look, be careful since these cues are irrelevant and will probably not help the child to remember them in context. Children are usually confronted with black type on white paper.

7) Take care when using configurations. Make sure the word has individuality in its general form. When using this technique in a game-type activity, make sure you use only one word with a specific configuration so as to derive the greatest benefit from the exercise.

8) When working on new words, make sure the child knows the meaning of the word by having him or her use it in a sentence correctly.

9) A child should not be hurried when he is trying to identify a word. It may occur to him after a moment's reflection, and the chances of knowing the word the next time are increased.

10) In situations where the child simply cannot decode the word, especially with unphonetic words such as; though, flight, gone, etc., the teacher should tell him so that he can get the meaning from context and focus on words he has the ability to decode.

11) Sight vocabulary must be overlearned and is most effective when the child can use it again and again in context. To avoid memorizing the words in a particular setting, the words should be met repeatedly in different settings.

12) Require the child to pronounce words carefully as a first step in word study. Do not allow him to omit a part or slur over a part. Help him to distinguish between similar sounds.

13) Set short term goals which will enable the child to see his way more clearly to the end of the established goal. Practice should not deal with too much too quickly.

14) Use bulletin boards as teaching aids. Seasonal themes can be used. For Halloween, have a haunted house full of ghosts and skeletons with words from the list. If the student is able to identify the word correctly he gets to keep the ghost or skeleton to see who gets the most words. Bulletin boards should serve a useful purpose.

15) If possible use equipment such as language master, tachistoscopes or controlled readers. There is also a great deal of commercial materials which are excellent aids to teachers. Good workbooks such as the Michigan Tracking System give excellent drill in sight words. These items will not be discussed any further in this paper.

Ideas and Activities for Teaching Sight Words

Sight Word Boxes

      a) Using one inch square tagboard pieces, print
           sight words, one letter per square. Put the
           letters in envelopes, one per word. Give the
           child an envelope and see if he can sequence
           the letters correctly.

      b) Using 3 x 5 cards and sandpaper for letters,
           make up a box of sight word cards.

      c) Using 3 x 5 cards, print sight words one on a
           card. Cut the card up in from 4 - 8 pieces
           and place the pieces in an envelope. Give the
           child the envelope with the word puzzle and
           have him put it together and say the word.

      d) Using 3 x 5 cards, print sight words on cards
           having parts of letters missing. Have the child
           determine what the word is by filling in the
           missing parts with his finger and then saying
           the word.

Word Pairs Card Game

Using 3 x 5 cards, make up a deck of 48 cards containing 24 pairs of words taken from the Dolch List. The game can be played as Old Maid, handing out all the cards among 3 or more players. The cards are laid on the table when a person has a pair. The person who gets rid of all his cards first is the winner.

These same cards can be used to play concentration, where all the cards are laid face down on the table. Each person, when it is his turn, looks at two cards. If they match he may keep the cards. The person with the most cards at the end is the winner.

A third use for these cards would be to play "Go Fish". Each player is given five cards and the remainder are placed in the middle of the table, not stacked, but

piled. The player to the left of the dealer starts by asking any of the players for a card to match one that he is holding. If the person asked has the card, he must give it to the person who asked. If the person asked does not have the card he tells the person asking to "Go Fish". The person who asked for the card takes one from the pile. When a person gets a pair, he places them down in front of himself. The player with the most pairs at the end of the game is the winner.

Variation: The cards could also be made up with a word and its configuration.

Newspaper Hunt

Write a word from the Dolch List on the chalkboard. Hand out pages of newspaper and a colored marker to each child. Have the children hunt for and circle the word each time they find it on the page. The winner is the person who found the word most often. This could be used with one child or a whole class.

Fishing

Make a box into a fishing pond. Print words from the Dolch List on fish which have a clip in their mouths, and place them in the pond. Take a thin wooden dowel and attach a piece of string with a small magnet on the end. The child is supplied with a ring on which he hangs the fish he catches and can read.

Magician's Hat

Make rabbits from construction paper and write words from the Dolch List on them. Use a man's dress hat as a container for the rabbits. Have the children draw a rabbit out of the hat. If they can read the word, they get to keep the rabbit. The person who gets the most rabbits is the winner.

Mountain Climbers

Cut an old sheet into strips. Write words from the Dolch List on the strips. String two ropes up to resemble a mountain peak. Attach the words, increasing in difficulty from bottom to top, to the ropes. Each player is given a worksheet with the picture of a mountain, which has lines along the sides from bottom to top. As the child is able to read each word, he starts the climb up the mountain by writing the word in the space on the worksheet. The first player to reach the top of the mountain wins.

Word-o

Make up a set of cards having 25 squares. The middle square should be Free. Fill the other squares with 24 different words from the Dolch List. Each card should have the words in different places and a total of 50 to 75 different words should be used so that no two cards are the same. The

words should also be printed on a master set of small cards to be used for calling the words. Each child should be given small pieces of paper to be used as markers. When a word is called and the child finds it on his card, he covers it up. The first one to cover a row of five squares is the winner. For more drill in word recognition the whole card could be filled to declare a winner.

Listen and Clip

Using pizza wheels, divided into 12 sections, print a word from the Dolch List in each section. Supply 12 clips (clothes pins) numbered from 1 - 12. On a tape, pronounce one of the words, instruct the student to place pin number one on that word, pause, pronounce the word and repeat the number of the clip and then instruct the child to stop the recorder while he places the clip on the wheel. Proceed until all twelve words have been pronounced. For self-checking, place a card with the answers in an envelope on the back of the pizza board.

Pick Up Sticks

On tongue depressors or popsicle sticks, print parts of words from the Dolch List; t_e for the; th_s for this; wh_n for when. Each child picks up a stick. If he can tell what the word is he can keep the stick. The sticks may be kept until the teacher can check to see if he can read the words.

<u>Ring-'em</u>

Let the child choose a word from the Dolch List he wants to work on. Put the word on a card with a whole punched in it. When the child has been able to identify the word at least five times in succession either in an activity or reading, he may put it on his own ring. Eventually the cards can be placed in a box of "Words I Know".

<u>Flash Cards</u>

Hand out flash cards containing Dolch List words. Give each student five cards. The teacher reads a sentence which contains some of the words. Have students hold up any word they have which was used in the sentence.

<u>Worksheets, Reusable Laminated Cards or Chalkboard</u>

1) Give each child a worksheet with words listed in groups of four.

the	there	then	this
up	down	jump	run
was	saw	sew	see

   Read a word and have the child circle the correct word from the row.

2) Make a list of brief numbered phrases on the chalkboard; <u>the funny cat</u>; <u>this is red</u>. Have a bag of numbers to correspond to the numbers on the board. The child chooses a number and reads the corresponding phrase. If he reads it correctly he keeps the card.

3) Make up worksheets with short sentences. Child must circle words used in the sentence from a group of words.
   The man walked.
   She This (The) Them
   me may mad (man)
   talked waked (walked) walled

4) Write sentences on the chalkboard, in which one word is missing. Also write a list of words to choose from.

go   that   up   Look   you

a) Who was _____?

b) Call her _____.

c) Girls, _____ home.

d) _____ at him.

e) Are _____ there?

Eventually this same task could be used without supplying the words to choose from.

5) Place a number of word cards along the chalktray. Say a phrase like bread _____ butter. Have the child find and read the word that goes in the blank.

6) Use the cloze procedure with

Words: this   th _ s   thi _   t _ is   t _ i _   _ _ _ _

Sentences: _____ man went to _____ store.

_____ cat ran _____.

Paragraphs leaving out one word:

_____ man went to _____ zoo. He took _____ car. _____ man fed _____ bears. After _____ man saw _____ monkeys, he went to see _____ birds.

Paragraphs leaving out more than one word:

_____ school I will go _____ the park. I will _____ on the swings and go _____ the slide. I will _____ my dog with _____. He likes to run in the _____.

Summary

This chapter contained ideas, tips and activities which will serve as an aid to the teacher of learning disabled students who need to acquire a sight word vocabulary. Most of the activities require more than one mode of learning therefore can be matched to an individual student's strengths and deficits.

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