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Professional Standards for Reading Personnel

developed by the
MRA Professional Standards Committee
Beverly Chamberlain, Chairman
Jessie Blank
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(The standards for professional preparation and the descriptions of positions in reading instruction on the following pages were adopted by the Michigan Reading Association on March 10, 1968.)

I. **The Classroom Teacher.** The role of the classroom teacher is to teach children. In order to do this effectively, the teacher must be prepared to adjust the level of instruction to the level of competency of the individual child. A small number of students in the total school population cannot benefit from regular classroom placement. A teacher should be capable of recognizing these children and referring them for diagnosis and therapy.

Proposed Standards of Preparation

1. It is recommended that for the teachers in training for elementary and secondary teaching positions a minimum of six college semester hours in the theories and methods of reading instruction be required.

2. The IRA recommended minimum standards for professional preparation in reading for classroom teachers (Revised, 1965) should be referred to for more specific guidelines.

II. **The Reading Specialist.** The reading specialist should function under the direction of a reading consultant or a reading coordinator. The use of the reading specialist should usually be limited to a clinical setting.

Proposed Standards of Preparation

1. A minimum of three years of successful classroom teaching in which the teaching of reading was an important aspect of the job.
2. A planned program from an accredited institution, consisting of a minimum of thirty graduate hours in reading and related areas as follows.

(1) A minimum of 12 hours in graduate level reading courses with at least one course in each of the following:

- a. Foundations or survey of reading.
- b. Diagnosis and correction of reading disability.
- c. Clinical or laboratory practicum in reading.

(2) Have completed, at undergraduate or graduate level, study in each of the following areas:

- a. Measurement and/or evaluation.
 - b. Child and/or adolescent psychology.
 - c. Psychology, including such aspects as personality, cognition, learning behaviors, etc.
 - d. Literature for children and/or adolescents.
- (3) Any remaining portion of the program may be obtained from related areas such as the following:
- a. Research and the literature in reading.
 - b. Linguistics.
 - c. Physiological factors in reading (Speech, Hearing, Vision, etc.)
 - d. Exceptional children.
 - e. Foundations of education.
 - f. Curriculum.
 - g. Guidance.
 - h. Psychology.
 - i. Sociology and anthropology.

III. Reading Consultant. The reading consultant should be a full time employee who works primarily with teachers and administrators within a school to develop and implement a complete program of reading, kindergarten through 12.

Proposed Standards of Preparation

- 1. The IRA minimum standards for reading specialists should be met.
- 2. A minor in educational psychology dealing with learning theory, diagnosis and remediation of learning disabilities.
- 3. Three years or more of practical experiences as a classroom teacher, also some experiences as a specialist, or a clinician.

IV. Reading Clinician. The primary function of the clinician should be individual diagnosis of children's difficulties in developing their basic learning skills, the development of strategies for a more suitable learning environment designed to promote the children's growth. A second function would be training people to become reading clinicians and specialists. The clinician also would participate in the development and implementation of basic research.

Proposed Standards of Preparation

- 1. The IRA minimum standards for reading specialists.
- 2. A minor in educational psychology dealing with the diagnosis and remediation of learning disabilities.
- 3. Two or more years of experience working in a clinical setting with children who have learning disabilities.

V. Reading Coordinator. In cooperation with the local school district administrative personnel, the reading coordinator should provide leadership for the total reading program of the entire school system. This should include the programs for classroom reading instruction and also specialized reading situations for the exceptional child.

Proposed Standards of Preparation

- 1. The IRA minimum standards for reading specialists.

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or finger-paint is an effective kinesthetic technique as is tracing letters in the air.

Enforcement through verbalization may be accomplished by having the reader stop after he has misread a word and immediately spell it out loud correctly.

Materials, research, theories and methods of instruction are contributed from many sources to help up-grade our reading programs. But teachers as well as children must be up-graded.

Teachers must be made aware of the significance of perceptual training and developmental possibilities and these findings would be applicable to classroom teaching experiences.

It is, as it always has been, the teacher, the human, not the

inanimate factor which makes the difference.

(Wanda Sandefur and Pat Suckley are teachers in the Warren School District.)

1. Montessori, Marie, *The Absorbent Mind*, (Adyar, Madras 20, India: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1961), p. 3.

2. Orton, Samuel T., "An Impediment to Learning to Read. A Neurological Explanation of the Reading Disability." *School and Society*, September, 1928, pp. 286-290.

3. Eames, Thomas H., "The Relationship of reading and Speech Difficulties," *Journal of Education Psychology*, 41 January, 1950, pp. 50-55.

4. Frostig, Marianne, "The Marianne Frostig Test of Visual Perception, 1963 Standardization." *Perceptual and Motor Skills*, 1964, pp. 464-499.

5. Langford, William S., Jansky, Jeanette Jefferson, and deHirsch, Katrina, *Predicting Reading Failure*, Harper and Row, 1966.

Standards (Continued from page 23)

2. A minor in educational psychology dealing with learning theory and the diagnosis and remediation of learning disabilities.
3. Three years or more of practical experience as a classroom teacher as well as some experience as a reading specialist, a reading clinician, or a reading consultant.
4. Experience or training that would prepare the individual for administrative responsibilities.

VI. **The College Teacher.** The college teacher involved in preparing teachers and specialists in the field of reading should provide leadership in relating the theory and practice of his field to the solution of problems in the reading curriculum of a local school district.

Proposed Standards of Preparation

1. The college teacher involved with teacher preparation in reading should have the training and experience required to impart necessary knowledge to classroom teachers and the prospective reading specialist.
2. Practical experience as a reading consultant or coordinator should be an integral part of the required preparation.