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An Eclectic Approach to Individualized Reading in the First Grade

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AN ECLECTIC APPROACH TO INDIVIDUALIZED READING
IN THE FIRST GRADE

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Sandra S. Scherer
August, 1966

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away (72:358).

One drummer beats a slow, heavy rhythm; another taps a rushing pace; and many appear in between. Thoreau understood that every man was an individual guided by a "beat" unique to him. Educators today are very anxious for each child to "step to the music he hears," to develop his uniqueness as an individual. The problem is to find an effective way to provide for his individual differences.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. Past experience has revealed a definite need to release children, at least partially, from the traditional ability groupings and allow more flexible groupings. The past also revealed that individual children's unique interests and abilities were not being provided for. Since the teaching of reading occupies a central position in the elementary grades, and since children have a wide range of reading abilities and interests, an investigation of individualized reading was prompted.

It was the purpose of this paper, then, to thoroughly study the literature on individualized reading and on the basis of this, conceptualize an eclectic approach for individualizing reading in the first grade.

Importance of the paper. Since very little research has been done on individualized reading in the first grade and fewer programs described on this level, it was necessary to study all aspects (including descriptive action studies) of individualized reading before setting up a first grade program. Smith stressed the importance of this "professional preparation" since only through careful study can one expect to set up a program of his own (63:141).

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Individualized reading program. This program for teaching reading infers, according to Veatch, self-selection of materials by pupils, individual conferences between the child and teacher, and flexible and temporary groupings organized for other than reasons of ability or proficiency (76:ix). Different reading skills are introduced only as the child indicates the need for them.

Self-selection. The individualized reading program is often referred to as merely "self-selection." However, in

this paper, it refers to each child's act of selecting his own reading material.

Personalized reading program. This program is the same as the individualized reading program with one major difference: this program advocates a complete coverage of the skills needed for the particular grade. This is accomplished through the careful use of skills check lists.

Independent reading. This is not a method for teaching reading but usually refers to a period when children select material to read. There is no reading instruction involved. Other terms for independent reading are recreational reading, extensive reading, and free reading.

Trade books. Many of the books used for self-selection will be trade books or those designed for the general bookstore and library market rather than for text use.

III. ORGANIZATION OF THE REMAINDER OF THE PAPER

The remaining chapters in this paper will cover the following:

Chapter II will give the review of literature on individualized reading as it especially pertains to first grade. It will include the different aspects of the program, different plans described, and ways of combining individualized reading with other methods.

Chapter III will present a program for an eclectic approach to individualizing reading in the first grade.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I. HISTORY OF INDIVIDUALIZED READING

The idea of individualized reading is not new, however the concepts, methods, and materials have changed with the passing of time. Early American Dame Schools were taught on an individual basis, each child progressing at his own rate. There was no particular psychology or philosophy governing the Dame Schools; the pupils were few and at different stages of development so it was only feasible for individualized instruction to be used (63:130).

The earliest conscious effort to individualize instruction was in 1888 when Preston Search originated the Pueblo Plan, and outlined high school subjects in such a way that a student could progress at his own rate. In 1913 Frederick Burk used this plan in certain California schools where it became known as "individualized reading" (63:133).

With the development of the reading and I.Q. tests in the early nineteen hundreds, came a very acute awareness of children's individual differences in reading. Children of the same age in the same grade read at widely varying levels. Individualized reading appeared to be the answer, and many school systems turned to the Winnetka or Dalton plans in the early twenties (63:130).

Under the Winnetka Plan, each child's grade level was determined, and each was given books to read silently at his own level. When he finished a book he was tested and the cycle repeated itself. Time was also allotted each day for social and creative activities. The child did progress at his own rate, thus eliminating failure, but the subject matter was set up for him (63:129-131). Kilpatrick evaluates further:

It [Winnetka Plan] tends to break the child's learning into two disconnected parts. One part, highly mechanical, belongs to the system of goals--a system too nearly complete in itself, too little connected with life. Stated psychologically, the danger is that the learning will not transfer. Stated in terms of life, the danger is a divided self--that the child will look on learning as something apart from life, something to be "learned" and then put behind him (40:284-85).

Three basic principles are employed in the Dalton Plan which started at the fourth grade:

1. Freedom to pursue interests.
2. Cooperation and interaction in group life provided by different subject laboratories rather than instruction in one room.
3. Budgeted time through a "job" system whereby each child contracted to do certain units of teacher-prescribed work over a certain amount of time, varying with his ability (63:132).

Each child then could develop socially, could progress at his own rate academically and was given experience in

budgeting his time. However, the curriculum, as in the Winnetka Plan, was the same for all students and was adult-chosen. Kilpatrick, in evaluating this method, found one grave error: "It [Dalton Plan] accepts childhood as a time of storing up learnings to be used when called for at a remote day, typically in adult life" (40:279-80).

Both the Winnetka and Dalton Plans emphasize the importance of each individual moving at his own pace, but, at the same time, both curriculums were prescribed by adults; there was no self-selection of what to study on the part of the pupil. The concept of individualized instruction in the twenties has given way to the present concept of the fifties and sixties based on Willard Olson's research. This concept not only allows for a child moving at his own rate but also having a choice of what his curriculum will be.

II. INDIVIDUALIZED READING--PRESENT

Olson's concept. Dynamic psychology has brought to the light the importance of motivation and levels of aspiration in learning activities. Willard Olson, after several studies in growth behavior and development of children, has synthesized the results of his work into three terms: "(1) seeking, (2) self-selection, and (3) pacing" (63:134).

In applying these concepts to reading, seeking assumes that the child wants to read and will seek out ways of

learning to read. He continually explores his environment searching for experiences that will fit his growth and needs. As he seeks these experiences he selects the reading materials that fit his interests and needs. Pacing deals with skill development and interest at the rate the child determines for himself as determined by his own capabilities and limitations. This rate cannot be predetermined for it is inherent in the child. The most desirable situation for each child's reading growth, then, would be an environment rich with a wide variety of stimulating reading materials which he could explore, select, and read at his own pace.

The concept of individualized reading in the sixties, then, extends far beyond the plans set up in the twenties which primarily were aimed at allowing the child to move at his own rate. Smith summarizes the present view:

It [individualized reading] is primarily concerned with reading as it meshes into and promotes development, in its many different aspects--physical, mental, social, emotional, linguistic, and experiential. It is interested not only in a child's reading achievement but also in his interest in reading, his attitude toward reading, and his personal self-esteem and satisfaction in being able to read (63:133-34).

Objectives. To develop an interest in and positive attitude toward reading as well as the skills needed for reading is the primary goal of reading according to one proponent of the individualized reading program (3:54). Interest is the most important factor, for if a child is not

interested in reading, he will not necessarily like to read. Dolch states: "Liking to read is the most important learning that any child can secure from school" (16:568). Dolch further cites a recent study reporting that one fifth of all adults interviewed said they had never read a book they were not compelled to read (16:568). Compelled is the key word in the above sentence. In individualized reading no child is compelled to read a single book, for he chooses exactly what he wants to read based on his interests and needs. And, he feels more comfortable reading at a pace of his own. Individualized reading overcomes the problem of lack of interest, for many teachers who have used this approach report avid interest evidenced in the large number of books read (39:98, 28:107).

Skill development is as important as interest in individualized reading for one can have unbounded interest in a book, but if he lacks the necessary skills, he will not be able to read it. In the individualized reading program skills are introduced functionally rather than mechanically (10:133, 1:101-103). In other words, the skills are presented within the context of a meaningful book at the time they are needed rather than being introduced as a separate entity, apart from reading. Reading becomes an entity merged with interesting material. "Instruction in reading and reading itself are constantly interwoven and are developed simultaneously" (43:78).

Characteristics. In order for the individualized reading program to truly be "individual" it must be flexible; consequently, there is not one set of procedures to follow. It is not, then, a single method with predetermined steps but many individual adaptations of Olson's principles of seeking, self-selection and pacing (52:10, 3:55). Jacobs further agrees with this idea, and he states:

It is not possible to say that every teacher who would individualize guidance in reading must do this or that. It is not feasible or desirable to present a simple, single methodological formulation of what is right in individualized reading which every teacher shall follow (34:10).

Although Barbe views individualized reading as a rather freely-defined method now, he predicts that in the next decade experimentation will indicate the most successful techniques. Then individualized reading will develop as a separate method (3:19-20).

Although there is no one set method of individualized reading, certain elements can be identified which are common to most individualized reading programs. The reading program is organized so every child reads independently rather than in an ability group. Each child chooses his own reading material, reads at his own pace, and keeps a record of the books he has read.

The typical reading period, theoretically, consists of the following activities:

1. Individual conference.
2. Independent reading.
3. Skill development in small flexible groups or as seat work.
4. Sharing of stories in small groups.
5. Vocabulary and reading lists kept up-to-date.
6. Creative activities in groups or independently.
7. Evaluation (21:374, 28:107).

Each of the above characteristics will be discussed in detail later.

Lazar describes a survey in New York City of forty-six classes taught using an individualized reading program. The classes were observed intensively to determine the types of activities actually being used, and the following basic procedures were observed:

1. Children could explore and select materials, read at their own pace independently, keep records and reports.
2. Individual conferences held as often as children needed or wanted. Teachers sometimes walked around giving help "on the spot."
3. During the conference, the teacher gave help on skills, listened to oral reading, discussed reading, and kept records of abilities, needs, and selections.

4. Teachers arranged group and whole class activities for skill development.

5. Time arranged for sharing of books through group and class discussion (43:80).

III. INITIAL INDIVIDUALIZED READING

Who benefits. Research shows that differences of opinion exist concerning who benefits from individualized reading. Generally speaking, however, one could conclude that the gifted or faster-learning child might benefit to a greater extent than the slow learner.

Spencer (67:596), Lazar (43:80) and Duker (19:220) all feel that any child would benefit from individualized reading. Groff alone reported "spectacular" results achieved with slow learners (28:107). Several other studies with slow learners, however, have resulted in smaller gains in achievement. This might be explained by the slow learners' inability to work independently for the long periods of time that come between conferences (4:188, 58:382). Greater gains in the reading achievement of gifted children were reported by Bohnhorst (4:189) and Groff (28:107), however, one study showed only average gains in reading achievement (57:269).

The majority of experiments reported in which individualized reading was used have been in the intermediate

grades, and as Alice Miel states:

Many will readily grant the utter good sense of individualizing reading instruction in the upper elementary school where the range of reading ability is so great (52:18).

Where should individualized reading actually begin, though? Should we wait for the range of reading abilities to widen? Many authorities believe the first grade is the time to initiate the program, although there is very little research that supports this (8:16-20, 3:50-51, 67:595-600). Smith (64:145), MacDonald (50:643-46), and Veatch (73:160-65) all advocate individualized reading in the first grade to be preceded by a good readiness program that emphasizes language experiences. Harris takes a definite stand against individualized reading in the first grade.

An individual reading program should be most difficult to operate in the first grade, because the children are less mature, less independent, less capable of self-direction, and less able to sustain attention than in succeeding grades...in such a program, it is probably desirable to continue with a carefully arranged sequence of basal readers through the third grade level (32:116).

Special problems have been noted in an individualized reading program with young children. They are often too immature to keep busy during a conference and the independent, student-directed activities may seem "chaotic" (3:62-63). However, if the children and the teacher, too, are properly orientated and organized, and understand the routine and what is expected, first grade children should benefit from an individualized reading program.

Preparation of teacher. Before launching into an individualized reading program the teacher should examine her own convictions and personal qualifications, for a high level of teacher effectiveness is demanded in the individualized reading program (63:140, 66:104). She must be ready to put in hours of organizing, planning, testing, evaluating, record keeping, and collecting materials (63:140). There is no easy, simple formula to follow.

The teacher should prepare herself professionally by familiarizing herself with the research that has been done in individualized reading (63:141). Only through a study will she be able to set up a workable program of her own.

The success of the whole program depends on the teacher's diagnostic skill in identifying a child's needs and difficulties, and knowing what to do about them (66:105). It is imperative, then, that the teacher have a thorough understanding of the reading skills program and how to teach any one skill at a moment's notice (3:21, 28:105-111, 68:49, 63:140, 66:105). Even though she will not follow a rigid sequential skills presentation program, she should have lists of skills to be taught so that certain skill instruction is not skipped entirely (3:210).

Before the individualized reading program begins the teacher should take stock of each child's abilities, skill development, reading level, interests, sight word recognition

and readiness development. Some measure of the child's potential is needed. Individual I.Q. tests are recommended. Barbe feels the teacher's estimate of the child's ability to comprehend material read to him is a valuable indicator of the child's potential since "Understanding is essentially what mental ability is..." (3:96).

To determine the variety of levels in different types of reading skills, a diagnostic test should be given. Evans's study of the effectiveness of teacher evaluations of reading skills in individualized reading indicated the need for teachers to use systematic checks in the form of standardized diagnostic tests rather than depending on their own judgment. In this study experienced teachers ranked fifteen reading skills in the order in which the two children they were working with needed help on them. Their choices did not correlate with those indicated when a Gates Diagnostic Test was administered (22:258-60).

The informal reading inventory is the most valuable means of determining the reading level of the child. There are prepared inventories available, but the teacher can construct and administer her own by adapting Bett's inventory form which determines these three levels of reading achievement:

Independent level - child reads completely on his own with no difficulty at 90% comprehension, 100% pronunciation.

Instructional level - 75% comprehension, 90% pronunciation. Recognition required, but he uses skills to unlock new words.

Frustration level - child must have much help for he is stopped by inadequate skills (3:77,90).

The teacher in adapting this inventory should secure graded materials, approximate the child's reading level, and start with that level. Prepare the child for the selection by an introduction, check his comprehension, and listen to his oral reading. To determine his independent reading level he should be able to know what he read, and meet no more than a couple unfamiliar words (3:77,90).

Most of the testing programs described were used with children from the second grade and up. Since many tests require reading the first grade testing program will have to be altered. Either reading readiness tests or individual readiness check lists can be utilized to determine the first grader's readiness. Groff states, "Once the child has reached the point of the pre-primer or primer stage of word recognition, by whatever means, he is ready for individualized reading" (29:16). Thus, each child must be tested on his sight word recognition before he starts on an individualized reading program. According to Groff, this is the most important criterion on which to base an introduction to individualized reading (29:16).

Preparation of children. In preparing the children for an individualized reading program, certain attitudes about themselves, about others and about learning should be developed; the over-all objective should be to develop the attitude that differences in people and things make our lives more interesting. Through class discussions, each child should learn to accept himself as unique and learn to accept the differences in others. To develop a favorable attitude toward learning, children should be encouraged to question--to ask the "whys" and "hows" of things.

Out of the feeling of respect for individual differences should grow an attitude of "mutual helpfulness" towards one another. This is important since the pupil will assume not only the role of a learner, but also that of a helper and a member of a team or group during the reading period. It is important, then, that he is able to function harmoniously and helpfully with others.

Another way to prepare children for the individualized reading program is to offer as many opportunities as possible for the child to develop self-responsibility since they will be working independently much of the time. The following are examples of responsibilities first graders might accept at the beginning of school.

1. To perform specific room jobs assigned.
2. To care for personal belongings.

3. To be in their seats and ready for "morning business" at the appropriate time.

4. To correct mistakes made on papers.

5. To finish their work before selecting free time activities.

6. To select and implement their choice from a previously suggested list of appropriate activities.

7. To contract to finish a certain amount of work.

The children need to understand the reasons for individualized reading and their part in the program. The class should discuss purposes for the program such as why they have conferences or self-selection of books (20:194-95).

Children can be prepared for the procedures used in individualized reading through role-playing sessions. If the teacher wanted to demonstrate exactly how a team would work together in developing recognition of sight words by using flash cards, two children could actually demonstrate the situation for the class. Then all class members could "play their roles" (3:26, 76:7).

Some basic sight words should be mastered along with other readiness activities before beginning an individualized reading program with first graders (28:105-111). In fact, in Groff's opinion

It is preferable...to base an introduction into individualized reading on the ability to recognize a certain

number of words rather than on any other criteria-- such as oral reading speed, the number of 'new' words per 100, results of readiness or mental tests, etc. (29:16-17).

Many authorities suggest using the language experience method as a way to develop these words and readiness activities since the child uses his own language in stories meaningful to him with this approach. Thus, the child has a natural bridge between his ideas and the printed word (28:105-111, 18:97-99, 50:48-49, 66:180). Spache suggests using experience charts (class or child-composed stories arising out of an experience) with pupils until they have a sufficient vocabulary to read independently (66:181). Children can dictate their own stories and these, bound together, can be the first reading materials (18:97-99).

The child can be introduced to simple books along with reading the experiential materials. However, it is important that the content of commercial books be thoroughly familiar to the child, giving continuity of experience because it goes from ideas to the symbolization of ideas-- the printed word. These books should have been read to the children, their content discussed, related to, and dramatized in an endeavor to make them the child's own before he reads them (63:147).

Preparation of parents. The teacher is responsible for explaining the individualized reading program to parents.

This explanation of the goals, objectives, and procedures should be offered before the program begins. Barbe suggests sending a letter explaining the program to the parents followed up by parent-teacher conferences for further explanations and a chance to answer parents' questions (3:54-55). A group conference might be an effective manner for handling the initial meeting with parents. One first grade teacher invited the parents to school for a "reading party" at which time the parents observed the program in action (79:36-37).

Parents need to know what their role is in the program and how they can help at home. Vite suggests several pointers to parents for helping their child read at home.

1. Make the experience enjoyable. (An explanation of what this means and how to do it should be discussed.)
2. Tell your child any unknown word, writing it down for the teacher who can help with the word analysis later if needed.
3. Let the child read silently before he reads orally.
4. To avoid pointing, have child frame with fingers unknown words (77:35).

When informing parents of reading progress through the report card, progress should be stressed rather than actual reading level. In the case of children who have low reading levels, Sperber sent home letters to parents suggesting that they dwell on the progress their child was making rather than discussing with the child his low level.

How to begin. Unless the children have "grown into" an individualized reading program, as was suggested earlier through the language experience approach, some method must be established for beginning. Numerous techniques have been reported, but generally they involve using a part of the class or a part of the reading time (17:15). In either case, it is assumed that until the time the individualized reading program is actually begun, the class has been organized in groups according to ability.

The following techniques are descriptions of ways different teachers have started individualized reading. Each begins with a part of the class. Veatch, although she asserts it can be done all at once, suggests shifting over to individualized reading one group at a time, beginning with the top group. After finishing the book at his own rate, each child chooses a book. The teacher helps in the group, but gradually, through use of the individual conference, each child would be led into an individualized reading situation (74:6). Rowe reports starting early in the first grade by choosing five children and conferencing with each of them individually. Each day she added another child until finally the whole room was reading individually (56:118-22). A program whereby each child was assigned a partner who read at about the same level was described by Maxey. They would read to each other, and the teacher would

conference with the pair (51:47,78). Jenkins felt young children were more comfortable about reading when they could gather around the teacher and then confer individually within the confines of the group structure. The groups were formed on the basis of friendships derived from a sociometric test (36:84,90).

Frazier initiated an individualized reading program by letting the children move at their own rate but using the basal readers (24:319-22). No self-selection was involved in Frazier's program, but if he had gone one step further, allowing self-selection, a full-fledged program could have evolved.

Several techniques have also been used to initiate individualized reading by using part of the reading period. One of these techniques might suit the teacher who is reluctant to change too quickly or who wants to "feel her way" before actually changing completely into an individualized program. One way is to use the morning reading period for basal reader instruction and spend afternoon reading periods for individualized reading (59:277-81).

Daniel and Sharpe both report using individualized reading one day a week with the basal reader approach used the other four days (13:17, 61:507-512). When the teacher and students felt secure with the individualized reading program, Daniel increased the days for individualized

reading and decreased the basal reader days (13:17). On the days when the basal reader was used, skill development was especially stressed (61:507-12). Another suggestion for varying time is to spend a week or two using the basal reader approach and alternating it with the individualized reading approach (67:386). On the other hand some first grade teachers did not begin until after a group had finished the first reader (79:36-37, 59:277-81, 11:16-20).

Some teachers have reported starting by individualizing all the supplementary or independent reading (9:362-66, 35:3-12). One teacher formed Library Clubs, then, with each of her groups and during the reading period would help children individually. Eventually, conferencing began (9:362-66).

Classroom arrangement. Different aspects of organization in the classroom need to be planned for prior to starting the program. The pupils usually sit at their respective desks and read although some teachers assign certain reading areas where reading proceeds silently in a group situation (3:41). Another suggestion was to divide the children into "families" to sit together (these would vary). One good reader is placed with each family as a helper (68:47).

The setting of the conference should be in an out-of-way corner. A table or simply two chairs can be used;

the important thing is to sit with the child so a close one-to-one relationship is felt. Also, you can talk in lower tones if you are side by side (3:31). To save time between conferences a "next-at-bat" chair is placed near-by for the child whose conference will be next (3:32).

The books should be placed on shelves or tables at some place in the room where the least number of people will be interrupted by pupils coming and going to and from the book area. The books should also be as far away from the conference point as possible (3:30, 76:43).

Different work and interest centers should be established around the room such as: science, weather, current events, class newspaper, writer's table, bulletin boards, music, art materials, games, exhibits, painting and clay, picture file, puppet theatre, exercise and worksheet file, audio-visual aids (55:10-11, 6:9).

Pupil-teacher planning. Through pupil-teacher planning sessions, routines should be set up to insure the smooth running of the reading period (76:144). Whenever the children are involved in helping to plan and organize routines and activities, they are learning to be responsible and reliable members of the classroom. Also, their allegiance to the program is gained, for they have helped with the planning.

Some of the routines to be established are : (1) how and when to get a book, (2) procedures to follow for checking it out and in shelving, (3) how many children choosing a book at one time, (4) time limit if needed, (5) when reading period will be, (6) when and how to get help with words, (7) when and how to use children's records, (8) how to choose an independent activity (3:29-30, 76:45, 33:7). While the routines and procedures are being developed, purposes and needs for them should be discussed. The children should help determine the "whys" involved.

If the pupil-teacher planning period is successful and routines are set up, there should be very few discipline problems since each child should have a purpose and plan of action in mind before the reading period begins (28:110, 3:29). Many teachers, of young children especially, are concerned with the amount of non-teacher directed activity in the individualized reading program and the discipline problems that would probably arise in such a situation. Barbe reports, "...[they] are actually afraid they could not adjust to anything so 'chaotic' as personalized individualized reading"(3:63). In reality, fewer discipline problems have been reported. Jenkins found that with an individualized reading program many troublesome children found an absorbing interest for the first time (35:9). Lazar reported studies where discipline was less of a problem

than ever before. In fact it was shown that when the children attained status in the room the "best in their personalities" was exhibited (43:75-83).

The evidence suggests that teachers do fear the threat of discipline problems, but in actual practice, when children are interested and absorbed they rarely make a disturbance.

Reading materials. Since the very basis of the individualized reading program is self-selection of materials, it is vitally important that a large supply of books is available covering varying reading levels (3:33). Generally speaking, three books per person is sufficient to start with (76:41, 3:33). Although some recommend as high as five, (17:16, 56:118-22) no more than three copies of any one book is recommended for the primary grades (3:33). The range of difficulty will increase as the grade level goes up. The first grade room should have a range starting with prereading picture books and extending to at least third grade level books. As the year progresses, more difficult material may need to be added (76:41, 3:34).

Besides selecting books covering many levels of difficulty, it is important to select books that are interesting to the children. Dolch says: "The number is not so important as the interest. Fewer books are all right if they are

all interesting" (17:16). The teacher should be cognizant of interests of children at her level. Interests can be determined by taking informal inventories of her own class' interests or by finding in literature the general interests of children at her specific grade level (30:1-7). Smith's study of interests of first graders indicates that the child's interests extend beyond his immediate surroundings out into the world. They preferred stories about the wild west, space, astronomy, nature, animal tales and travel (65:209).

There should be a wide assortment of books including trade books, pamphlets, magazines, class writing bound together, texts and supplementary readers, reading laboratories, and newspapers like the Weekly Reader (33:22). Nulton, with her second graders, included also adult magazines such as Reader's Digest and Woman's Day with pertinent articles underscored, comic books, children's pages from the Sunday paper, fairy tales, an atlas, anthologies and adult poetry. She felt a variety like this would help the child become more discriminate in his choice of reading material (53:26-27).

Veatch suggests several ways for a teacher to proceed in her quest of reading materials.

1. Order trade books on your regular book order.
2. Order one or two copies of supplementary readers that you do not already have.

3. Order one or two copies of basal readers you do not already have.
4. Sound out your P.T.A. or teachers' organization about having a Book Fair.
5. Trade some of the books with other teachers for those you do not have.
6. Visit all libraries within a reasonable distance and inquire how to obtain boxes of books on loan and about their policy of selling "throw-outs."
7. Request bookmobile visits and be persistent until they are made.
8. Write or visit state and county libraries or other tax-supported book depots and request the loan of boxes of books. Refer unreasonable refusals to your local legislative representative.
9. Take your class to the library and be sure each pupil has his own personal library card.
10. Encourage every child to use his own library card.
11. Encourage children to bring books from home.
12. Hunt through second-hand book stores or stores of service organizations, and attend sales at church bazaars and the like.
13. Thoroughly explore your school's storeroom or that of the central office.
14. Ask for book samples which principals, supervisors or administrators frequently receive.
15. Institute a book hunt in your own and other people's attics (76:42-43).

Arrangement. After the books are procured they are usually arranged on shelves or tables by subject or level of difficulty (17:18). Crossly and Kniley describe a system of marking the books by color for different subjects (11:17). This could be adapted for first graders. For instance:

- red - animal stories
- blue - science books
- green - mystery stories
- yellow - poetry
- pink - fairy tales and make believe
- brown - stories about people

Sometimes it is hard to classify some books according to difficulty because the vocabulary is not controlled (3:33). However, if this system is chosen, the books can be placed on tables according to difficulty. Warford describes a system featuring a red table for easy books, a blue table for medium books and a green for the hardest (79:36-37). Both systems of using color to distinguish the subject of books or to determine the level of difficulty should not be used simultaneously. A combination method is to place a spot of colored tape indicative of the level of difficulty on the inside cover of the book; then arrange by subject or author possibly (28:105-111).

Before the books are shelved some teachers catalog the books, making out a card for each book noting the difficulty level, summarizing the contents, making a list of difficult words, or composing comprehension questions (12:260-262, 28:108).

IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM

Although every individualized reading period should be flexible, the following activities and procedures are involved in most instances: self-selection, individual conferences, record keeping, skill development, independent activities, grouping and evaluation. Each of these separate topics will be discussed in the following pages.

A typical reading period is planned cooperatively with each pupil setting his purpose and activities. During a fifty-minute period, approximately thirty minutes might be spent in silent reading and conferencing with the remaining time being spent in sharing group work and evaluation of the period (33:5).

Self-selection. Individualized reading is based on the conviction that a child might be indifferent about a book chosen for him, but he will be active and interested if he is permitted to choose his own reading material (17:16). A child is usually able to determine his own reading level besides choosing reading material to fit his needs and interests. In fact it was found when children were asked to rate their own reading--"pretty good, not so good, just about average"--they indicated accurately their supposed reading level (3:67). Veatch has faith in each child's ability to select his own materials.

...Children can choose their reading diet far more wisely than the most skilled and knowledgeable teacher can choose it for them (73:160-165).

When children find material they are interested in, they are naturally motivated to read. The teacher then, should provide opportunities for the child to do such things as browse, to hear and discuss stories, or to use book lists (41:319).

Through teacher-pupil planning sessions, criteria for book selection and standards for procedure can be set up. Such criteria as this might evolve on how to judge a book's difficulty: familiarity of words (more than three unknown words per page usually indicates the material is too difficult) (76:19); format, such as size and type of book; amount on pages; relevance of pictures to text; and examination of table of contents, index, preface and introduction (66:186, 41:319).

Certain standards concerning self-selection should also be established. Questions to consider are:

- Should "browsing" time be limited? If so, what is the limit?
- Is teacher approval necessary?
- Is child obligated to read the book after he chooses it?

Dolch felt each child should be responsible for finding a book by the specified reading time. If he decided he did not like the book, he had to wait for the next reading period before trying again (17:18). Sperber reported a "book check" time in his classroom when each child reported to him the book he would be reading the next day (68:48). Generally, a child is expected to finish the book of his choice unless it is a basal reader or a science book (28:111). Sometimes a child signs a contract with the teacher

to read his chosen book. This can only be broken by both parties' agreement, so the child would have to state a good reason for rejection of a book (28:111).

Although the basic philosophy of self-selection assumes the capability of each child to choose reading materials for himself, most authorities feel initial guidance is needed in the skill of learning to choose books (3:28-29). The extent to which a teacher should guide a child's selection is a point of debate (66:96). Some teachers will interfere very little, feeling that through a process of elimination he will make a selection on his own level. Other teachers feel that a certain way to get the child off to a quick, sure, start is to limit his choice (56:118-22). One program described limiting the selection to four to five books chosen by the teacher on the child's level (56:118-22).

Generally it is agreed that there are times when teacher help is needed (3:30,69). If a child just cannot make a choice, if he chooses difficult or easy material too often, or if he consistently chooses books on one subject to the exclusion of all others, an evaluation is needed (3:69-70). The teacher and child should discuss the problem, determine the "whys" involved, and try to solve it. Through this evaluation it may be discovered, for example, that the only reason for consistently choosing easy material was fear to "try his wings" (3:69).

Individual conference. The conference is the core of the individualized reading program (3:46). Through this close, one-to-one relationship the child's psychological needs will be filled through close interaction with the teacher (76:29). Every child needs understanding, security and a sense of being cared about, and the good teacher will see that these needs are filled in the conference.

The teacher should assure the child that she likes and respects him. A sense of security is built through the conference because each child is accepted for what he is. Veatch says, "no child is labelled as belonging to a 'fast' group or a 'slow' group" (11:27).

An experiment reported by Ojemann and Wilkinson showed a direct relation between the teacher's understanding of the pupil's behavior and his academic achievement and school behavior. The teacher for the experimental group got to know the pupils by studying their attitudes, motives and environmental conditions. Even though teachers of both groups were unaware that academic achievement was being measured, the experimental group made higher gains (54:88). This close rapport, then, is beneficial not only from a psychological standpoint, but also from an academic one.

The conference is valuable also as a means of developing better skills and reading habits on a personal one-to-one basis. The child's strengths and weaknesses are

investigated and the child can thus develop an understanding of the skills he needs. Arrangements are made for the development of needed skills (41:320).

Through teacher-pupil planning the contents of the conference and the procedures to follow should be determined. The three general areas which should be covered are (1) checking new words and word attack skills; (2) comprehension; (3) evaluation of child's progress (3:32). Even though the teacher knows what the contents of the conference should include, the planning period with the children gives them a chance to think about what and why certain things should be included.

Procedures for the conference must be set up too. Some authorities strongly insist on holding the conferences on a voluntary basis. Veatch is an advocate of this method.

...all teachers, no matter how differently they work out an individualized program in their classroom, agree that the conference must be held on a voluntary basis. Otherwise, the interest of the children in the reading period is affected (73:160-65).

Barbe, on the other hand, finds more reports holding conferences on a scheduled basis.

Numerous reports on programs in operation describe procedures in which the child is scheduled for his conference with the teacher (3:31).

Barbe suggested that a scheduled plan be used in the beginning whereby the teacher list on the board the children having conferences that day. After a pattern is established,

the teacher could become more flexible, allowing the child to choose his own time (3:31-32).

One other procedure that is used by some teachers is the "help-one-another" method. The children are either seated in pairs, helping one another with unknown words or one child is chosen who does nothing else but help during the reading period (17:18).

When the content of the conference and the procedures have been determined, the whole reading period should be acted out in a role-playing situation. One advantage of role-playing is the teacher can call out directions for specific things. The step-by-step procedure followed by each child will accustom him to the type of thing he will be doing when the program starts (3:27).

The reading period varies from one to two hours depending on the grade level. Generally a teacher can hold six to ten conferences a day and three to five instructional or other kinds of group sessions. The conference itself lasts anywhere from two to five minutes (76:22, 3:31).

Lucy Hunt, in the Shasta County Guide to Individualized Reading describes what might occur in a conference.

1. The teacher greets the child and puts him at ease.
2. The child has brought his book, and also his word and reading list. He shows his book to the teacher and tells her about it. From the child's account, the teacher is able

to check comprehension. Jeanette Veatch suggests the use of open-ended questions in checking comprehension (76:52). Ask "how" and "why" questions, and expect the child to back up any answers he gives.

3. The teacher asks the child to read an interesting section to her. She pronounces words he does not know and notes where help is needed. If she deems it advisable, she checks the child's needs on his skills check-list. She gives help then, or if other children have the same need, later in a group. Jeanette Veatch suggests, too, that the teacher regularly check on the child's ability to read sight words, and this might be included at this point (3:92-93).

4. If the book seems too hard, together the child and the teacher try to find an easier book on the same subject.

5. The teacher asks if the child would like to share the book, and if he does, she helps plan a way to share.

6. The teacher examines the child's reading list. If books have been listed since the last conference, the teacher accepts them without question and copies the titles on her own list.

7. The child's word list is examined, and the teacher gives help on word analysis, notes ways in which help can be given in a group, and perhaps adds some words from the child's oral reading.

8. The teacher closes the conference with friendly and encouraging comments. She then makes notations in his records (33:13-14).

Independent activities. No individualized reading program can succeed unless the child is able to work independently for a block of time. The beginning reader cannot read for a very long time, so during the reading period there should be several activities planned that he can intersperse with reading (28:110). Authorities differ as to what degree independent activities should be planned with the students. Vite insists the very key to independent work is through planning all activities with the children. Vite's assumption is that children's attention spans will increase when they plan the activities. Rather than imposing an activity on them, possibly keeping them interested for twenty minutes, the pupils take as much as twenty minutes initially to plan together several activities. If each child, then, formulates his own plan and purpose, he can go ahead for an hour and a half if need be (52:28-29).

Although Veatch advocates teacher-pupil planned independent activities, she does suggest that teachers just beginning a program might want to use the seatwork they are accustomed to until the children are able to work well independently. When they can, independent work can be more

individualized (76:44). Rowe and Dornhoffer describe a similar program where after teacher-assigned work is finished, the child may choose an independent activity (56:118-22).

Sperber describes a combination system dividing seatwork into the two categories of "needed work" and "optional work." The teacher plans the needed work, and this type of seatwork includes: exercises for skill development, handwriting, correcting seatwork from day before, keeping individual records and word tests up to date. Optional work is determined by each individual pupil after the needed work is finished (68:46).

In all individualized reading programs, the first independent activity during the reading period is reading by each child of his self-selected material (76:24). Some programs described a few routine duties of every child to prepare himself for the conference. He chooses a portion to read orally to the teacher and practices it to himself or a friend. Secondly, he brings his records and/or word list up to date (3:101).

Over a period of time the teacher and class should develop together a list of independent activities from which they can choose when they have finished reading (33:7). These activities might be listed on a big chart that could be continually reviewed and added to (28:105-111). The

following list was compiled from suggestions offered by several authors, and many more specific activities will probably be suggested by the children (76:44-45, 3:42-45, 28:105-111, 33:7).

More independent reading, by self, with partner, or in group.

Preparing to share a book.

Practicing word analysis skills with another child or alone.

Oral reading to a partner or in a group.

Art - each child might have his own picture frame and he is responsible for putting in his best work.

Creative writing - might include jokes for a class joke box, stories, poems.

Preparing article for class newspaper.

Writing letters to friends or relatives.

Working at any interest center around room.

Keeping records - milk money, growth of classroom plants, etc.

Labelling pictures, scrapbook.

Illustrating - main characters, sequence pictures, book jackets, diorama.

Group work - preparing for dramatization, making a list of questions to ask others who have read a story, preparing answers to such questions, skill development work or

games, planning a bulletin board, sight vocabulary practice, etc.

Diary.

Making study word cards.

Getting ready for a puppet show.

Making a list of unknown words.

Developing any interest.

Many teachers hold an evaluation period at the close of the reading period. Vite says this about the importance of an evaluation period:

Both the formal and the informal type of evaluation are necessary for showing the importance the teacher attaches to the work being accomplished without his close supervision. In addition, when children stop to evaluate their work, they learn about their successes, why they have had difficulties in some areas, and what steps they might take to improve their work next time (77:31).

Skill instruction. Skill instruction including vocabulary, word analyzing, comprehension, and oral and silent reading skills, is a very important part of the individualized reading program. The teacher must be very much aware of the specific skills that need to be developed. It is based on the idea that a specific skill should be taught when the need arises for that skill (76:31, 43:75-83). In Lazar's words, "...the skills are fitted to the child and not the child to the skills" (43:75-83).

The timing for presentation of skills is determined by each child rather than the so-called average child, thus ignoring the fact that the slow child is not ready for it and the gifted child has probably already learned it.

Five principles of skills training are noted by Lazar (66:108).

1. "The teachers must know what the reading skills are" (66:108). Not only does the teacher need to know the skills presented in her grade, but also those taught in the grades below and above her (3:34). Barbe suggests that every teacher have a check-list of skills for her grade to use as a guide in teaching. By following these checklists, not necessarily in order but in general areas, the teacher can move the child from level to level without any gaps (3:231). He recommends that every beginning teacher "depend upon the more formal type of sequential development of skills until she has learned these skills adequately and can develop them on her own" (3:19).

2. "They must know what the children need" (66:108). The teacher must be able to diagnose reading problems. She is able to do this during the conference through the formal testing mentioned earlier, informally through her observations and by using the above mentioned checklist.

3. "They must know how to teach the skills" (66:108). Besides knowing what the skills are, the teacher must know

the techniques for teaching them (3:226). A teacher, especially a beginner, might use several teachers' manuals of basal readers as a guide for teaching skills.

4. "The teachers must provide the time and opportunity for skill development" (66:108). Skills are taught by instructing the whole class, small groups, teams and individuals (5:6). Each method is used according to the need. If the skill seems to be a new one for the whole group, it is introduced to the class as a whole. During the conferences the teacher keeps a list of the children needing help in specific skills, and when enough children need help on a specific skill, a special group is formed, and the teacher conducts a skill development lesson with this group. Spencer found pupil teams effective working on skill development exercises. This system was most effective when the teams were changed often varying from pairs with equal ability to those of unequal ability (67:595-600). Skills are developed "on the spot" in the conference (76:32).

5. "They must utilize the most appropriate material for developing the skills" (66:108). Stauffer suggests using workbooks for each child (63:375-82) to insure systematic instruction. Groff suggests procuring workbooks too, but using them differently. Many different workbooks would be secured, and the pages torn apart and sorted as to the skill being developed. These pages could be mounted on

stiff paperboard and covered with a clear plastic material so a child could mark on it with a grease pencil which could be rubbed off later. A numerical designation on each page would indicate the difficulty. These pages would be placed in a file for individual use when the child needed a particular skill (30:1-7). Job cards, cards containing an activity for developing a certain skill, are used by some teachers (67:595-600). A master file could be kept to hold all of these skill-developing materials. For vocabulary development, some teachers ask children to keep word lists or a dictionary box where they file new words (66:98).

Grouping. It is not realistic to suppose that all the children in our nation should receive all instruction individually. The individualized reading program does out of necessity provide for groups--flexible groups--formed for specific purposes such as skill development, common interests or sharing. The groups, however, should last no longer than "several days" (3:215). Children need to identify with a group situation--a situation where they have peers in reading skills, interests, and attitudes and where they realize the many meanings and interpretations derived from one idea in a reading selection (41:320).

Many of the grouping situations are set up as the result of what has been learned during the conference. If

he needs additional help with a particular skill, the teacher notes this and later he will become a member of a skill development group formed for the single purpose of mastering the particular skill (33:13-14). Perhaps the teacher will note during conferences that two children are interested in the same subject, and she can set up a grouping based on mutual interest. Maybe a shy child expresses a desire to share his book but is not ready yet for a whole class sharing period. A small group of children who just finished a book can be formed for sharing purposes. Some groups will be formed too, on the basis of common experiences. Children will have many suggestions for special groupings arising as an outgrowth of their daily work and play.

When a skill development group is arranged it is formed in Veatch's words "on the basis of a specific disability rather than on general ability" (75:60). The teacher forms the group on the basis of her records. The group meets, a skill development lesson follows, and practice follows in pairs, individually, or as a group. The group will meet as many times as needed until the skill has been learned (3:40). Skill development groups might expand to include the whole class if the skill is a new one for the children.

Interest groupings are formed when two or more children want to discuss or pursue a common interest after

having read similar material. Perhaps a few students want to try out a science experiment, prepare a dramatization, or make up questions and answers to a specific story (75:61, 42:244-45). Interest groupings may arise from a common experience such as a film or a trip. Following class discussion, volunteers may form an interest grouping to plan and prepare a mural depicting the event. Or they might prepare questions about the event to later ask the class (42:244-45). One teacher reported an ever-changing group which prepared daily the "Class Diary" (75:61). This idea could be adapted to first grade at the beginning of the year and continue throughout the year. The whole group might form this interest grouping initially. An experience chart could be dictated to the teacher by the children recording the day's happenings, and this might be among the first reading materials, then. Later in the year, flexible interest grouping would compose the diary.

"When a person has something he likes he wants to show it off" (76:26). This generalization can be applied to the child who has just read a book that he particularly likes; he wants to show it off. The teacher does little motivating for it comes from the children.

A child feels a certain spontaneous desire to 'sell' his choice to his friends. Much of this 'plugging' is done unconsciously, however, for as he reads his enjoyment is obvious (75:25-26).

By way of this "unconscious plugging," the child's neighbor is alerted and soon he may be reading over his friend's shoulder (15:145). Many shy children will prefer this informal type of sharing. A more formal type of sharing of books is also carried out in the individualized reading program, when the child reports on his book in some way (52:25-26). Before the sharing takes place, the children should determine through teacher-pupil planning, standards for telling about books. For instance, things he should and should not tell and what and how much to read orally (3:39).

Small groups often participate in a sharing-of-books time, but most teachers include the whole class in an "end-of-the-reading-period time" for telling about books (76:26). There are many different ways of sharing, and through teacher-pupil planning a list can be made for the child's use. The following list can be used as a guide for the teacher as to different ways of sharing a book (33:18).

1. A poster to advertise book.
2. A book jacket decorated in any desired manner and a written advertisement to accompany it.
3. A series of original illustrations for a story.
4. A set of written or oral directions from books on how to make things.
5. An evaluation of a book, with reasons for liking

or not liking it.

6. A "movie" of a book devised by drawing a series of pictures on a long sheet of paper, the ends being fastened to rollers which are turned to move the pictures into view.

7. An oral or written description of an interesting character in a book.

8. Re-telling the story but making changes in the ending or in other parts of the book.

9. A description of the most humorous incident, the most exciting happening or the part liked best.

10. A pantomime.

11. A letter recommending a book.

12. A puppet show planned to illustrate a story.

13. A broadcast of a book review to a radio or TV audience.

14. The representation of a character by dressing the part and describing or acting the role.

15. A brief biography of a favorite author.

16. Three-dimensional illustrations with concrete materials such as clay, soap, wood, or plaster.

17. A scene from a story constructed in the form of a diorama or mural.

18. A section of the bulletin board reserved for written sketches.

19. Oral reading of a story or poem.

20. Dramatization.

21. Presentation of several new words and their meanings.

22. Pictures or descriptions of exciting, interesting or fascinating parts of a book.

Occasionally a period should be set up for the whole class--perhaps on Fridays--for special sharing experiences (50:643-46). During this time the children might want to do such things as nominate a "book of the week" or auction off exciting books by giving exciting hints (59:278). This might be the time when the teacher shares something special like a new book, or a poem or story she especially likes. Maybe she will describe how a book is made or tell about an author familiar to the children. A special game like "Name it" where she describes a character or episode and the children guess the name of the book might be played (53:231-32). All in all, this should be a relaxed, fun time centered around the sharing of special reading activities.

Records. Record keeping is essential in an individualized reading program for evaluation purposes, and also for informing parents and the next teacher of the child's progress (3:36). Most teachers emphasize the importance of systematic, specific, and regularly-kept records, but Dolch feels that this should not be over-emphasized. "Record

keeping must not be emphasized to a point where it hinders teaching" (17:18-19). Dolch places a higher faith in the teacher's "mental notes" about a child feeling that the time spent in record keeping could better be used conferencing (17:20).

The first grade teacher's records consist of a file for each student containing the results of his I.Q. and standardized diagnostic tests, his informal reading inventory giving the independent, instructional and frustration reading levels of the child, an interest inventory, and checklists for readiness and first grade reading skills.

The teacher will need a loose-leaf notebook, or a file of 5" x 8" cards with a page or card for each child. Spache tells how one teacher recorded her pupil's skill progress in a rather unique fashion.

She constructs a large wall chart which depicts a number of satellites and space stations in orbit around the classroom. Each situation is labeled in terms of a specific word recognition skill, such as sounds, vowel digraphs, silent e rule, and the like. With the teacher's assistance each child draws materials from the exercise file to help him acquire these various skills. When he has completed using the skill-building materials, the pupil asks the teacher to check him out. If he is successful, he adds a drawing of his profile labeled with his name to the appropriate place on the space chart. Thus the children are kept aware of the skills they are attempting to master and their progress. The nature of this wall chart could, of course, be adapted to the particular level and interests of the class to depict a trip around the world, a time line of historical events, or a wagon train, etc. (66:272).

Barbe summarizes the contents of the page or card.

Essentially, the information which must be included will be the date of the conference, so that no child will miss having a conference at least once every three or four days. The name of the book which the child is reading and the page on which he is reading should be recorded. The questions he has or the difficulties he has encountered should be noted and any suggestions made to him either to do immediately, or do after the conference at his seat, should be noted. A comprehension check rating is probably essential at each conference. Notes should be made of any skill instruction which he needs, but which the teacher feels can just as well be supplied later to a small group (3:37).

Vite reports keeping a separate list of the books read by her first graders since many could be read in between conferences (77:36).

A special section of the notebook or file box should contain records of independent activities and sharing-time activities such as choral speaking, panels, etc. (76:56).

Children usually engage in some type of record keeping also, and it is often preceded by a class discussion of why this will be valuable. Sometimes the children help develop the forms to be used (66:273). The child usually keeps a card file, file folder or notebook for cards or forms which contain this information: titles, authors, dates of reading, and pupil comments (66:273, 76:56, 33:6). Primary children, whose writing abilities are not highly developed have special problems. Spache recommends the use of art work as the form for their records of reading.

These records might include a painting or drawing of a particularly interesting incident, a series of drawings or pictures cut from old magazines depicting the chief characters of the book, or a make-believe cover of the book illustrated by the child (66:274).

Many teachers ask the child to keep a list of difficult or interesting words (3:37, 66:99, 33:6). This list is valuable to the teacher in helping the child with word-attack skills and vocabulary development. It is also valuable to the child for it stimulates his word consciousness. "Keeping the list promotes a set toward learning words, an attitude or habit which is fundamental to continued vocabulary development" (66:274).

The word list and the form or card is taken to the conference. The child maintains his own word list and notebook. If cards are used, he may keep a file at his seat or in a master file for each student.

Evaluation. Evaluation must include many factors. Tangible factors, such as reading achievement are easily measurable, but the intangible factors such as interest and attitudes about reading are the most difficult to evaluate since there is no adequate statistical measure for these factors (3:7). It is in these intangible areas that the individualized reading program claims its fame since one objective is "to develop greater and more lasting interest in reading" (3:7). It must be kept in mind, then, that the

individualized reading program cannot be truly evaluated in terms of its strongest aspects; it must depend on evaluation of reading achievement if objectivity is required.

Reading achievement can be measured by determining the grade level of reading at the beginning of the year, again at the end, and then comparing the results (3:55). Most of the studies reporting reading achievement have been comparisons with the traditional group basal reading plan and the findings are controversial (63:154). Safford and Karr reported lower gains in reading achievement with the individualized reading approach (57:266-70, 38:174-77). Karr's experiment showed, specifically, gains in comprehension and vocabulary made by the basal reader group (38:174-77). On the other hand, the following experiments showed significantly greater gains using the individualized reading approach.

Greenman and Kapilian reported third and fourth graders made better than average gains in reading ability, read with a higher degree of accuracy and retained skills and vocabulary longer (27:234-37).

Jenkins reported significant gains in reading vocabulary, comprehension and total reading growth after one year comparing eight matched (teachers matched on the basis of educational training and experience and children matched on the basis of M.A., I.Q., and socio-economic background)

second grade classes, four under an individualized reading program and four under a basal reader program (36:84-90).

McChristy found greater gains in reading vocabulary, comprehension and total reading in sixty second graders under the individualized reading program as compared to sixty under a basal reader program. Initially they were matched in reading achievement (49:48-49).

Spencer found gains in all reading skills except oral reading were significantly higher for the twelve first and second grade students under the individualized approach as compared with twelve classmates under a basal reader program (67:595-600).

The following investigators have found no significant differences in reading achievement of students taught under an individualized reading approach and a basal reader approach: Fox and Fox (23:46-49), Karlin (39:95-98), Sartain (59:277-81), MacDonald (50:643-46).

It is difficult to evaluate comparative studies of individualized reading and the basal reader approach since in reality, most teachers do not follow one method exclusively. Also, many other problems exist such as matching teachers and children to limit the variables in an experiment. At this time there are very few controlled experiments published, for the individualized reading approach has not been used long enough (63:154-55). On the

basis of these controversial studies of comparing reading achievement for the two approaches, it is hard to conclude anything other than the need for more carefully controlled studies. However, Barbe concludes:

No claim is made that children will immediately score higher on traditional standardized reading tests, but they must do at least as well. In the long range picture it is believed that even on standardized tests the children will score higher, mainly because of the influence of having read more (3:7).

Thus, formal evaluation is used to determine gains in reading achievement, but informal evaluation, too, goes on day-by-day by both teacher and child via the records kept. Ongoing diagnosing, checking and evaluation occurs in the conference. Individually, the child is aware of his reading growth as he watches his book list grow, unlocks new words, or reads material that was too difficult previously (77:42).

Informally, a child's interest in reading can be determined by such things as the number of books read, their level of difficulty, and reading retention over the summer. Several teachers using the individualized reading approach report children reading many books. Sperber reported his third graders read on the average 33 books a year as compared with ten other third grade classes taught under the basal reader approach who read only 5.8 books (68:51). Carson reports her second graders read an average of 51.5 books per year (9:362-66).

While the number of books read is some indication of a child's interest in reading and his accomplishment, length alone is no proof. However, by comparing the approximate reading level of the first book read (as found on the book list) with that of the last, some measure of reading progress can be determined too (44:174).

Children usually experience a drop-off in reading ability over the summer months, but Vite reports that under an individualized reading program every child in her first grade class had experienced an increase in reading ability over the summer (77:41). Motivation and an extended interest in reading is indicated by this study.

Another informal method of evaluation is through the attitudes of the children. Almost universal in the literature was reported a positive attitude on the part of the child toward the individualized reading approach. When 163 first graders taught by the individualized reading method were compared as to their preference for reading activities, it was determined that the individualized group "preferred reading to other school activities to a significantly greater degree than did the control (basal reader) group" (50:643-46). When first graders were taught under both individualized reading and basal reading programs, and asked which they preferred, the answer was individualized reading (36:87). One comment from many teachers of

individualized reading is "...children love to read when they can choose their own books" (76:33). Sperber developed a reading attitude inventory of twelve questions with three choices in each question. One choice in each dealt with a reading activity while the others suggested some other activity. Those children in his individualized reading program chose more activities involving reading than did the children in ten other classes taught by the basal reading method (68:51).

Schwartzberg describes the attitudes of 39 gifted children taught under individualized reading:

They believed the individualized reading method was of value to them. They felt it was a better way of achieving their ends than the group method which they had had before (60:86-89).

He also noted positive changes in attitudes of slow learners when this method was used.

Most astonishing of all were the children's stated reactions to the year's reading activities. In private interviews with the writer all but one child stated definitely...that he preferred reading in this fashion. A check of their 'logs' showed as many as eighty books read during the year. No child read less than thirty (60:86-89).

When first grade children were asked to comment on the individualized reading program, after having been taught under both, they replied favorably. Some of their comments were:

'I like to read more books and I can read them faster.' 'I can read what I choose--any book in

our room! I like to tell others about my book and hear about theirs.' (36:86).

Factors affecting teacher success. The teacher's success in an individualized reading program is dependent not only on necessary personal characteristics and different roles she must assume but also on her ability to accept and deal with problems that will invariably come up.

The teacher is the single most important influence in a successful individualized reading program. Jacobs says this about desirable teacher characteristics:

Individualized reading starts not with procedures but with a creative, perceptive teacher--one who believes that children want to learn; who thinks with children rather than for them; who basically respects the individual behavior of every youngster; who works with children in orderly but not rigid ways (34:17).

Besides fitting into the above description, the teacher needs an adventuresome spirit--willing to experiment with different procedures (43:321). Flexibility is probably the most-mentioned desirable characteristic. Teachers who have used the individualized approach suggest that "continual evaluation and adjustment of their teaching procedures are necessary" (15:349).

The teacher in the individualized reading program assumes numerous roles at different times; she might be called a "Jill-of-all-skills." She is sometimes a librarian or book salesman, continually guiding children to books

and reading selections from different books to create interest (28:109). At other times she is a resource person, coordinator, and evaluator, always on the alert for new materials, helping develop skills and determining the effectiveness of the program (8:11-12). Always she is a counselor and a reading instructor, helping the child set purposes, discussing with him his interests, deficiencies and successes, and always exercising understanding (28:105-111).

The teacher should be aware of and willing to cope with inevitable problems that are bound to come up. Studies show one problem concerns the experience of the teacher, generally showing that the less experience the teacher has, the less effective she will probably be in an individualized reading approach. The assumption is that the inexperienced teachers will need the security of the teacher's manual (30:1-7). Another problem concerns itself with materials--procuring a supply on varying levels (43:75-83) and then becoming acquainted with their contents (39:95-98). Problems are reported with using individualized reading with first graders. Teachers sometimes think they are too immature to take the responsibility for the self-directed activities going on during the reading period (3:63). Other first grade teachers note that the slow learners have special difficulty adjusting to an individualized reading program (28:107).

The area of skill development and evaluation concerns some teachers. Some doubt their adequacy to diagnose problems and teach the various skills without formal guides (3:62). Johnson felt a "Pandora's Box of reading deficiencies" might result if skill training is left up to individual teaching (37:2-6). Evaluation is one of the most-mentioned objections. Barbe says:

...teachers worry about how they will be able to measure the child's progress, how they could be sure that he is making progress, how they can be certain that he is not merely staying at the same level practicing how to do only what he already knew what to do (3:62).

One last problem is the need for opportunities to discuss procedures and questions with others--possibly authorities or other interested persons trying the method. Dickinson summarizes from teachers' reports on this problem: "...they [teachers] sensed their own needs for information, study, and change in their way of working" (15:349). The teachers, then, needed someone to help with problems.

In conclusion, it is recognized that no one teacher is going to possess all of the desirable characteristics or adequately assume all the roles necessary for a successful individualized reading program, but she should be aware of these characteristics and roles and set them up as goals to strive for. An awareness of the problems that might come

up is necessary also so she might formulate possible solutions.

V. ECLECTIC APPROACHES

The basal reader program boasts of its sequential development of skills through the basal readers with their controlled vocabulary. The individualized reading program boasts of the child's high interest in reading and the development of positive attitudes toward reading through seeking, self-selection, and pacing. Can these two methods be combined?

Although some proponents of the individualized reading program would accept no middle ground, there are authorities who support an eclectic approach combining the good parts of both the individualized reading and basal reading approaches. Artley advocates joining the two methods with the hope of emerging with an instructional method more effective than either approach when used by itself (2:326). Several other reading authorities supporting an eclectic approach are: Witty (80:217), Strang (71:420-21), Sartain (59:277-81), Gray (26:99-104), Gates (25:83-88), Blakely (5:214-19), Fox and Fox (23:46-49).

There are several reasons for choosing an eclectic approach. Many experiments have shown that no one method of teaching reading will secure results with all children

(31:1122). Therefore, the wise teacher has many methods at her disposal and does not hesitate to use another method when the one being tried is unsuccessful (3:224). Also, the research on reading achievement is inconsistent. Therefore, combine the strong points of each approach (59:277-81).

There are a number of ways to combine the basal reader approach and the individualized reading approach, many of which are being experimented with at this time. Through this experimentation there should emerge some combinations which are most effective (3:224, 80:216). Some of these combination approaches are actually, in many cases, the in-between step from the basal reader program to the individualized method. In other words, some are the same as the methods described previously under "Initial Individualized Reading, How to Begin," pages 21-23.

An approach is described by Sartain whereby he uses the basal reader as the backbone of the program with the addition of the conference for all children. After finding that second grade children made approximately the same gains under individualized reading and the basal reading programs, Sartain suggested that

Children who complete the basal reader series would profit from individualized reading for the rest of the year and children in the top reading group could effectively use the basal reader part of the day and individualized reading the rest of the day (59:277-81).

The slower students tended to make gains in vocabulary under the basal reader method; therefore, this approach should be utilized with them (59:277-81).

Warford chose an eclectic approach with her first grade class by a divided-time method. In the morning, the basal reader approach was used, thus laying a firm foundation in the development of skills. In the afternoons a modified individualized approach was used whereby she tested the skills during an independent reading period with supplemental books, experience charts, class stories, class newspapers, etc. (79:36).

Rowe and Dornhoeffer turned to an eclectic program because they felt group reading from basal readers was valuable since it brought out "a certain sense of pleasure in sharing a story with your classmates" (56:118-22). Each day half the reading period was spent using basal readers with each child in a group reading the same story. The other half was spent with the children reading self-selected material (56:118-22).

Evans favors an eclectic approach featuring a balanced program using a type of division of time. This program would include:

1. Sequence and continuity of skill and vocabulary development, involving basal readers and other aids two or three days per week, with the children diagnosed and grouped by levels. (Experienced teachers may use co-basals or other materials.) Reader stories need not

be dull. Good motivation depends on the teacher at any time.

2. Wide reading. A good library is essential, with each child having a book of his own choice at all times. Free reading at the independent level is important, but it assumes that skills have been taught which enable the child to unlock new words and to understand what he is reading. Each child should read as widely as possible in books he selects himself.

3. Some individual and small group activities, such as teacher-pupil conferences, sharing of reading experiences, independent work on vocabulary and reading lists, and literature appreciation (21:376).

Spache describes an eclectic program in detail where he uses a part of the children and a part of the time in combination. He describes different programs featuring groupings of gifted, average and slow learning pupils. The gifted pupils, having high verbal ability, strong vocabularies and quick learning aptitudes, follow an individualized approach after an introduction to reading through experience charts. They may function as a group for skill training, chart reading and other purposes, but basically, their reading program would include reading self-selected materials under the guidance of the teacher in individual and group conferences. The average pupils follow a modified basal reader approach involving introduction to reading through experience charts, followed by the use of basal readers, and later, individualized reading. The individualized program will begin slowly through recreational materials. Slow learners, who may be intellectually or verbally handicapped, lacking in readiness aspects or maybe just more dependent,

follow an extended readiness program emphasizing the experience chart again. When ready, they are introduced to the basal readers which offer them the carefully controlled vocabulary and repetition that they need. They, too, will move toward individualized reading as they are ready (66: 185-90)

In conclusion, then, a combination approach can be successful, resulting in, according to Evans, a well balanced program "...not either individualized or group-orientated," but both (21:377).

CHAPTER III

THE AUTHOR'S PROPOSED ECLECTIC APPROACH

I. EMERGENCE OF AN ECLECTIC APPROACH

There are many approaches to teaching reading, each emphasizing certain strong points. I believe a good reading program would reach out and draw in the best parts of each method to be emphasized especially at different points in the first grade reading program. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis was to gather together the strong points of different approaches to teaching reading and emerge with a workable eclectic approach specifically designed to meet the needs of the first grade child. At the base of this eclectic approach lies the belief that each child is unique and should be respected for his differences.

Ideas from various approaches. The individualized reading method offers several advantages. First, it provides for the development of interest in reading and, thus, a positive attitude toward reading through seeking and self-selection of reading materials and finally through pacing; second, the individual conference with its close one-to-one relationship; third, its idea of keeping records; and, fourth, flexible groupings.

The language experience approach offers a second objective--development of meaning in reading by viewing reading as merely talk written down. The child uses all four aspects of the language arts--listening, speaking, reading, and writing--to create stories from his experiences. Thus, he sees his own language transformed into writing; written materials will have meaning in the same way talking has meaning. Whole class, group, and individual dictated experience stories, with the emphasis on the individual experience story, will be used.

The basal reader program furnishes the third objective in its systematic development of skills, complete with these materials: reading readiness books and tests, pre-primers, primers, and teacher's manuals.

Description of eclectic approach. Beginning in September, the language experience approach, with emphasis on individual experience stories, will be used in conjunction with the basal reader approach for reading readiness activities. The children will be grouped randomly at first, and later according to ability based on reading readiness tests and teacher evaluation. Each of the four groups will proceed in the basal readers through the primer. When the primer has been read, the top group will be completely individualized, likewise with each successive group as they finish the primer.

During this period of time until the primer is finished, the children will be going through certain stages of readiness to prepare them for the time when they begin the completely individualized program. Each child should have had experience in every phase of the procedures involved in individualized reading before the program is begun. The preparation for this time will be discussed in later sections.

Justification of eclectic approach. An eclectic approach, rather than a completely individualized approach from the beginning, was chosen for several reasons. First, the research indicated experience of the teacher as a determining factor for success. With only two years' experience, the writer felt individualized reading should be experimented with cautiously. After having about half of the year for preparation, getting to know the children, and planning with them, the writer would begin.

Since the first grade offers the first formal exposure to the developmental reading skills, the child should have an especially strong background of skills as a basis from which to build in later grades. A haphazard development of skills--which could result in a completely individualized program--would not only hurt the child but also handicap his next teacher since she would have to reteach many skills which were skipped.

The first half of the year is needed to develop the necessary sight vocabulary, and to develop reading readiness skills. During this time, also, the child must be prepared for the procedures and routines needed later in the individualized reading program.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF THREE OBJECTIVES

Interest in reading. The first grade child is still very ego-involved, and he is interested in anything which concerns him personally. It follows naturally that he should be interested in his first reading material: his own stories dictated to the teacher who records for him. His interest in reading is extended as he uses his experiences and knowledge as sources for his stories.

This interest is reinforced through the sharing of his stories with a partner, group, or the whole class. The child is motivated to extend his interests as he observes what others have to share. Flexible groupings are being brought together here for a purpose. Also, very important, is the teacher's approval of his story and her positive reinforcement. This is achieved through the dictating sessions and later on, through the individual conference.

Self-selection is the greatest contribution of individualized reading. The child is allowed to choose the reading material that interests him and sets his own purposes for reading.

Interests of each child can be determined by the teacher for the purpose of aiding her in selecting books in accordance with the interests of the class. The language experience approach, with its group and individual dictation times with the teacher, and the conference to be used later, both offer the teacher opportunities to become acquainted with individual interests. Since first graders would have difficulty filling out an interest inventory, more informal methods could be employed. Discussions about what kinds of stories are best-liked and why will be valuable. First graders could draw a picture of a favorite kind of story, dictate a sentence or two about it, and share it with the class.

Meaning in reading. It has been found that if the reading materials of the beginning reader are like his own "talk" it will be easier for him to comprehend. Thus, it follows that a good method for initiating beginning reading is to put the child's own talk down in writing in the form of a story. This approach will be the prime method of developing the idea of meaning as being synonymous with reading.

Through this approach the following sequence of concepts will be developed by the children (46:5-8).

1. What a child thinks about he can talk about.
2. What he can talk about can be expressed in painting, writing, or some other form.
3. Anything he writes can be read.

4. He can read what he writes and what other people write.
5. As he represents his speech sounds with symbols, he uses the same symbols (letters) over and over.
6. Each letter in the alphabet stands for one or more sounds that he makes when he talks.
7. Every word begins with a sound he can write down.
8. Most words have an ending sound.
9. Many words have something inbetween.
10. Some words are used over and over in our language and some words are not used very often.
11. What he has to say and write is as important to him as what other people have written for him to read.
12. Most of the words he uses are the same ones which are used by other people who write for him to read.

Through the development of these concepts, then, the child is led from the realization that his thoughts can be expressed through written symbols to the knowledge that all books written carry meaning expressed through these same symbols.

Three types of charts will be utilized--class, group, and individual--each for different purposes. These will be discussed in detail under the section entitled "Development of Chart Work."

Skills. Because of the importance of laying a firm foundation in the development of these beginning reading skills (vocabulary, word analysis, comprehension, and oral and silent reading) two different methods have been employed. First, the unstructured development of skills through the

chart stories where the skills are integrated with the child's own experience. Second, through the structured development of skills as found in the basal reader approach. By uniting these two, the child will be assured of a structured introduction to all the skills of his grade, and, at the same time, will understand how these skills are used to produce meaningful stories.

The skills, contained in Tables No. 1 and 2 in the appendix will be developed at the readiness and first grade level as determined by Barbe (3:142-43, 152-53). A copy of each of these skills check lists will be duplicated for each child to be checked and filed by the teacher as a means of diagnosis and evaluation. When individualized reading begins, the first grade skill list will be used as the basis for checking skill development.

III. PROGRAM PRIOR TO INDIVIDUALIZED READING

Aspects developed through pupil-teacher planning.

Many aspects of this program will be determined with the students in pupil-teacher discussion and planning periods. These aspects of the program cannot be planned specifically, then, but will evolve out of these planning sessions.

1. Classroom arrangement, such as seating, setting of the conference, placement and arrangement of books.

2. Procedures and standards for self-selection.

3. Organization of the conference.
4. Determination of independent activities and ways of sharing reading materials.
5. Determination of record-keeping system of child.

Reading readiness. The readiness period is the most important phase in reading. Only when the child encounters success in all phases of readiness will he be successful in reading. Through an eclectic approach, utilizing both chart work and basal reader readiness materials, the child can determine the length of his readiness program. Reading readiness tests, the reading readiness skill check list (Table No. 1 in appendix) and informal evaluation by the teacher on the basis of his chart and readiness activities materials will be the means of evaluating each child's readiness.

Development of chart work. During the reading readiness period the emphasis will be on the development of class, group, and individual charts. Chart work will continue throughout the first grade but will become much less frequent when individualized reading begins. Class charts are usually of the directive type. Specifically in this category will be charts on the following procedures necessary for individualized reading.

1. What to do when an unknown word is encountered when reading.

2. A daily or weekly class plan chart.

3. How to learn hard or interesting words.

4. How to choose a good book.

5. Ways to share books.

6. Suggestions for independent activities.

These charts, then, will evolve from pupil-teacher discussion and planning sessions and will include many of the procedures and routines needed later in the individualized reading program. Figure I, located on page 75, shows an example of a group chart.

Group charts take advantage of spontaneous or shared experiences of the group or an individual in the group. For less able students who have difficulty giving an account or experience, group charts give a chance for success through a joint group effort. Group charts are also valuable for developing a specific reading skill such as using context clues to recognize a word that looks like another word or emphasizing word structure when adding -s, ed, ing, etc. Figure II, located on page 75, shows an example of a group chart.

Individual charts will be the most common with the more able students who have no trouble expressing themselves. Through the individual chart, the pupil can express his own

interests and creativity through the story and his illustration. Many opportunities for sharing ensue. Stories can be "swapped" or just read to one another. Each child can decide which of his stories will go to the class library or into his personal file of stories. At intervals these stories can be bound together in a book. These stories give the child a running inventory of his own progress; thus, the beginnings of self-evaluation. Figure III, located on page 75, shows an example of an individual chart.

Development of self-selection. The children will grow naturally into the self-selection skills necessary by the preparation and activities before they go into an individualized program. From the very beginning there will be books and reading materials in the room for the children. During their free time they will be encouraged to look at or read different books. The teacher will be available before school and often during free time to talk informally with individual children about the books--which ones they like, don't like, and why. Eventually the class as a whole will discuss how to choose books they can read. Children will be encouraged to tell how they know if a book is too difficult. Special sharing times will be scheduled when children can tell how and why they chose certain material to read. A class chart will be prepared on self-selection.



How To Choose A Good Book

1. See what it is about.
2. Look at the pictures.
3. Look for hard words.

FIGURE I
CLASS CHART

Add	-s	-ed	-ing
jump		I can <u>jump</u> .	
jumped		Jerry <u>jumped</u> up and ran.	
jumping		Jerry is <u>jumping</u> .	

FIGURE II
GROUP CHART



Jipper

by Billy

I had a dog but he died.

A car hit him.

We buried him.

I cried.

FIGURE III
INDIVIDUAL CHART

Eventually (when most children are at least in pre-primers) Wednesdays will be set aside for independent reading of self-selected materials. Each child will bring his material with one special portion prepared to read to the teacher or with her. He will also bring his word cards prepared from this material, and his notebook. At this time, the teacher and child will evaluate his selection besides checking on other skills and his records.

Development of seatwork and independent activities.

The seatwork and independent activities during the reading period will be determined partially by the teacher and partially by the students. Realizing the need for regular evaluation of skill development, the teacher will always require one seatwork activity that she has determined developing some specific skill. It is hoped that by the time the individualized reading program starts, this teacher-determined activity can be eliminated and each child will be determining his own seatwork in connection with his self-selected material.

The child, upon finishing the required seatwork paper, will then have his choice of independent, team, or group activities. Prior to this, many discussions, chart recordings, and role-playing sessions will develop the following:

1. Possible independent activities in which children can participate.

2. How to conduct themselves in a team or small group.

3. How to carry out the various independent activities.

Prior to any reading lesson will always be a pupil-teacher planning session during which each child must plan what his choice for an independent, team, or group activity will be. Examples of independent activities might be art work such as painting, clay or coloring; browsing among books and/or reading; or, preparing to share a book or chart. Team activities might be sharing charts or books with a neighbor or friend; using word cards to make sentences or play different kinds of word matching games; or, talking about a book both children have read and perhaps planning together some way to share the book with the whole class on Friday afternoon. Group activities might include sharing of books read recently; a game developing some skill; or, preparing a book exhibit or bulletin board display.

At the close of each reading period a five-minute signal will be given. This is a signal to pupils to stop and evaluate their activities; conclude them or arrange for their continuation the next day; and, clean up. At this time the

teacher will circulate, discussing activities with the children, and evaluating their progress.

A "typical" reading period, then, excluding the actual time spent with the teacher, would follow this procedure in this order:

1. Teacher-pupil planning with the pupils, determining the activities they will participate in if time allows.
2. Reading period of charts and/or books.
3. Keeping records.
 - a. Making word cards of known or especially interesting or difficult words to be checked by the teacher.
 - b. Recording titles of charts or books read in his notebook.
4. Participation in independent, team, or small group activities.
5. Self and teacher evaluation and clean-up.

Development of groupings. Initially the children will be grouped randomly for the chart work in the morning and reading readiness books in the afternoon. After reading readiness tests are given and the teacher has evaluated each child's abilities and skills, the children are organized into four groups. This is done to differentiate reading instruction and to pace the learning of each child on as nearly an

individual basis as possible. These groupings will continue to meet together until individualized reading begins completely after the primer is finished. However, during the morning, chart work will be conducted on a group and individual basis. The more able students will participate in more individual chart work than the less able, who need the stimulation and dynamics of the group to a greater extent.

By providing for various temporary groupings meeting for specific purposes, the children will gain opportunities to work with many different children and will not feel the stigma of being associated with only one group. When the four main groups are organized and moving along smoothly, the teacher will allow enough flexibility in her program to allow for skill and interest groups. From the Wednesday individual reading sessions and informal observations at other times, she will be able to form special groups who need help with one particular skill. Maybe she notes certain children having difficulty with self-selection, context clues, or a particular phonics problem. A special group can be formed for the sole purpose of helping with each of these specific skills or problems. This type of grouping can definitely be planned and scheduled. If certain children share a common experience, a special session for development of a chart story with just these children will be held. The membership in these groups will be flexible,

temporary, and purposeful. The special interest groups cannot always be planned for, however. The teacher must keep the schedule flexible enough to allow for such groupings.

Each Friday afternoon there will be scheduled a whole class sharing time. During this period a "book or chart of the week" will be nominated. Also, this time will allow for any special sharing of reading activities the teacher and pupils have prepared. Other ways of grouping will be discussed on the section on "development of seatwork and independent activities."

Development of records of child and teacher. Each child will be given a notebook to record all the titles of charts or books he has read and the dates read. Included will be: his own or another child's chart stories, group or whole class chart stories and any books. Stories read in the basal reader will not necessarily be included. This record will be valuable to both the student and teacher as means of evaluation. Once a week the child, with the teacher, will check over this record. Later, when individualized reading begins, he will not only record the title of the book and the story, but the pages read each day, and a comment about the book. This may be indicated by drawing faces indicating the degree to which they liked or disliked

the book, or by written comment.



I liked this book very much.



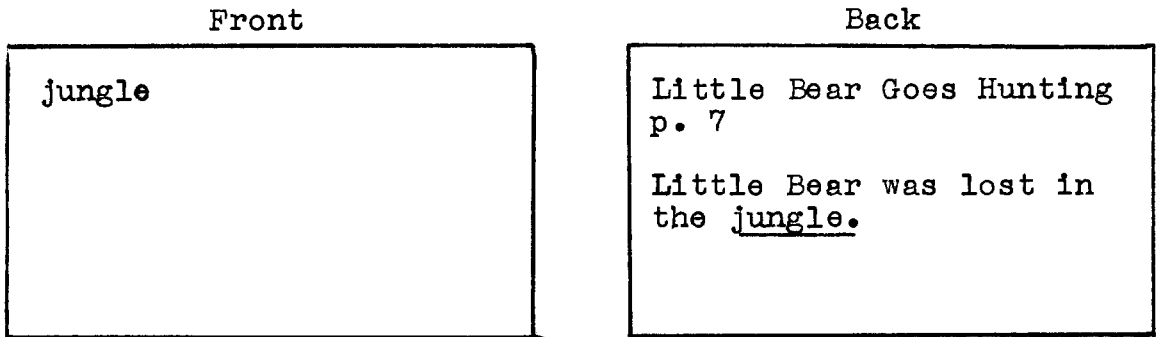
This book was all right.



I didn't like this book.

A form of record will be the word banks, or boxes with alphabetized tabs, containing 3 x 5 inch cards. On each card will be written the words each pupil knows. As he proceeds with his chart stories, he will underline all the words he knows. After he rereads the chart to the teacher, he is given word cards for these words. Initially he can draw or cut out and paste a picture on the back of the card suggestive of the word in case he forgets. Later, when his writing ability permits, he may also record on the back the name of the story or chart, the sentence in which the word was found, and the page number. After the basal readers are begun, their vocabulary words will also be added to each child's word bank. When individualized reading begins he may still make word cards for new words he learns, but he will be responsible for bringing to the conference only those cards showing new words encountered in his reading

that he can't figure out and possibly a different or interesting word for the child. Such a card may look like this:



FIGURE

WORD CARD

The teacher will keep a file for each child containing information from the kindergarten teacher (if any), results of I.Q. and reading readiness tests, and any other information or forms that won't be used or referred to often.

A loose-leaf notebook will hold forms and materials that will be used and referred to each time the child and teacher meet, either during the conferences after individualized reading begins or in the reading and dictating periods before. Each child will have a special section in the notebook for his own mimeographed copy of the reading readiness and first grade skills check lists and copies of mimeographed forms to be used each time the child and teacher meet. Form III will be used before individualized

reading begins as a means of readiness for the teacher to prepare herself for the more detailed Form IV to be used after individualized reading begins. Tables III and IV, located in the appendix, show these forms.

In a special section of the notebook will be filed these lists:

1. A comprehensive list of all the skills to be developed from the reading readiness period through the first grade and suggested activities to be used for seat-work and skill development in small groups.

2. A list of all the static books and materials used for independent reading and later self-selection for individualized reading.

3. A list of different ways to share books.

Schedule. Although the reading schedule will necessarily be flexible, Table V, shown in the appendix, illustrates what typically might be a day's schedule prior to the time when the complete individualized reading program begins. There are two hour-long reading periods daily, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. The four groups are named by number; Group I is the least mature, and Group IV is the most mature.

Dictating sessions have been scheduled for each group once a week, followed the next day by rereading sessions and

word study. Sometimes two rereading sessions will be necessary as indicated for Groups I and II on Thursday and Friday mornings in the schedule. Skills are developed through the chart stories and related materials.

On Wednesday each child has an individual conference with the teacher, bringing along a self-selected chart or book and his records. This activity is preparatory for both pupils and teachers for the time when conferencing begins regularly in individualized reading. Friday afternoons are reserved for special sharing sessions.

Development of evaluation. Evaluation will include both formal and informal types. Formal evaluation will occur in the form of I.Q. tests, reading readiness tests, and a standardized test at the end of the year to determine each child's reading level. The standardized test will also be valuable in terms of diagnosis of specific difficulties in reading skills, to be discussed with the child's next teacher.

Informal evaluation will be continuous and will involve both the teacher and child in many instances. All three objectives--development of interest in reading, meaning in reading and skill development--can be evaluated effectively through individual chart work, the child's attitude toward reading, and records of the child and teacher, including the skills check list.

IV. INDIVIDUALIZED READING PROGRAM

Beginning of completely individualized program. As each group finishes the primer, it will be natural for each child to go into a completely individualized reading program since he has had experience in each of the following aspects of individualized reading: self-selection; in partial determination of his seatwork and independent activities; in participation in small groups and teams for skill development, interest, and sharing; in keeping records; in the conference; and, in self-evaluation. As each group finishes the primer, individualized reading will start for them. In this way, then, the whole room will eventually be individualized.

Complete self-selection. After Group IV (the faster-moving group) finishes the primer, the teacher will simply allow complete self-selection from trade books, charts, and stories in the basal readers. Initially, the children will read their selection in the confines of the group with the teacher calling up individual children to her for conferences. When the children are sure of the procedures, they will be released from the group setting. During their reading time (until the rest of the class is individualized) individual children will be called up for conferences.

Determination of seatwork and independent activities.

Gradually the child will be released from the mandatory seatwork requirement of the teacher. This will be replaced by exercises geared to his own specific need. Through the conference and the use of the skills check list, his special skill needs will be determined, and exercises for the development of this specific skill will be given to him. These exercises will be teacher-developed, and also pages detached from various workbooks will be used. All will be filed in a special "Skills File Box" under the specific skill which the page develops. Each child will still participate in the independent activities of his choice whether it be individual, team, or group.

Records of child and teacher. The child will continue keeping the records established earlier. However, now, he will find it necessary to record in his notebook, not only the title of the book and the story, but also the pages he reads each day, and perhaps a comment about the completed selection. The word cards he makes now will consist of words he doesn't know, or different and interesting words. These words will be checked by the teacher, needed help given, learned, and filed, in that order.

The teacher's records will become more complete than the record used prior to individualized reading. She must now record the book and interests of the child, along with

the date, noting of skills needed, and individual or group assignments. An example of this record is Form IV shown as Table IV in the appendix.

Evaluation. Evaluation will continue as it did prior to individualized reading stressing, to a greater degree, each child's self-evaluation.

Summary. The strong points of several reading approaches have been brought together to complement each other. The disadvantages of one approach have been balanced by the advantages of the others. For instance, some feel it is questionable whether the language experience approach can feasibly be carried on through the upper grades and include more advanced skill instruction. However, it is especially valuable in initial reading instruction. The basal reader approach carefully develops vocabulary and word analysis skills, while this is the very weakness of the individualized reading and language experience approaches.

On the other hand, the following weaknesses in the basal reader will be eliminated and replaced by the advantages of the other two approaches: the vocabulary control of the basal readers doesn't allow for words which today's children use; the content doesn't always cover all children's interests; the spoken language of the child and that used in the basals often doesn't coincide. These criticisms of

the basal readers can be allowed for positively in the other two approaches through self-selection and language experience chart stories.

The proposed eclectic program, then, allows the first grade child to follow a readiness and a later reading program utilizing both the basal and language experience approaches. When the primer is finished, individualized reading will begin. Prior to this point, however, the child will have experienced every procedure involved in the individualized reading program. Thus, he is prepared for the independence and self-responsibility which the program requires.

In conclusion, it is hoped that through the use of this eclectic approach to individualized reading, each child will find increased opportunities to "step to the music he hears."

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APPENDIX

TABLE I
 BARBE READING SKILLS CHECK LIST
 READINESS LEVEL

(Last Name)	(First Name)	(Name of School)
(Age)	(Grade Placement)	(Name of Teacher)

I. VOCABULARY:

A. Word Recognition

- 1. Interested in Words _____
- 2. Recognizes own name
in print _____
- 3. Knows names of
letters _____
- 4. Knows names of
numbers _____
- 5. Can match letters _____
- 6. Can match numbers _____
- 7. Can match capital
and small letters _____

B. Word Meaning

- 1. Speaking vocabulary
adequate to convey
ideas _____
- 2. Associates pictures
to words _____
- 3. Identifies new words
by picture clues _____

- 4. Observes likenesses
and differences

in words _____
in letters _____

III. COMPREHENSION

A. Interest

- 1. Wants to learn to
read _____
- 2. Likes to be read to _____
- 3. Attention span
sufficiently long _____

TABLE I (Continued)

II. PERCEPTIVE SKILLS:

A. Auditory

1. Can reproduce pronounced two and three syllable words _____
2. Knows number of sounds in spoken words _____
3. Can hear differences in words _____
4. Able to hear length of word (Which is shorter? boy - elephant) _____
5. Able to hear sound:
 - At beginning of word _____
 - At end of word _____
 - In middle of word _____
6. Hears rhyming words _____
7. Aware of unusual words _____

B. Visual

1. Uses picture clues _____
2. Recognizes:
 - Colors _____
 - Sizes (big, little, tall, short) _____
 - Shapes (square, round, triangle) _____

B. Ability

1. Remembers from stories read aloud:
 - Names of characters _____
 - Main ideas _____
 - Conclusion _____
2. Can keep events in proper sequence _____
3. Uses complete sentences _____
4. Can work independently for short periods _____
5. Begins at front of book _____
6. Begins on left hand page _____
7. Knows sentence begins at left _____

IV. ORAL EXPRESSION:

- A. Expresses self spontaneously _____
- B. Able to remember five word sentence _____
- C. Able to make up simple endings for stories _____
- D. Able to use new words _____

Teacher's Notes:

BARBE READING SKILLS CHECK LIST

FIRST GRADE LEVEL

(Last Name)	(First Name)	(Name of School)
(Age)	(Grade Placement)	(Name of Teacher)

I. Vocabulary

A. Word Recognition

1. Recognizes words with both capital and small letters at beginning
2. Is able to identify in various settings the following words usually found in preprimers:

___a	___come	___green	___mother	___something
___airplane	___cookies	___has	___morning	___splash
___an	___cowboy	___have	___my	___stop
___and	___daddy	___he	___near	___surprise
___apple	___did	___help	___no	___table
___are	___dinner	___her	___not	___thank
___at	___dish	___here	___oh	___that
___away	___do	___hide	___on	___the
___baby	___dog	___home	___one	___tree
___ball	___down	___house	___party	___to
___be	___father	___I	___pie	___toy
___bed	___fast	___in	___play	___two
___big	___find	___is	___pretty	___up
___birthday	___fine	___it	___puppy	___want
___blue	___fish	___jump	___ran	___we
___boat	___for	___kitten	___red	___what
___bow-wow	___funny	___like	___ride	___where
___cake	___get	___little	___run	___will
___call	___girl	___look	___said	___with
___can	___give	___make	___see	___work
___cap	___go	___may	___she	___yellow
___car	___good	___me	___show	___you
___Christmas	___good-by	___mitten	___sleep	___your

Only additional words found in six of seven leading primers were:

___about	___eat	___let	___sat	___us
___again	___farm	___long	___saw	___walk
___all	___from	___man	___so	___was
___am	___fun	___many	___some	___water
___as	___had	___Mr.	___soon	___way
___back	___happy	___must	___take	___went
___black	___him	___night	___them	___were
___boy	___his	___new	___then	___when
___but	___how	___now	___there	___white
___came	___just	___of	___they	___wish
___could	___know	___put	___this	___who
___cow	___laugh	___rabbit	___too	___yes

II. Word Analysis:

A. Phonics

1. Recognizes single initial consonants and can make their sound :

b__ k__ q__ w__
 d__ l__ r__ x__
 f__ m__ s__ y__
 h__ n__ t__ z__
 j__ p__ v__

2. Knows single consonant sounds in final position (hat) _____
 3. Knows single consonant sounds in middle position (seven) _____
 4. Names of vowels are introduced _____
 5. Knows sounds of initial consonant blends (listed in order of difficulty) _____

sh__ tr__ ch__ sp__ tw__
 st__ fr__ fl__ sm__
 bl__ wh__ cl__ sn__
 pl__ th__ gl__ sw__

B. Structural Analysis

1. Knows endings _____

ed sound as "ed" in wanted _____
 ed sound as "d" in laughed _____
 ed sound as "t" in liked _____
 ing _____
 s _____

2. Recognizes compound words (into, upon) _____

3. Knows common word families:

all__ et__ an__ ay__ at__
 ill__ ake__ it__ in__ or__
 ell__ en__

C. Word Form Clues

1. Notices capital and small letters _____
 2. Notices length of words _____
 3. Notices double letters _____

TABLE II (Continued)

III. Comprehension:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| | 100 |
| A. Understands that printed symbols represent objects or actions | ___ |
| B. Can follow printed directions | ___ |
| C. Can verify a statement
(See if Sandy ran away.) | ___ |
| D. Can draw conclusions from given facts
(What do you think happened then?) | ___ |
| E. Can recall what has been read aloud | ___ |
| F. Can recall what has been read silently | ___ |
| G. Can place events in sequence | ___ |
| H. Can remember where to find answers to questions | ___ |

IV. Oral and Silent Reading Skills:

A. Oral Reading

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Uses correct pronunciation | ___ |
| 2. Uses correct phrasing (not word-by-word) | ___ |
| 3. Uses proper voice intonation to give meaning | ___ |
| 4. Has good posture and handles book appropriately | ___ |
| 5. Understands simple punctuation: | |
| period (.) | ___ |
| comma (,) | ___ |
| question mark (?) | ___ |
| exclamation mark (!) | ___ |

B. Silent Reading

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Reads without vocalization: | ___ |
| lip movements | ___ |
| whispering | ___ |
| 2. Reads without head movements | ___ |

TABLE III

FORM III. RECORD FORM FOR USE
PRIOR TO INDIVIDUALIZED READING

101

Name _____ Reading Readiness Test Score _____

Age _____ I. Q. _____

Date	Skill Needed	Special Grouping

TABLE IV

FORM IV. RECORD FORM FOR USE
AFTER INDIVIDUALIZED READING BEGINS

102

Name _____

Age _____

Date	Book	Interests	Skills Needed	Individual or Group Assign.

TABLE V

SCHEDULE PRIOR TO INDIVIDUALIZED READING

Group	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
am I	Dictate stories	Reread stories and word study	Individual conferences all day.	Reread stories and word study	Special skill group
pm	Basal reader- books and activities	Basal reader- books and activities	(Sharing activities if time permits.	Basal reader- books and activities	Special class sharing activities
am II	Reread stories and word study	Special skill group		Dictate stories	Reread stories and word study
pm	Basal reader- books and activities	Basal reader- books and activities		Basal reader- books and activities	Special class sharing activities
am III	Flexible activities	Special skill group		Dictate stories	Reread stories and word study
pm	Basal reader- books and activities	Basal reader- books and activities		Basal reader- books and activities	Special class sharing activities
am IV	Dictate stories	Reread stories and word study		Flexible activities	Special skill group
pm	Basal reader- books and activities	Basal reader- books and activities		Basal reader- books and activities	Special class sharing activities