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# Teacher-Pupil Interaction in Three Types of Elementary Classroom Reading Situations

by Dr. Virginia B. Morrison

## Introduction

Are differences in teachers' and pupils' behaviors apparent when the "same text for every pupil" classrooms are compared with classrooms in which multi-level and/or supplementary reading and subject matter materials are used in instruction?

Through new instrumentation and equipment technology, it is not only possible to identify patterns of teacher-pupil interaction (Medley and Mitzel, 1958 (3); Dixon and Morrison, 1964 (1); Morrison, 1961, 1965 (5, 4); Perkins, 1961 (7); Morrison and Ray, 1968 (6); Lantz and Medley, 1966 (2); and Ray, 1968 (8)) but to identify changes in teacher-pupil behaviors under various methods, or uses of instructional media as vehicles of methodology. Havoc may well have been unintentionally inflicted on findings of previous studies of interaction if no concern for methodology was provided.

## Problem

The present report is concerned with findings of teacher-pupil behaviors occurring in three types of classroom reading situations: (1) the use of the same (single) reading or subject area text by the teacher and all pupils; (2) the use of multi-level texts in reading

groups or ability-subject groupings; and (3) the use of supplementary and/or individualized reading materials by teacher and pupils in classrooms of elementary schools.

## Data Collection

Both teachers' and pupils' behaviors in four dimensions of interaction were investigated: I. Classroom Activities-Comprised of categories of leadership, participation, assistance and mobility; II. Uses of Instructional Materials; III. Teaching styles and Pupil responses, including a lecture-question-answer-recitation; a problem-solving; a demonstration-illustration-manipulation; and an individualized provision for pupils category; and IV. the Emotional or Affective Climate of the Classroom, composed of positive and negative items of verbal, physical and covert behaviors evidenced by teachers and pupils.

Instrumentation consisted of the Revised Observer Schedule and Record Form II (4, 6) and video tape recording equipment. Data were collected in a larger study (4) in which 96 different elementary school teachers and pupil samples were observed by means of video tape for a three hour morning or afternoon session in the Detroit, Michigan public schools during

1964-5. Ninety minutes of taped, sequential classroom activity for each teacher and pupil group were obtained.

### Sample

Subjects of the study were equal numbers of male and female, Negro and Caucasian elementary school teachers and equal numbers of Caucasian and Negro predominance (75 per cent or more) pupil groups. Groups from 33 representative public schools (10 inner-city, 10 mid-city and 10 outer-city - with three "Great Cities" project schools) - were equally distributed by socio-economic location. A balance of 28 outer-city, 26 mid-city and 27 inner-city groups were included with 15 "Great Cities" groups in the design of the study.

For this report, concerned with interactions in these three types of classroom reading situations, only those data cards of teachers and pupils engaged in reading activities during the 90-minute, video taped observations were selected from the total group. Scores were obtained from tallies of observed events listed on the Revised Observer Schedule and Record Form II (4) as coded by three trained observers. The total frequencies of items listed for each category comprised the "category score" or the video recorded behaviors per classroom. Inter-observer agreement levels of .862, .886 and .946, at the .01 level of agreement, were considered acceptable in establishing the reliability of observational counts by the observers.

Data were subject to the Fisher t-test of significant differences between independent group means with each category describing the same general type of both teacher and pupil behaviors in these varied reading situations.

Intercorrelations among the categories, at either the .05 or .01 levels of significance, are indicated with appropriate asterisks in Table I. Note that negative aspects of interaction (indicated by a  $\circ$  symbol) having negative correlational figures reveal that less of this type of behavior occurred and was thus considered of more positive value. Only those values above the .05 level of significance are reported.

### Findings

In comparisons of the three types of reading provisions, significant differences in amounts and patterns of teacher-pupil interaction occurred.

#### Same Single Text Classrooms

When the same text was used by the teacher and every pupil, in reading or subject area classes, differences in teacher behaviors of significantly less assistance to pupils; less mobility in the classroom; less individualized provisions in all activities; less positive verbal, physical and covert behaviors and more self-restriction at significant levels were revealed. Pupil mobility and individual activities were significantly restricted with significantly less pupil positive physical behaviors occurring.

TABLE 1

INTERCORRELATIONS OF TEACHER - PUPIL INTERACTIONS IN THREE TYPES OF CLASSROOM READING SITUATIONS<sup>1</sup>

CATEGORY	Interaction Associates When Teachers Used			Interaction Associates When Pupil Used		
	Same Single Text	Multi- Level Texts	Supple- mentary Reading	Same Single Text	Multi- Level Texts	Supple- mentary Reading
<b>Classroom Activities</b>						
T. Leadership						.251*
P. Leadership				-.289**		.266*
T. Participation	-.264*					.267*
P. Participation						.435**
T. Assistance	-.264*	.371**		-.271*		
T. Mobility	-.303**	.481**		-.307**	.275*	
P. Mobility	-.309**			-.363**		.244*
<b>Uses of Instructional Materials</b>						
Teacher		.306**	.417**		.230*	.236*
Pupils			.238*			.323**
<b>Teaching Styles-Pupil responses</b>						
T. Problem-solving		-.371**			-.328**	
P. Problem-solving						.340**
T. Demonstration et. al.			.360**	-.290**	-.297**	.401**
P. Demonstration et. al.			.401**	-.336**		.464**
T. Individualization.	-.252*	.514**		-.385**	.450**	
P. Individualized	-.293**	.243*		-.454**	.330**	.286**
<b>Emotional or Affective Climate of the Classroom</b>						
T. Positive Verbal	-.227*	.284**		-.342**	.305**	
T. Positive Physical	-.319**		.284**	-.357**		.272*
P. Positive Physical	-.239*		.328**	-.307**		
T. Positive Covert	-.261*			-.260*		
P. Positive Covert			.299**			.303**
P. Negative Verbal <sup>o</sup>	-.216(*)					
T. Negative Physical <sup>o</sup>				.344**		
P. Negative Physical <sup>o</sup>				.269*		
T. Negative Covert <sup>o</sup>						
P. Negative Covert <sup>o</sup>			-.488**	.275*		-.387**
T. Self-restriction <sup>o</sup>	.291*					
T. Punitive <sup>o</sup>		-.235*				
P. Disruptive <sup>o</sup>						.283**

<sup>1</sup>df=81. P > .05 = .217\*; P > .01 = .283\*\*

<sup>o</sup>Negative value categories interpreted by meaning; i.e., - = less of listed behavior; + = more of listed behavior.

Pupil behaviors in these "same text" classrooms also showed significant and consistently negative patterns of interaction with less pupil leadership opportunities; less pupil mobility; less teaching or involvement by demonstration-illustration-manipulation of academic materials; and less individualized engagement in activities. Significantly less positive pupil affectivity in physical actions and significantly more negative physical and covert behaviors were recorded.

#### **Multi-level Classroom Use of Texts**

Teacher behaviors in situations employing multi-level texts in reading groups or subject matter groupings were more positive with significantly more assistance given pupils; more mobility in the classroom; significantly more instructional materials of various types used; more individualization of activities; more positive verbal statements and significantly less punitive behaviors in evidence.

Pupils' group means showed significantly more individual activities, as an obvious correlate of methodology, and no instances of negative interactions as in the "same text" classrooms.

#### **Supplementary Reading Situations**

When teachers used supplementary, enriched or individualized reading texts and subject area reading materials, significantly more varieties of instructional materials were also used by both teachers and

pupils; teachers and pupils employed more demonstration-illustration-manipulation of academic materials; evidenced more positive physical behaviors and revealed more positive pupil covert actions and less negative covert behaviors.

The greatest number of significant differences occurred in those pupil groups using supplementary reading materials. Significantly high amounts of teacher and pupil leadership opportunities; teacher and pupil participation; and pupil mobility occurred. Teachers and pupils also used greater amounts and more varieties of instructional materials. Highly significant amounts of pupil problem-solving, demonstration and individualized activities were revealed. Teachers were more positive in physical contacts with significantly less covert behaviors; pupils showed more positive covert actions (although also indicated more disruptive (i.e., whispering, inattention, etc.) behaviors.

#### **Conclusions**

From these data regarding relationships of interaction between teachers and pupils in 81 elementary school classrooms of a public school system in three types of reading situations, the use of multi-level and supplementary reading and subject area materials showed the greatest number of significantly positive aspects of classroom interactions in Classroom Activities; two of four Teaching styles-Pupil Responses categories; in total Uses of Instruct-

ional Materials by number and variety; and in the majority of positive affective behaviors.

The "same text for teacher and every pupil" classrooms were characterized by significantly low and negative interactions in Classroom Activities categories; in individualized provisions for pupils; and in types of positive affectivity. In no single category were the interactions of a positive nature.

These findings are submitted not only in support or general knowledge that reading methodology must provide for

the needs and interests of students to attain the goals of reading instruction-the desire and ability to read-but are presented in more specific terms. The "same text for every pupil" situations are associated with a lack of involvement and interaction between pupils and teacher while multi-level and enriched classroom reading provisions are characterized by more positive and educationally sound relationships. To forty years of reading research is added this evidence of specific classroom occurrences in behavioral terms.

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