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DEVELOPING WORD RECOGNITION IN THE SECOND GRADE

by

Doris I. S. Wiley August 1958

Eastern Illinois University Education 560

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DEVELOPING WORD RECOGNITION IN THE SECOND GRADE

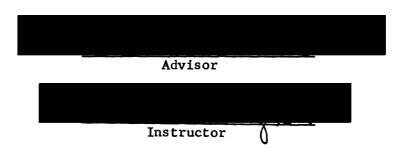
A Paper Written in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in Education at Eastern Illinois University in Education 560.

Plan B

by

Doris I. S. Wiley B. S. in Education Eastern Illinois University, August 1956

AUGUST 1958



PREFACE

This study was made because the writer felt the need for more techniques to use in improving her teaching of second grade reading. "Developing Word Recognition in the Second Grade" was chosen as the main area of study. An attempt has been made to compile information which others, of a wider range of experience than that of the writer, have found useful. This term paper does not represent all the ideas that can be used nor is it the final word on how to deal with this phase of the reading problem. Some of the material may seem somewhat "dated" now, and future experimentations, which prove to be successful, will also produce other methods. However, in the writer's opinion, this material is from reliable sources, and the techniques included should be of value to a teacher of primary reading. The Bibliography and Appendix will give sources of much more complete information. Even these do not include everything of value which may be found. The material included seemed to supplement the needs of the writer in her task of teaching reading in her present position.

Appreciation is due to the librarians of Eastern Illinois University and the Illinois State Library. The writer also wishes to thank: Dr. A. U. Edwards, her advisor, Dr. G. C. Matzner, and Dr. D. L. Moler. These three professors, who are members of the Education Department of Eastern Illinois University, advised on the content of this paper.

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CHAPTER I

GENERAL INFORMATION ON WORD RECOGNITION AND READING

INTRODUCTION

The process of learning to read has many parts, each interrelated with the others. Recognition of the printed symbols, or words, serve as stimuli for the recall of meanings. This recall is involved in the idea that reading is essentially a thinking process. Word recognition skill is required for the interpretation of the printed symbols.

Words may be in a reading, writing, listening, or speaking vocabulary. Sight vocabulary, as the name signifies, is the vocabulary that is immediately recognized on sight, and the term is used as it applies to reading.

Paul McKee expresses his idea of the Three Major Acts of Reading as:

- 1. Identifying and recognizing printed words quickly and accurately.
- 2. Arriving at an adequate understanding of the meaning intended by the writer.
- 3. Making use of the meaning arrived at. 1

¹Paul McKee, <u>The Teaching of Reading in the Elementary School</u> (Chicago: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1948), p. 12.

METHODS OF RECOGNIZING WORDS

The authors consulted seemed to agree, in the main, with Russell² that there are at least seven different ways primary pupils recognize words. These ways include the general pattern of the word, its special features, its similarity to known words, recognition of known parts in words, use of context clues, use of picture clues and some phonetic and structural analysis of the word.

The best equipment for the child is the ability to use various methods for word recognition with a feeling for the applicability of each to specific cases. The best results are seen when the pupil becomes versatile and changes to a suitable method if one is found to be unsatisfactory. This facility is the result of having a variety of skills and being able to properly apply them.

In general, words should be taught in context, not in isolation, following a careful developmental program which helps the learner to use a method, or methods, of recognition. Provision should be made for maintenance of skills, previously presented, and exercises to more firmly establish the old and new words and skills.

If a child does not have a method of observing and studying words that will help him to recognize and remember words, he needs to learn an attack method so that he can develop a sight recognition vocabulary. "The use of kinesthetic, phonic, and visual methods

² David H. Russell, <u>Children</u> <u>Learn</u> <u>to</u> <u>Read</u> (Chicago: Ginn and Co., 1949), p. 145.

have been found useful if the disability is severe."³ A combination of these methods and a combination of experience stories and teacherdevised materials may be needed to supplement books and other published materials used.

Each basic reading program provides for new learnings and review of the old. Teacher's guidebooks and manuals, planned for sequential use, give information about the plan the author thinks most satisfactory. An alert teacher need not be a slave to such helps but may adapt them as they best fit her teaching situation. Her ingenuity will help her provide other ideas.

COMPREHENSION AND WORD RECOGNITION

Word recognition is valuable as an aid to comprehension. Reading presents two more tasks to those found in listening alone. The written word must be recognized before its meaning can be appreciated and the words, in a selection, must be grouped into meaningful phrases and thought units. In listening, the speaker does this for the listener. In reading, comprehension tends to improve as repetitions and hesitations over unfamiliar words can be overcome. These cause a break in the continuity of thought and thus obscure meaning. A well developed sight vocabulary is an aid in overcoming confusions in thought getting.

³Albert J. Harris, <u>How to Increase Reading Ability</u> (New York: Longmans Green and Co., 1956), p. 383.

The heart of the reading task is to obtain appropriate meaning from printed material. Perhaps a person can pronounce foreign words but has no understanding of their meaning. For that reason any definition of reading stipulates that the reader gain meaning. Reading is a type of thinking with the meaning arrived at integrated with the reader's experiences. Poor comprehension is sometimes a direct result of the child's inability to read words.⁴

"Reading is a complex of skills, habits, attitudes and knowledge. It is an integration of complex processes."⁵ Involved in these complex processes are perception, comprehension, interpretation and reasoning in the light of the reader's experiences. An interaction takes place between the reader, his purpose and physical, intellectual, and emotional equipment and what he has read.

FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS

It seems to be necessary that the person learning to read must master some fundamental skills. They include word power and perception, word attack, comprehension and reading study skills.

Many people do not have the knowledge of how to work out unfamiliar words or meanings. As teachers we attempt to provide the tools they need, to work more independently and effectively and to gain in reading skills. In word recognition we strive to build word attack powers from a vocabulary of well learned sight words and attack skills and abilities.

⁴Henry P. Smith, <u>Psychology</u> <u>in</u> <u>Teaching</u> (New York: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1954), p. 299.

⁵John DeBoer, (ed.) "An In Service Approach to the Improvement of Developmental Reading Instruction", <u>Elementary English</u>, Vol. XXXIV, May 1957), p. 312.

INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

To successfully teach reading, the reading processes must be mastered and understood and interpreted to each pupil. This requires adaptation of materials and methods, to each individual child, to effectively guide him toward the achievement of goals in accordance with his capabilities. Just as people differ in physical growth, they also differ in their abilities to master new learnings.

CAUSES OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

The causes of individual difference in the problem of improvement of word recognition is similar to causes of these differences for any other learning task. The pupil's progress will depend upon the degree of his intelligence and his visual and auditory sensory capacities. His physical condition will help determine the amount and degree of attention given to tasks and the vigor and persistence of the actions of learning and other essential factors in learning. The language equipment of the learner and previous experiences are also part of the differences.

In addition to these causes, the rate of learning will depend upon whether material is suited to the achievement level and learning rate of the individual learners. The problem posed is one of having enough variety of materials and using them at the proper times, in the best way and in suitable quantities.

The response to motivation will depend upon utilization of interests already established and enrichment through preliminary activities and discussion in a variety of ways of presentation. Graphs and charts of accomplishments, contests and the use of rewards for good workmanship may result in additional differences. If success can be felt, the will to succeed is a valuable asset. In some circumstances deprivation of privileges and punishments may become necessary. These latter two are not conducive to a pleasant learning situation.

METHODS FOR DISCOVERING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Individual differences and difficulties may be found in various ways. Standard tests give indications which aid the teacher in discovering differences. Tests do not give all the answers but present evidence upon which the teacher can check her judgements, too. The basic reading tests are divided into sections, and the results of those parts dealing with word recognition merit careful study. The low, average or high test grade score indicates points needing attention, or the abilities which are well mastered.

A study of attitudes and interest toward reading and a record of the amount and type of materials read will give further insight into differences. A rating scale of attitudes toward reading, as evidenced by activity, includes a variation in degree from obvious delight in reading to an avoidance of it. The latter type of reader poses more problems of motivation.

The recognition of the significance of individual differences has been shown by attempts to adjust the program of the school to the needs of the child. Classes have differences in mental abilities, in background, in previously acquired skill in reading, and in the amount of variation within the class. Available materials differ. Teachers also are unlike in many ways, including "amount and kind of training; in energy, resourcefulness and in temperamental characteristics,"⁶ thereby adding other differences.

In recalling the happenings of the school day, teachers may often question how well they have dealt with individual pupils. "The speed of achievement will tend to become farther apart between the slowest learner and the quickest with efficient teaching."⁷ "The child who carries the most capability to the page gains the most. Uniformity of achievement in a class is more apt to indicate neglect of abler pupils than it does effective teaching."⁸ Children vary in their capabilities and potentialities for development.

GROUPING AND REMEDIAL READING

Classification into instructional groups, on the basis of reading ability, is an attempt to cope with differences. These homogenous groupings should be accompanied by differentiated courses

> ⁶Albert J. Harris, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 375. ⁷Henry P. Smith, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 305. ⁸Albert J. Harris, <u>op</u>. <u>cit</u>., p. 96.

of study. Mental hygiene principles and corrective and remedial techniques will need to be used, especially with the very poorest readers.

When a completely individualized plan of instruction is followed the group meets together only for the purpose of whole class activities, such as audience situations, for some common new learning, current events of the class newspaper type, or choral reading.⁹

Remedial reading is developed as a way of meeting the needs of each pupil when these have not been previously met in the reading program. In remedial work an attempt is made to find at what level the child can read, what his difficulties may be, why he is experiencing difficulties, and how to overcome them. Work is planned to help the poor reader and to develop the maximum reading power of which each pupil is capable.

> The teaching plans provide growth in the developmental and also the recreational and functional phases of the reading program. A realistic plan should be such that it can be carried out, with a fair degree of success, even by teachers of average ability and training.¹⁰

Satisfactory plans seem to include some whole class activity, some group activity, and some individualized reading, to provide for differences in abilities. The pupil's feeling of success in early stages of reading level leads to more enjoyment of the next level because success is more attainable then. He is less likely to need remedial work later if he feels this early glow of success.

⁹<u>Ibid</u>, p. 115.
¹⁰<u>Ibid</u>, p. 115.

Freeman¹¹ describes corrective reading as that taught to improve reading achievement and as lacking the diagnostic aspect of remedial reading. Reading much familiar material, with a new purpose each time it is read, is helpful. If basal and supplemental materials are slightly inadequate, perhaps the individual approach, rather than homogenous grouping would be more effective.

READING MATERIALS

Most of the newer basic reading texts for primary grades plan to give:

1. Developmental reading and to aid in learning the process of reading.

2. The work type or study reading, is a time when the child "learns how to read to learn,"¹² or the reading for information.

3. Opportunity for the child to develop good taste in the choices of reading.

Supplementary texts and other reading materials add practice in the exercising and perfecting of learned skills. These additional materials are most effective if they utilize a high percentage of the vocabulary of the basic reader, especially in the primary grades. Library and browsing materials should also be selected with this basic reading vocabulary in mind. To help create reading interest many simple, ungraded materials which can be read at free time are needed.

¹¹Frank S. Freeman, <u>Theory and Practice of Psychological</u> <u>Testing</u> (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1955), p. 35.

¹²William Burton, Clara Belle Baker and Grace Kemp, <u>Teaching</u> <u>Guide for Meet our Friends</u> (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1951), p. 35.

VARIETY FOR INTEREST

Perhaps much of the inattention and lack of interest can be overcome by increasing the variety of activities, to include physical variations, variety in drills and reading materials and the use of mechanical devices, such as motion pictures or slides.

The physical variation might include changes of room arrangements, especially in library corners, or other arrangements of books and magazines to stimulate more curiosity and interest in what their printed pages could reveal.

Variations of games, races, and seatwork are possible for drill purposes. The time limit for drill periods should be kept within a non-tiring length and be of a challenging nature with opportunity for success. This success builds toward the acquiring of useful knowledge and skills.

In addition to reading materials from books and magazines, experience charts usually capture interest because the subject of the chart is something with which the pupils have had experience. Records of things seen and experienced on field trips add variety.

If an interest is discovered or can be created in further reading on any subject, a variety of reading materials should be available to make research possible. On the primary level this research type reading is much more limited than in higher grades because of a more limited reading vocabulary and experience level.

Much of the vocabulary of newspapers is too difficult, but calling attention to pictures, captions, and headlines of events within childrens' interest will help create an interest in this type

of reading. The comic strips help arouse an interest in what the words with the pictures tell. Some of the spelling and grammar in the comics are not good examples. "Little Nancy" by Ernie Bushmiller, the writer believes, is one of the more desirable comics. The newspapers often carry pictures or stories that coincide with the news stories in the <u>Weekly Reader</u>, and will be seen by an interested child.

When school library facilities are limited, as a broadening experience, trips to larger libraries add variety. This visit may be for the purpose of browsing or research, but in either case choosing and handling books would be part of the purpose of the trip. The teacher and librarian should confer before the visit to provide as many learning situations as possible.

CHAPTER II

BASIC PROBLEMS AND TECHNIQUES IN DEVELOPING WORD RECOGNITION

BASIC TECHNIQUES IN WORD RECOGNITION

The preceding chapter has briefly mentioned information pertinent to methods of recognizing words and comprehension and word recognition. This chapter will give some techniques and principles of developing word recognition to help the child become an increasingly independent reader. A good sight vocabulary and many quickly recognized phrases, formulated from the sight vocabulary, are to be attained as a foundation for further abilities. Improvement in reading will follow an increase in ability to make auditory and visual discrimination and to use context clues.

The following basic techniques are given in the order which probably is the one for introducing them to primary children: picture clues, context clues, configuration clues, distinguishing characteristics, phonetic analysis, letters and letter combinations and structural analysis.

The picture clues may range from a complete story in pictures in beginning reading with the child supplying the words, to a picture and a printed sentence which the picture makes relatively easy to read. The sentence may contain only one strange word, which has within it something familiar. This may be a speech or consonant blend, and the picture will give a familiar meaning to the unknown word.

The context clues give help in word recognition when the sense of the sentence is kept in mind and by using the known part of the word forms. If the strange word is about a topic with which the reader is familiar, the meaning will help in its recognition. If a knowledge of correct grammatical use, such as come and came, and the order of words in English construction is known, the words are more readily learned in context.

The size and shape of words or the general configuration are used in recognizing words. Along with the shape of the words, some particular part of the form may be most useful, such as initial sounds or these sounds plus other distinguishing features.

Phonetic analysis is of value in attacking words that are spelled phonetically. Difficulty is experienced frequently because many letters have more than one sound, many sounds are spelled in different ways and letter combinations may have more than one sound when in different words. The sound elements within the word, beginning letters, phonograms and consonant blends are used, by the learner, in phonetic analysis.

In general, second grade work is built on the foundation developed in first grade. Sounds of the remainder of single consonants and consonant blends, commonly found at this level, are taught. Phonetic systems usually provide for teaching the long and short vowels. Key words help retain the proper sounds. The consonant blends at the end of words and vowel blends are used, and single rules for vowel sounds are learned.

Structural analysis is a means of searching for the manner in which a word is made by a "taking apart". The familiar base word,

suffix or prefix, and recognizing parts of compound words are a finding of large rather than small phonetic elements.

PRINCIPLES FOR DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT WORD RECOGNITION

As a new technique is introduced, the child may exercise more choice in his working toward an independent mastery. He should be taught, or helped to discover, to use context and analysis skills and use the meaning he arrives at to form a check on his comprehension. As he becomes acquainted with more words, the comparison of new words with the familiar ones, their uses, phonetic and structural elements of these words will be useful.

Phonetic analysis, including sounds of letters and letter combinations, is recommended by most writers as best introduced following the acquisition of a sight vocabulary. These sound elements, arrived at phonetically, are used in pronouncing the entire word, not as isolated sounds. The amount of guidance the child needs will vary, with the variations of maturity, intelligence, and learning experiences. The goal ahead is the ability to use many rather than just one technique.

Combinations of methods and flexibility of attack, rather than mere mastery of facts and principles, is desirable. As a rule, words should be taught in context, not in isolation, following a careful developmental program in which help is given in how to use methods of word recognition. Provision for maintenance of skills presented earlier, and exercises to more firmly fix the old and new words and skills should be undertaken.

PROBLEMS AND TECHNIQUES OF WORD RECOGNITION AND IDENTIFICATION

The child should develop skill in recognizing readily word forms through visual and auditory perceptions. Less rapidly, but with little analysis or inspection, he should recognize words not so well known. The recognition of likenesses and differences, known sounds and the use of any clues, picture, context, or phonetic, and the retention of visual image of the word are useful in working with unfamiliar words. This is the attack with the combination of what he already knows about the word.

Before the child is expected to get meaning from the written word, he must have the word in his listening vocabulary. He will need to be encouraged in the use of context, as a reminder of the sense of what is being read, and whether the new word seems to add sensible meaning. Completion type sentences and exercises are useful activities to use in aiding the child to look and read for meaning.

Primary teachers have two general approaches for building word recognition techniques. They develop an awareness of the new word and its use before it is presented in print or introduced in context. Then the new term is repeated to assure that it will remain familiar. In experience charts are many opportunities for repetition, as in lists, labels and varied games. At the early primary level the words are told the child, but as he gains word analysis skills the need for such procedure is diminished.

If the words are likely to become part of the child's speaking

and writing vocabulary, it is important to spend time in helping him work the word out by structural and phonetic analysis. Practice to develop skill in rapid recognition by word analysis clues will also include context clues. Flash card devices may increase the ease and speed of recognition, but it is more important that the words be recognized in context than in an isolated list. In addition to the child's individual list of words that he possesses as a sight vocabulary, the class may want a class list of new words.

Multiple choice vocabulary tests or riddles may be used to give a better acquaintance with new terms. Compound words lend themselves to structural analysis and suffixes and prefixes usually become readily recognizable leaving a small part of the word to be recognized. Key letters for words in completion exercises afford another drill method.

TECHNIQUES FOR USE IN OVERCOMING WORD DIFFICULTIES

Prevention is better than cure in avoiding word difficulty. If the child is matured sufficiently and has an adequate background of experiences, his stage of mental growth will help him find meaning in his tasks of learning to read. When he finds this meaning, many of the comprehension difficulties will not arise. If proper attention has not been given to maturation, the proper stage of readiness will be lacking for mastery of his reading tasks. If word difficulty has arisen, the following techniques will indicate some helps in overcoming the difficulties.

For the child who has difficulty seeing the configuration of the word, the teacher calls his attention to length and height of

the word, to likenesses and differences in its form and structure. Any extensions of the word above or below the line should be noted. Writing it from memory, after careful observation, helps to show if the form is correctly perceived.

Structural analysis, supplemented by pictures, is a way of learning recognition of compound words. The pictures of a pocket and a book, as in the case of the word pocketbook, is an example of this use of pictures. Two words, written separately, may be put together for example, bird and house, as in the word birdhouse, to use in sentence completion.

WORD PERCEPTION ERRORS

Reading material should be highly interesting to the child and be relatively easy at first, growing progressively more difficult as his mastery and maturation develop. Particular errors and successes of each child should be noted. The most common perception errors are usually omissions, of part of the word, as fat for fast, and omissions or confusions of word endings; reversals, as was for saw; substitutions of sounds, as wound for round; initial and final sound; configuration, as hand for land, because of similarity in appearance.

In re-teaching to help correct these errors, it will be necessary to know which ones are causing the difficulty and to give practice to overcome them. The awareness that each word is important and has a definite meaning will help correct omissions.

For reversals, the proper sequences of left to right will need to be learned. Becoming aware that the initial sound is the

one on the left side of the word is a must. A simple device, for illustrative purposes, is to write the initial letter in green and the final letter in red. Perhaps none of the children will fail to get the significance if they are reminded of the usefulness of the green and red of traffic lights. Closer attention to the number of letters and their place in the word will also help break the reversal habit.

CHAPTER III

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES IN THE TEACHING OF READING

LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Learning difficulties may be found in all fields of learning. The teacher should be aware of learning difficulties and how to deal with them as they affect the reading problems of children. Those difficulties considered here are the main ones which interfere in the learning to read. Some of these difficulties are physical handicaps, word difficulties, immature habits, and lack of fluency in oral and silent reading.

IDENTIFYING AND OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

The help of parents, doctors, psychologists, other teachers, social workers, speech therapists, and vocational counselors is of value in checking for possible causes of the difficulties affecting the problem of learning to read. However, there are observable signs which require little special training to note.

TECHNIQUES FOR FINDING PHYSICAL DIFFICULTIES

In checking for visual difficulties careful observation of the child will determine how he looks at the chalk board and how he holds his book. If the head is held to one side, or if the material is held at such a distance that it indicates near or far sightedness,

reading troubles can be expected. Other observable signs include blood shot eyes, swollen or inflamed lids, and tense facial expressions. Complaints of sleepiness, fatigue, headaches, nausea, dizziness, and blurred, double or distorted vision may come from visual difficulties.

In observing auditory acuity and discrimination, watch the child who always asks for words to be repeated, or turns his head or cups his hand behind his ear and scowls or shows signs of intense effort when listening. An audiometer test may be made by a speech teacher, or others with training in its use, to determine the degree and type of hearing loss. The watch tick test shows how much closer the watch must be held to be heard than for a child with normal hearing. The whisper test is another simple one. The teacher whispers and asks the child to repeat. The child's back is turned to remove the opportunity for lip reading.

If there seems to be need for testing for sounds, words containing similar sounds, as bat and cat, may be said, and words having the same initial consonant sounds as coat, cat and cut may be said with the child's back turned and he be asked to repeat them. Words with the same final consonant may be used in the same way. The child may also be asked to pick out the word which does not rhyme as in me, bee, bet.

PERSONALITY MALADJUSTMENTS

There seems to be no definite type of personality maladjustment which always points toward a reading disability, but it is found with other forms of maladjustment. Shyness, timidity and self

consciousness will require understanding by the teacher and time to gain self-confidence, as will temper tantrums. A friendliness, with appreciation for effort, gives needed encouragement to the crying or nervous child so that it will assume more responsibilities.

OVERCOMING IMMATURE HABITS

Habits of poor eye movements, lip reading when reading silently and pointing with the finger are immature habits which need to be overcome. For proper left to right eye movements the directions of left and right will need to be understood as well as the place at which to begin reading. Rhythm and proper direction will improve when this is understood. A story told in pictures arranged in a left to right sequence, reading large signs from left to right will help establish better eye movements. If something is held between the teeth or if the child reads silently, with a finger touching the lip he will become conscious of the movement of his lips and can begin to overcome the habit. To overcome pointing with the finger, use exercises that are to be read with the eyes only, and practice using short sentences and, when necessary, use a marker to keep the place in longer sentences.

Even though the chronological age indicates that the child should be ready for reading activities it does not necessarily follow. His slowness in other maturational phases may make it impossible. Poor habits, due to his immaturity, will be formed, and extra problems will result. The correction of bad habits will be hastened if the child becomes conscious of them in a way which does not cause him fright or embarrassment.

SUMMARY

In the preparation of this paper the writer failed to find any evidence that word recognition interferes with understanding the context or in noting context clues. It seems to supplement and to lead to a more accurate interpretation of what is being read.

Configuration clues should become less important in use as soon as other more efficient word recognition skills such as context clues, phonetic elements and structural clues function more effectively. Training in word recognition should extend beyond primary grades because of increasing difficulties in words encountered. Word study in college may be a benefit.

Skills in word recognition which are needed are: word meaning skills, phonetic analysis, and ear training skills, word analysis, and word building skills. Activities, including visual, auditory, kinesthetic and speech, should be integrated. A quick and accurate word recognition will aid in reading effectively for meaning. Without meaning there seems little purpose in learning to read.

APPENDIX

WORD LISTS

It is wise for the teacher to become familiar with some

of these widely used word lists.

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