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# ERIC/RCS REPORT

## Individualized Reading

by William Rupley, Research Assistant

Jerry Abbott, the principal of an elementary school in North Dakota, listed (Elementary English, Volume 49, January 1972, pp. 33-36) fifteen reasons why individualized reading does not work. He believed that his list was only a beginning and that many more reasons could be added. But he and the teachers at the school where he is the principal also refused to believe that there was a better way to teaching reading.

Some more detailed research reports and programs in the area of individualized reading that have recently been acquired by the ERIC system include a study conducted by Harold E. Stolt which attempted to determine the effect of inservice training in individualized conferences and interaction analysis of the individual reading conference conducted by elementary school teachers. Stolt found that those teachers in the experimental group became more accepting of students' feelings and ideas, used more indirect influence, placed less emphasis on the content of materials read, and used less teacher-directed talk. (Stolt, Harold E., *An Analysis of the Individual Reading Conference in the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Grades*, ED 063 607; Document Not Available from EDRS.)

In another paper Phylliss Adams identified the variables that influence the success of an individualized program, indicating that the variables of personnel, pupils, and materials are of major importance. Although research has not yet clarified what type of child is best suited for an individualized

approach, pupil variables to take into consideration include self-concept, learning style, attitude toward reading, and the child's degree of independence in directing his own learning. (Adams, Phylliss J., *Individualized Reading: Variables That Make a Difference*, ED 065 844 9p.)

A three year study involving 359 pupils compared individualized reading instruction with basal reading instruction. Twenty-eight first-grade classrooms were divided into instructional groups using either the basal or the individualized approach. Pupils remained together in their various classes and treatment groups for the three year period, but their teachers changed yearly.

It was found that the pupils in the individualized reading groups<sup>(1)</sup> scored significantly higher on eight of thirteen standardized achievement tests;<sup>(2)</sup> did not differ significantly in oral reading ability, social adjustment, or attitude toward reading; and<sup>(3)</sup> read more in first grade (a trend that was reversed in third grade). It was also found that the parents of these pupils had a more positive attitude toward their children's reading programs. (Gleason, David, *Lakeshore Curriculum Study Council Individualized Reading. A Three Year Study*, ED 052 906, 81p.)

Thirteen papers from the 1971 Auburn University Reading Conference report on various aspects of individualized reading, including informal diagnosis of reading skills, the role of oral and silent reading,

classroom organization, media and materials for teaching reading, affective behavior related to reading, simulation games and their use in teaching reading, the comprehension of written materials, evaluation and record-keeping, adapting materials for skill development, and teaching/learning situations conducive to learning. The papers are introduced and concluded with comments from the editors, and an appendix containing a sample informal reading inventory is included. (Noland, Ronald G., and Wright, Jone P., *Comments on Individualized Reading*, ED 062 101, 80p.)

The staff of the Reading Project of the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh has adapted commercially available materials for use in an individualized elementary school environment. Their activities culminated in the New Primary Grades Reading System designed for three years of instruction. The program permits individual rates of progress through sixteen levels, each of which contains ten instructional sequences. The program utilizes such materials as workbooks, storybooks, games, and cassette-record lessons. The materials fall into three categories: (1) prescriptive - teacher controlled; (2) selection - limited student choice; and (3) choice - greater student freedom. (Beck, Isabel, and Mitroff, Donna, *The Rationale and Design of a Primary Grades Reading System for an Individualized Classroom*, ED 063 100, 92p.)

The Ralph C. Robinson Elementary School, Atlanta, Georgia, implemented an individualized reading program through the support of the Comprehensive Instructional Program, the Emergency School Assistance Program, and ESEA Title I. The program was directed toward increasing the reading skills of pupils in the primary grades. Since those activities resulting

from special support programs were integrated with the regular school programs, all services and resources became a part of the regular instruction program and were aimed at satisfying the identified needs of the disadvantaged pupils. The document discusses the development of the program during the 1970-71 school year and includes information on (1) supporting programs and goals; (2) instructional programs; (3) management and product evaluation and cost effectiveness; (4) inservice activities and workshops; and (5) conclusions and recommendations. (Walker, Richard, and Horton, Richard, *Ralph C. Robinson Elementary School, 1970-71 Research and Development Report*, Volume 5 Number 8, ED 064 456, 58p.)

An individualized, nongraded ESEA Title III reading program to be used with children from kindergarten through third grade was developed at Moreland School in Moreland, Idaho. Through the use of team teaching and individual and small group instruction, the program is attempting to provide prereading experiences, language experiences, and reading-thinking activities, and to develop vocabulary, independence, enjoyment, and versatility in reading. The basis for independent reading is the word recognition skills, such as phonic generalization, context clues, and structural generalizations. (Snake River School District 52, Blackfoot, Idaho, *Curriculum Change Through Nongraded Individualization*, ED 053 898, 54p.)

An elementary program used in a third grade heterogeneous class in an Iowa elementary school is used as an example of individualized reading. Incorporated in the program are oral reading, audiovisual aids, records of reading, and free reading time. The goals of the program are to develop positive attitudes toward reading, to

encourage free reading, and to stimulate a wide range of reading interests. (Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, *Guided Individualized Reading: English Language Curriculum Series Pamphlet 2*. Grades K-12, ED 053 891, 51p.)

Some journal articles listed in CIJE are related to the topic of individualized reading are: (1) Abbott, Jerry L., "Fifteen Reasons Why Personalized Reading Instruction Does Not work," *Elementary English* v49 n1, p33-6, Jan 72; (2) Housekeeper, Geraldine, "Does Individualized Reading Affect Other Subject Areas?" *Elementary English* v49 n1, p37-43, Jan 72; (3) Krynski, Elizabeth, "Individualized Reading," *Instructor* v91 n3, p 104, Nov 71; and (4) Schoeller, Arthur, "Reading: First Steps to

Individualization," *Instructor* v81 n5, p53-4, Jan. 72.

Further information on these and other ERIC documents on individualized reading can be obtained by consulting *Research in Education* (RIE) and *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE).

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