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Twelve Sequence Stories
for use as
Part of Reading Curriculum for Deaf Children

Submitted by
Amy McDonald
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from library.*

I would like to express my special thanks to Barb Lanfer and Kathy Rakowski for using several of my sequence stories in their classes and giving me helpful feedback as to what was working and what was difficult for the children. I would also like to thank Karen Stein for her help and guidance throughout my study, including several last-minute meetings to discuss changes within the stories. Everyone's help was greatly appreciated, as it helped me continue to learn about the process of teaching reading to hearing-impaired children.

Reading is the main vehicle of success in the learning process. The reading skills that one develops as a child are further strengthened and refined in adulthood for everyday survival. The process of reading is complex, and is not solely based on the ability to decode and identify words. Rather, the skill of reading requires that one possess the ability to read the words of a given passage, comprehend what he has read, pull out the main ideas of the passage, sequence the ^{ideas} passage, and answer questions related to the content of the passage. Clearly, the ability to identify words in print is just a piece of the larger reading puzzle.

There appear to be at least two primary approaches to teaching reading. One of these approaches advocates that a word in print is simply a symbol for a spoken word (Ostern Hart, 1978.). With this concept as its base, this reading approach concentrates on having the child use his pre-existing knowledge of language to help him learn to identify words in print, and in turn, strengthen his reading skills. Here, the spoken English that a child knows, including sound-letter relationships and a variety of the supersegmental aspects of speech, is used to guide the child through the reading process (Ostern Hart, 1978.). A second approach to teaching reading sees the written form of language as a separate mode of communication, and therefore concentrates more on the content of reading, rather than the form (Ostern Hart, 1978.). Here the child is instructed to relate the content of his reading to his own experiences, to help him develop better comprehension skills in his reading.

Not all children learn how to read in the same way, so it is often necessary for teachers to incorporate techniques from several different teaching approaches to facilitate the skill of reading for their children. Hearing-impaired children tend to exhibit difficulties as they attempt to acquire basic reading skills. This appears to stem from the fact that reading is both a visual and a linguistic skill. Although the visual component does not pose many unusual problems among deaf children, the linguistic component of reading definitely puts deaf children at a disadvantage as they begin to learn how to read. ^{not} Deaf children need to be taught language in an extremely intense and repetitive manner, to enable them to use it to communicate their needs and ideas. Because of the concentrated effort that this type of learning

entails, the linguistic skills of deaf children are usually much lower than those of their hearing age-mates(Ostern Hart, 1978.). Without the use of the auditory channel, children do not have the advantage of hearing spoken language and using it to decipher a written code. As a deaf child begins the reading process, he is not only learning how to read, but he must also learn vocabulary and language that he may not yet identify or know how to use. Without a strong language base, most, if not all of the pieces in the reading puzzle will not be learned easily by the deaf child.

The ideas and philosophies that a teacher follows concerning how a person learns to read greatly affect how that teacher guides her students to read. Since the skill of reading is learned in a highly individualized manner, the materials for a reading curriculum serve as important tools for teaching children how to read. In the words of Larry Harris and Carl Smith, co-authors of the book Reading Instruction Through Diagnostic Teaching, "Materials do not constitute a reading program, but they help to acheive a reading program."(Harris & Smith, 1972.). It is the teacher's use and integration of reading materials that helps the child develop successful reading skills. One possible curriculum of reading materials includes the use of sight vocabulary drills, experience and sequence stories, pre-primers, basal readers, and text books.(Central Institute For The Deaf) The remainder of this paper will discuss the purposes and uses for these materials as part of a successful reading curriculum for deaf children.

The term 'sight vocabulary' can be defined as "the total number of printed words that a child can identify at sight."(Ostern Hart, 1978.) For the hearing-impaired children at Central Institute for the Deaf(CID), a set of sight vocabulary words is systematically taught in isolation, associating pictures to printed words. These words are generally taught in sets of nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions, and can also be used to develop early phonics skills. Seeing these the words in print may help to make the children more aware of sound/symbol relationships thus strengthening their speech skills. The words within a given set of sight vocabulary can vary with the needs of the children. However, it is helpful for the teacher to keep in mind words that the children may come upon when they begin to use early reading materials. The words in the sight vocabulary sets may then be incorporated for teacher-made sentences and stories, as it becomes appropriate to challenge the children with some more connective reading skills. Appendix A gives an outline of a checklist used by teachers at CID to indicate how ready a child is to move away

from sight vocabulary drills and ahead in the reading process. As one can see by looking at the checklist, a variety of other skills are introduced and practiced in addition to sight vocabulary, as beginning comprehension, use of phrases, and sequencing drills are also incorporated by the teachers.

For hearing children, sets of sight vocabulary words are often taught through daily discussions of events like the calendar, the weather, and holidays. These vocabularies are generally chosen because they are meaningful or interesting to the children, or because of their importance within the sentence structure (function words--taught in context) (Durkin, 1989.). As with deaf children, sight vocabularies are used with hearing children as a starting point for beginning reading skills; however, these words are learned at a faster rate by hearing children because of the advanced language base that hearing children possess.

Upon reaching consistent success with the sight vocabulary drills and comprehension activities, the deaf children at CID advance to using experience stories as their primary reading materials. One main advantage to using these types of materials is that it allows the children to see their classroom experiences in print. This serves to further help them make the connection between spoken language and printed words. As an added aid in preparing the children for reading short stories from books, the children can participate in making their experiences into actual books. Teacher-made experience stories allow for the teacher to control the language within the story, as well as the vocabulary and the skills that will be taught within the story. This helps to ensure that the language will be at an appropriate, but somewhat challenging level for the children to read. During these beginning reading stories, it is important to keep the language simple so as to allow the children to be successful in their reading, but also use the stories to introduce a few new vocabulary words in context. Experience stories are composed from experiences that have been shared by the entire reading class, so the children are given exposure to reading for the meaning and understanding of the content of the story.

In conjunction with the use of experience stories, children at CID progress to using sequence stories as ^{a vehicle for} ~~their mode of~~ reading ^{development} ~~practice~~. As with experience stories, sequence stories provide the children with a simple story from which they are given practice in developing and strengthening many of the basic

comprehension skills associated with the reading process. Again, a key advantage to the teacher-made sequence stories used at CID is that the teacher is responsible for the language, vocabulary, and skill work within the story. Also, vocabulary is no longer pre-taught or taught in isolation. Rather, the children are introduced to learning new vocabulary through the context of the story. The stories can be individualized based on the children's language level and overall reading ability. They can give the children practice in sequencing ideas, drawing basic conclusions, answering oral and written questions about the content of the story, and continuing vocabulary practice. Sequence stories are written from sets of four to eight pictures that tell a story. The children are asked direct questions about each of the pictures in sequence, which are used to elicit specific, pre-determined sentences for the children to read. In this way, experience and sequence stories may indeed strengthen the language skills of some deaf children by drawing their attention to word order as well as function words which are frequently omitted or misused by the children without the print. The full procedure used to teach sequence stories to hearing-impaired children, based on their use as a part of the CID reading curriculum will be examined in further detail later in this paper.

It is important to distinguish how sequence stories are used for the hearing-impaired children at CID, and normal hearing children. For normal hearing children, sequence stories are primarily used to teach and refine the skill of sequencing. The children learn to think about what occurred first, second, third, etc., and sequence the pictures to make a sensible story. This differs from how sequence stories are used to teach the deaf children at CID, in that they are incorporated as a step between sight vocabulary practice and pre-primer stories. Here, the deaf children are given additional practice in reading and understanding words in sentences. This additional practice gives the hearing-impaired child more time to grasp skills and language structures that they may encounter in the pre-primer stories. Again, these types of reading materials are needed to continue to build on, and reinforce the language deficit that makes the reading process so difficult and frustrating for hearing-impaired children.

When the children at CID are able to demonstrate success with skills in the sequence stories, they move to pre-primers. Pre-primers tend to ~~be~~ ^{be used for} similar purposes for teaching both normal hearing, and hearing-impaired children to read. These short stories contain pictures that can be used by the children to assist them in

comprehending the ideas ^{expressed by} found within the sentences. The frequency of the vocabulary is ~~high, and~~ controlled within these stories, and concentration is placed not only on comprehension skills, but also on learning to identify and understand word endings, subject-verb agreement, and specific phonics skills.

Continuing through the reading curriculum used at CID, the children progress from pre-primers to basal readers and finally, textbooks. Basal readers are a step-up from pre-primers in that there is more print per page in the basal readers, and the children are required to get more of the information from the print; they are no longer able to rely heavily on the pictures for help. Reading skills are continuously practiced and refined, as the book provides supplementary workbook practice on answering comprehension questions, identifying main ideas, making inferences, and learning new vocabulary. In this way, pre-primers and basal readers begin to teach the children some of the higher-level skills associated with reading. However, it is important to recognize that the language found within these higher-level reading materials is still difficult for deaf children. Due to the ever-present language deficiency in young hearing-impaired children, idiomatic language, catch phrases, and casual expressions within the reading stories will be difficult for the children to understand without some additional explanation and examples from the teacher.

In looking at the entire reading curriculum used by Central Institute for the Deaf, one of the most innovative and beneficial techniques developed for the hearing-impaired children is the use of the teacher-created sequence story materials. Along with the advantages discussed earlier, sequence stories allow for the teacher to create reading stories based on the individual skill work and vocabulary that the children need and from which they can work. Appendix B provides a detailed description of the exact procedures involved in teaching a reading sequence story, based on the procedure used at CID. One can see that the use of a given sequence story can provide practice in a variety of other vocabulary and comprehension skills.

My independent study as a second year graduate student at CID consisted of making sequence story materials for use in a classroom of beginning readers. The idea for this project originally stemmed from my desire to make, and explain reading materials for a school for the deaf in ^{New Orleans} ~~Churchill~~, Louisiana. At the time of my idea, CID was highly involved in helping this school develop some ~~new~~ ^{different} ~~materials~~.

teaching techniques and strategies to use with its children, and it was this initial enthusiasm toward helping the school that I desired to be a part of by making some reading materials for their reading curriculum. As the enthusiasm and needs for the Chinchuba school shifted, however, my original idea changed to creating twelve sequence story units for use as a part of the CID reading curriculum.

The materials within each of my sequence stories remained consistent across the twelve units. I selected sequence story pictures from a variety of different sources, and the stories generally consisted of between four and eight pictures. Since these stories were for beginning readers, I took care to write sentences for each of the pictures at a language level that I felt would be appropriate for beginning readers, but would allow for specific, new vocabulary words to be introduced within the context. Each unit also contained sentence strips to accompany the story, vocabulary and question cards (answers to be given orally), a fill in the blank vocabulary ditto, and a written question ditto. In each unit, there was a sequencing worksheet, and a type-written copy of the story. I also included in each unit a page for the teacher, of the story, the new vocabulary introduced within the story, and a brief list of specific questions that the teacher could use to elicit the target sentences of the story.

Although the units seemed concise and organized, this process was not problem-free. Once I really got going with the project, certain areas created some difficulty for me. The original idea was to create the twelve units at a beginning reading level, for use with children who were just attacking sequence stories in general. As I created the different stories, I found it difficult to evaluate what skills and vocabulary I should have been focusing on, due to the fact that I was working from a set of hypothetical children. I was unsure as to whether I should assume that the children already knew how to complete a fill in the blank ditto (using the words of the sentence to find the missing word), and I began to question whether my language level for the stories was appropriate, too easy, or too difficult for beginning readers to read. I tried to keep in mind as I was writing the actual stories that these children were beginning readers, and I wanted to give them as much success in their reading as possible, while also providing them with a bit of a challenge. Again, with a hypothetical group, this type of goal is hard to evaluate.

One problem I came across early on in the project was the number of 'new' vocabulary words I was pulling out of each story. Originally, I was pulling many of the words from the story that I felt the children would already know, such as nouns, colors, and numbers, to give them a feeling of success and motivation. I then went back and pulled words that I felt the children should learn how to read, like certain verbs, new nouns, etc. For my earlier stories, then, I was coming up with thirteen to fifteen 'new' vocabulary words per story. I felt uncomfortable with this high number of ~~pulled~~ vocabulary words because I knew that these stories were for readers who had just started reading sentences that make up short stories with a beginning, a middle, and an end. After discussing this with my supervisor, I realized that the purpose of the new vocabulary is to pull some but not all of the words that the children may already identify, as well as words that the children should learn how to read for functional and future purposes; words that are likely to turn up in other beginning stories that the children may read. We also decided that verbs that the children would probably gain exposure to through language, and see in print on the language charts, were not as important to include as new vocabulary for the stories.

To ease my mind about the appropriateness of the language in the stories I was creating, I asked some of the teachers in the Lower Primary department at CID to teach one of my stories. I was pleased to find that the children had no major difficulties with the language and skill dicitos of the story, "Making a Cake". However, after turning in my first batch of completed stories to be evaluated, I realized that the language level of the stories was not my only concern. The original stories were not 'cohesive' like a true story would be. Instead, the sentences within these 'stories' were more like a collection of picture descriptions about what was occurring in the pictures. I had not given the stories a beginning, middle, and end, like a true short story would have.

With this in mind, I went back and re-wrote all of the stories, concentrating more on developing a short story from the pictures, instead of simply writing disjointed sentences about the activities that were taking place within each picture. At the suggestion of my supervisor, I also increased the language level of the stories by adding more words to the sentences, and including words like 'because' to indicate causal relationships between the occurrences within the stories and the characters' feelings. Because of these changes in the stories, I no longer feel that these stories

are necessarily appropriate for beginning readers-- I think that the language and vocabulary in some of the stories would be difficult for children who are just learning how to read and follow stories. However, I feel these stories would provide good practice for children who are almost ready to make the transition into pre-primer materials, and could also be used as supplementary materials for children *above* already reading in pre-primers. Again, I asked several teachers in the Lower Primary department to try and teach the re-written stories, and it appeared that some of the language and vocabulary within the stories was more difficult for the children to read.

I feel that making sequence story reading materials really helped me understand more about teaching reading to deaf children. I was responsible for thinking about what language and vocabulary would be appropriate for beginning hearing-impaired readers. Although this process was difficult to do for a hypothetical set of children (like the ones in my study), having the help of the teachers in the Lower Primary department really helped me evaluate what was actually working in the classroom. I feel this independent study helped prepare me to become a knowledgeable reading teacher for hearing-impaired children in that it forced me to go through the thinking process about the important language structures and reading skills to bring out in the stories. I learned that keeping the stories at a level where the children can find success while also being challenged, can help make a process that is so difficult for deaf children to master, one that is motivating and successful.

Appendix A

Reading Readiness Skills

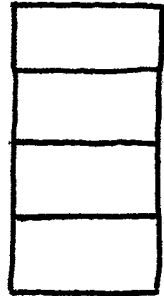
Visual Discrimination

Matches picture to picture

Matches letter to letter

Matches word to word

Matches number to number



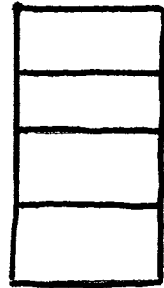
Phonics

Groups words by initial consonant (from pictures)

Produces at least 10 sounds in isolation

Produces at least 10 consonant-vowel combinations

Produces at least 10 vowel-consonant combinations



Beginning Sight Vocabulary

Identifies at least 25 nouns

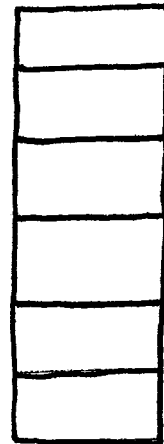
Identifies at least 10 verbs

Identifies 8 colors

Identifies numbers to 10

Identifies 25 verbs

Identifies 50 nouns



Comprehension Skills

Demonstrates comprehension of at least 20 noun-verb combinations

Demonstrates comprehension of at least 20 adjective-noun combinations

Demonstrates comprehension of a variety of prepositional phrases (under the table)

Demonstrates comprehension of a variety of noun phrases (big, blue box)

Demonstrates comprehension of a variety of subject-verb-object sentences (The boy pushed the box.)

Demonstrates comprehension of a variety of verb-object directions (Close the window.)

Identifies/tells main idea of picture or series of pictures

Sequences a series of pictures (up to six)

Answers simple (oral) questions about a picture

Uses context to complete oral sentences

Comments:

Appendix B

READING LESSON

Teacher-made Sequence Story

DAY 1

1. Introduce the story

- * Place first picture on the table, elicit exact sentence for the picture from the ch by asking specific question(s). When ch produces exact sentence, show the sentence strip for that sentence, place it under the picture, and have the ch read it.
- * Continue the same procedure until all pictures and sentences have been done (one at a time).
- * Have ch read entire story.

2. Vocabulary

- * Ask ch to identify words from the story. T "Show me _____." Ch points to word on sentence strip.
- * Show vocabulary cards one at a time. Check to be sure ch comprehends meaning of the word. Lay cards on table. T "Show me _____." Ch points.

Day 2

1. Story

- a. Place pictures in sequence on the table.
- b. Elicit sentence for each picture number.
- c. Place sentence strip under picture.
- d. Ch reads sentence.
- e. Continue b-d for each picture.
- f. Have ch read entire story.
- g. Pick up sentence strips, leave pictures on table.
- h. Hold strips upside-down, mixed up.
- i. Ch chooses one strip, reads it and places it under the corresponding picture.
- j. Continue until all sentences have been completed.

k. Ch reads entire story.

l. Identify some words in story. T "Show me _____." Ch points.

2. Vocabulary

* Identification of words on cards. T "Show me _____." Ch points to card.

* Flashcards. T shows card; ch reads it.

DAY 3

1. Story

a. Place pictures on the table.

b. T holds sentence strips (mixed and upside-down).

c. Ch chooses strip, reads it, and places it under corresponding picture.

d. Continue until all sentences are out.

e. Ch reads entire story.

f. Identify words in story.

g. Comprehension questions on cards.

2. Vocabulary

* Flashcards

* FFI in the blank worksheet

DAY 4

1. Story

* Same as Day 3, matching sentences to pictures.

* Read whole story.

* Comprehension questions on worksheet.

2. Vocabulary

* Flashcards

* Ch creates original oral sentences using vocabulary words (T may need to prompt with questions and/or give examples).

DAY 5

1. Story

- a. Mix up sentence strips and give to the ch (pictures not out).
- b. Ch places sentences in sequence (May use pictures as a reference if needed).
- c. Ch reads entire story.

2. Vocabulary

- * Flashcards
- * Choose 3-4 words. Have ch make up a sentence using each word and write it in a notebook. (I may write it after ch says it, and ch can copy it into his notebook with a teacher aide.) Ch should read sentences after writing them.

3. Worksheet

- * Have ch read story on the worksheet.
- * Identify words on worksheet "Show me _____."
- * Cut out pictures and paste beside corresponding sentences (can color with teacher aide.)
- * Child re-reads entire story.

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'Introduction to Reading Milestones' -- reading materials for teaching deaf children, copyright 1981.