

A COMPARISON OF TWO APPROACHES
TO THE TEACHING OF READING

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the School of Education
East Carolina College

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

by
Elizabeth Roberson
August, 1965

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by

Elizabeth Roberson

APPROVED BY:

DIRECTOR OF THESIS

John W. Batten

DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Douglas H. Jones

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES

John A. Reynolds

209706

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Elizabeth Gorrie Roberson, A COMPARISON OF TWO APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF READING (Under the direction of Dr. James W. Batten) School of Education, East Carolina College, August, 1965.

The purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of teaching reading using the traditional approach and a more progressive or experimental approach. In order to make the comparison, it was necessary to define the involvements of the two approaches and to relate them to reading instruction. The history of reading was reviewed and early methods of teaching reading were examined and studied. Subsequently, a comparative study was pursued by equating ten pairs of students in two different schools in Greenville, North Carolina. The pairs of children were chosen on the bases of intelligence quotients (90-110), similar socio-economic background, and continued attendance in the same school for five consecutive years.

Achievement test scores on standard achievement tests were recorded at the end of the fourth grade and compared and analyzed with the scores attained at the completion of the fifth grade.

The results of the study revealed that the weakest areas within the experimental group were the areas of paragraph meaning and study skills. The strongest areas were spelling and language. The traditional group excelled in paragraph meaning, science, and social studies but lagged in spelling and language. Finally, it was concluded that there is no best way to teach reading and that success or failure of a reading program depends largely on a skillful teacher who can work effectively with different students on diverse levels of instruction according to individual needs.

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITION OF TERMS

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to compare the traditional approach with the more progressive approach in the teaching of reading.

Limits of the Study. This study was limited in its scope due to the difficulty ensued in finding children who had been at the same school for five consecutive years who also had similar I. Q. levels (90-110). Because of this factor, it was possible to find only 10 pairs of children upon which the study could be made. The study was further limited in that the schools represented in the survey were not purely traditional nor progressive, thus causing some overlapping of philosophies, which might have altered some of the reported scores.

Significance of the Study. This study is significant in its attempts to contrast the achievement levels of children taught in a more traditional classroom with those of children who are instructed in a more progressive atmosphere. It indicates the value of directed teaching as opposed to incidental learning.

II. DEFINITION OF TERMS USED

Word. A speech sound or series of sounds that have meaning and are used as a unit of language. (A unit of meaning.)

Syllable. A part of a word in which a vowel is heard.

Determinative. A symbol or figure which was used as an auxilliary unit to help clarify the meaning of the word.

Phonogram. The smallest unit of sound that distinguishes one letter from another.

Pictogram. The first stage in the development of writing in which a picture stood for a word.

Vowel. A speech sound which implies a variation in sound. In producing the vowel sound the oral passage is comparatively unobstructed allowing the breath stream to flow from the lungs to the lips without being cut off at any point.

Consonant. Implies a consistency or constancy in sound. It is a sound which is produced by interrupting the air or breath by one of the organs of articulation such as the lips, teeth, tongue, or hard and soft palates.

Phonetics. The science of speech sounds and their representation by written symbols.

Phonics. The application of elementary phonetics in teaching a child how to read.

ABC Method. A method of teaching reading in which the letters of the alphabet were learned first. It involved teaching the child his letters, then combining letters into syllables, syllables into words, and words into sentences.

Word Method. A method of teaching reading which was introduced by Horace Mann. The child learned word wholes before learning the isolated letters.

Phonic Method. A method of reading which required the use of the ears as well as the eyes. It involved a sounding out of new words letter by letter and blending these sounds together so as to figure out new words independently.

Syllabarium. Consonants and vowels in combination with one another.

Vowel Digraph. Two vowels side by side.

Vowel Diphthong. Two vowels side by side which carry a sequence of sound or glide in the voice.

Experience Method. A method of reading instruction which stressed the teaching of reading for the primary purpose of preparing a child for well-rounded living with his fellow-man. It integrated the teaching of reading with all the other subjects in the curriculum.

Traditional Approach to Reading Instruction. Emphasized learning to read. It was based on the idea that drill would bring about this learning and made no attempt to correlate the subject of reading with other subjects.

Progressive Approach to Reading Instruction. Based upon the recognition of needs and interests of children rather than upon drill and memorization. It emphasizes experiences of children as a preparation for life rather than the subjects being taught.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The story of education and the development of various phases of language have revealed man's constant struggle to learn to read and write. The development of language is considered to be one of the greatest accomplishments man has made.¹ As Thorndike said, "It (language) is more important than all the physical tools invented in the last two thousand years."² Historically speaking, education is the means by which various ethnic groups have attempted to realize their social and spiritual ideals.³ Language is the means by which they have been able to express these ideals and to convey their thoughts to other people.

I. PREHISTORIC MAN

According to Thorndike, it is not known when or where speech originated.⁴ It is known only that it is very old and that through its progressive development, certain words have become associated with definite objects.⁵ The origins of man's writing are as remote as the beginnings

¹David M. Russell, Children Learn to Read (New York: Ginn and Company, 1961), p. 35.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Edward Lee Thorndike, Man and His Works (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1943), p. 84.

⁵Russell, op. cit., p. 35.

of his speech. His first attempts at recording his activities and ideas were in the form of carvings on the walls of his cave. Rogers states that the oldest rock paintings in existence are murals painted on the walls of a cave at Altamira in northern Spain which have been estimated to be about 30,000 years old.⁶ The pictures at Altamira were of animals and figures and apparently had no direct connection with one another. They merely depicted events in the cave man's life and gave some record of his physical needs.⁷ Smith suggests that another group of people, the Aurignacians, who lived about the same time as the people of Altamira, did make an attempt to tell a story through their paintings and achieved some measure of continuity with them.⁸

Davenport has concluded that alphabetical symbols were in existence in Egypt as early as 4000 B.C. during the reign of King Sent.⁹ Smith further describes this alphabet as a series of characters, none of which resembles the alphabet in use today, except for one letter which is almost identical to the letter N.¹⁰ The stone tablet which shows the evidence of this alphabet has the name of King Sent carved on it in alphabetical

⁶ Frances Rogers, Painted Rock to Printed Page (New York: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1960), p. 11.

⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

⁸ William A. Smith, Ancient Education (New York: Philosophical Library, 1955), p. 7.

⁹ Cyril Davenport, The Book-Its History and Development (New York: Peter Smith, 1930), p. 18.

¹⁰ Smith, op. cit., p. 4.

characters. The Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, England has this stone plaque in its possession.¹¹

II. SUMERIANS (3000 B.C.)

It has been said that "necessity is the mother of invention." Since man had felt no real need for a means of recording language, he made very little effort in the early years of his existence to develop a method of writing. However, about the year 3000 B.C. in the land of Mesopotamia, a people known as the Sumerians began to realize a need for writing.¹² Their country lay between two major rivers, the Tigris and the Euphrates, and because of its proximity to these rivers as well as its location on the major trade routes going east and west, Sumer became a land of tradesmen. The tradesmen had to keep some record of their business transactions in order to do their work efficiently. It became impossible for them to keep these records in their minds and they knew they must have another means of recording them.¹³ The Sumerians wanted some means of keeping records of their everyday affairs such as records of the people who owned land and of those who had paid their taxes.¹⁴

Their first method of writing was a very simple one that used pictures to represent the things of which the writing told. In order to read

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Rogers, op. cit., p. 18.

¹³Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 21.

their writing, the person had to use his ears as well as his eyes. Each picture or symbol represented a sound in the Sumerian language. This method of picture-sound writing is known today as a rebus.¹⁵ For example, if an intangible word such as belief was to be written, they would draw the picture of a bee and the picture of a leaf and then the ear would translate the sounds of bee and leaf into the word belief. The Sumerians gradually modified this method of writing and using the same principle, began to build a vocabulary of sound-picture symbols, in which a picture would stand for something else. For example, they would use the picture of a bent line to stand for the words "to bend." They would show two wavy lines to designate "water" or the picture of a triangle for the word "wedge."¹⁶

By 2000 B.C., the Sumerians had developed a very complicated system of writing known as cuneiform, which meant "wedge-shaped." All of the characters used in this writing were wedge shaped and it was their combination with one another which determined what they meant.¹⁷ Since the writing was so difficult to learn, only the people who received special training could learn to read it. Those people who were trained in the rudiments of reading and writing were called scribes, and their schools were the earliest schools in existence.¹⁸

¹⁵Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 39.

The Sumerians recorded their writings on clay tablets known as Fara Tablets. The figures were impressed on the moist clay and then put into the sun to dry. The content of these tablets were limited to temple accounts and classified lists of kinds of animals, fish, birds, or cities. These tablets were used as school text-books and can probably be credited with being the first textbooks in existence.¹⁹

About the year 2100 B.C., the Sumerians were conquered by the Semitic Babylonians.²⁰ The Sumerian script was adopted by the Semites and reached the height of its development under the reign of King Hammurabi (1947-1905 B.C.).²¹

III. THE EGYPTIANS(3200 B.C.)

The Egyptians were working on a system of writing at the same time the Sumerians were, and had a well-developed system devised by the beginning of the Old Kingdom (3200 B.C.). Smith suggests that their system of writing might have even been in use before that of the Sumerians.²²

The Egyptians, like the Sumerians, provided schools for the boys who wished to become scribes. They were eligible to go to school when they became five years old. They carried no schoolbooks or writing materials, for most of their work was memorized.²³ They were required to memorize

¹⁹Smith, op. cit., p. 20.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid., p. 28.

²³Rogers, op. cit., p. 40.

at least 700 picture symbols and had to learn to use these symbols in three different ways in order to write. First, the symbol would actually picture the object it represented. Second, the symbol would stand for an idea. Third, the picture would indicate the sound of the word or syllable as in a rebus. They had to use all of these variations in their writing and it was necessary for the scribe to distinguish whether the symbol stood²⁴ for an object, an idea, or a sound.

The Egyptians realized that this method of expression was too time consuming and reduced the number of symbols to twenty four.²⁵ They now had an alphabet which for the first time enabled them to write their language phonetically as it is today.²⁶ The letters were all consonant letters however, and a true alphabet would not exist until the invention of the vowels.²⁷

The modern alphabet can be credited to the Seirites, the forefathers of the Phoenicians. While working for the Egyptians, the Seirites came in contact with the Egyptian writing and from it developed twenty-one symbols corresponding to the letters of the alphabet. Russell states "The word alphabet comes from the first letters of the two Seirite words alpha and bet meaning ox and house respectively."²⁸ The new system of writing

²⁴Ibid., p. 42.

²⁵Ibid., p. 43.

²⁶Smith, op. cit., p. 28.

²⁷Rogers, op. cit., p. 43.

²⁸Russell, op. cit., p. 52.

which they began has been in use for 3000 years.²⁹

IV. THE PHOENICIANS(1500 B.C.)

The people of Seir migrated south from Egypt and through the centuries came to be known as Phoenicians.³⁰ The Phoenicians were traders and through their travels, carried their alphabet to many places. About the year 1500 B.C., the Greeks came in contact with the Phoenicians and borrowed their alphabet.³¹ A Greek, Herodotus, sometimes known as the Father of History,³² described the Phoenician influence:

Now the Phoenicians introduced into Greece upon their arrival, a great variety of arts, among the rest, that of writing where of the Greeks has as I think, been ignorant. And originally they shaped their letters exactly like all other Phoenicians, but afterwards, in the course of time, they changed by degrees their language and together with it, the form likewise of their characters.³³

V. THE GREEKS(1000 B.C.)

The Greeks modified and refined the Phoenician alphabet. Even though they had the Semitic consonant signs in their possession, they felt the need for something more. They needed some means of representing the

²⁹Rogers, op. cit., p. 58.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Smith, op. cit., p. 29.

³²Frank Pierrepont Graves, A History of Education Before the Middle Ages, (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1909), p. 144.

³³Rogers, op. cit., p. 76.

vowels, and according to Russell, the Greeks had developed the vowels by 1000 B.C.³⁴ They had now developed an alphabet in which there was a sign for every sound. This alphabet constituted the basis for all subsequent European alphabets.³⁵ The Greeks' achievement is regarded as the greatest gift of the Greek culture to Western civilization.³⁶

VI. THE ROMANS(300 B.C.)

Around the 3rd Century, B.C., the Roman culture employed an alphabet composed of twenty-one letters. It was eventually extended to twenty three letters. In writing their letters, they emphasized writing from left to right and are possibly the first ones to see an advantage in reading and writing in this manner.³⁷ The Romans are credited with the founding of the elementary school. The date of its founding has only been inferred, but Boyd thinks that it was in the mid-third century B.C., but has no real facts to back up his hypothesis. The elementary school received the boys and a few girls when they reached the age of six or seven and kept them until they were twelve or thirteen.³⁸ Good states that elementary education began at about the age of seven. The boys were taught reading, writing, moral virtues, rules of conduct, and the Law of the

³⁴Russell, op. cit., p. 53.

³⁵Smith, op. cit., p. 126.

³⁶Ibid., p. 128.

³⁷Ibid., p. 184.

³⁸William Boyd, The History of Western Education, (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1947), p. 189.

Twelve Tables. First he learned the letters, then syllables and spelling then words and reading.³⁹ According to Seeley, the whole purpose of the schools was to prepare children for practical life. They particularly emphasized their youth's preparation for public speaking.⁴⁰ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek historian who lived in Rome during this period described the Roman method of teaching reading:

When we learned to read was it not necessary at first to know the name of the letters, their shape, their value in syllables, their differences, then the words and their case, their quantity long or short, their accent and the rest?

Arrived at this point, we began to read and write, slowly at first and syllable by syllable. Some time afterwards, the forms being sufficiently engraved on our memory, we read more cursorily, in the elementary book, then in all sorts of books, finally with incredible quickness and without making any mistakes.⁴¹

VII. THE ATHENIANS(600-300 B.C.)

Up until this time, very little emphasis had been placed upon children's knowing how to read, but with the refinement of the alphabet, records begin to show the emergence of formal reading instruction. In the schools of Athens in the years from 600 B.C. - 300 B.C., the learning of reading played a predominant part in the life of the Athenian schoolboy.⁴²

³⁹H. G. Good, A History of Western Education, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960), p. 47.

⁴⁰Levi Seeley, History of Education, (New York: American Book Company, 1899), p. 78.

⁴¹Elwood P. Cubberly, The History of Education, (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), p. 64.

⁴²Ibid., p. 27.

There was no provision in the Athenian school for the education of girls and usually a Greek woman was entirely uneducated.⁴³

As soon as a boy could trace the forms of the letters in the sand or use a stylus to scratch the letters in wax, he began to combine the letters into syllables and words and to write down poetry that the schoolmaster dictated to him. The writing lesson one day provided the reading lesson for the next day. In this way, every boy made his own textbook. If he was unable to read his lesson due to its illegibility, he had only himself to blame.⁴⁴

Reading was taught by first learning the letters, then the syllables, and finally words. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, who described the Roman teaching methods also gave this description of Athenian methods:

We learn first the names of the elements of speech, which are called grammata, then their shape and functions; then the syllables and their affections; lastly the parts of speech, and the particular mutations connected with each, as inflection, number, contraction, accents, position in the sentence; then we begin to read and write, at first in syllables and slowly, but when we have attained the necessary certainty, easily and quickly.⁴⁵

⁴³William Barclay, Educational Ideals in the Ancient World, (London: Collin's Clear-Type Press, 1959), p. 91.

⁴⁴Graves, op. cit., p. 162.

⁴⁵Cubberly, op. cit., p. 26.



FIGURE I

PICTURE OF A READING LESSON
IN AN ATHENIAN SCHOOL
FROM A KULIX BY DOURIS

Kenneth Freeman, Schools of Hellas (London: Macmillan and Company, 1932),
Plate I.B.

Figure 1, taken from a Kulix of Douris, depicts a reading or recitation lesson in an early Athenian school. On a high backed chair sits an elderly master holding a roll in his hand. On it is inscribed what is clearly meant to be an hexameter line from some epic poet but Douris was not very well educated and so the line is misspelled and will not scan. In front of the master stands a boy. The master may be dictating the poem while the boy learns it by heart after him, or he may be hearing him say it. But very possibly the scene represents a reading-lesson. On the walls of the school hang a manuscript rolled up and tied with a string and an ornamental basket. These baskets were used as bookcases to hold the manuscript rolls.⁴⁶

It was very difficult for the students to learn to read at that time since all the books were written in capital letters.⁴⁷ There was no punctuation, accent, or spacing between words, which further added to the confusion.⁴⁸ This method of printing made it very difficult to arrive at the meaning of a sentence.

The first step in learning to read was to learn the alphabet. In order to make it easier and more enjoyable, it was put into verse and dramatized.⁴⁹ Since the alphabet consisted of twenty four letters, there

⁴⁶Kenneth J. Freeman, Schools of Hellas (London: Macmillan and Company, Limited, 1932), p. 92.

⁴⁷Frederick Eby and Charles Flinn Arrowood, The History and Philosophy of Education Ancient and Medieval (New York: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1940), p. 274.

⁴⁸Cubberly, loc. cit.

⁴⁹Freeman, op. cit., p. 88.

would be twenty-four people in the chorus, each one representing one of the twenty four letters. In the first choric song the letters were put together in pairs. The first chorus might have run as follows:

Beta	Alpha	BA
Beta	Ei	BE
Beta	Eta	BE
Beta	Iota	BI
Beta	Ou	BO
Beta	U	BU
Beta	O	BO

50

After this sequence, Gamma was paired with the seven vowels and so on through the entire alphabet. During the song, the members of the chorus dressed to represent the letters and postured themselves in the right position to form themselves into required pairs. After the song, the teacher lectured about the vowels to the group in iambic verse. The chorus then repeated the vowels one by one after the teacher. The opportunity was taken at this time for describing the shape of the letters, and the audience had to guess what letter was intended.⁵¹ This method of teaching must have been enjoyed by the children because Freeman says that there is no record of Hellenic boys "creeping unwillingly to school."⁵²

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 89.

⁵¹ Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 275.

⁵² Freeman, op. cit., p. 81.

These methods introduced by the Greeks have been considered to be the actual beginnings of reading instruction.⁵³

VIII. QUINTILIAN (100 A.D.)

A period of several centuries elapsed before another notable development in the teaching of reading occurred. In the first century A.D., Marcus Fabius Quintilianus, better known as Quintilian, stated his views concerning education. Quintilian, a Roman rhetorician and critic, had a great many theories concerning education, and he was particularly vehement in his views concerned with the teaching of reading. He advocated a sequential method of teaching the rudiments of reading. He thought the letters of the alphabet should be learned first; syllables should follow letters; words should follow syllables; and finally sentences should follow words.⁵⁴ In his book Pedagogy, he lists several requisites for learning how to read. He says:

The memory is most tenacious in early childhood. Learning must be a pleasure and not a burden. Begin with reading. First teach the forms of the separate letters so that the child may know them when he sees them. This is preferable to beginning with the order of the alphabet, or with syllabic sounds. Ivory letters will be found useful helps. Writing is best taught by cutting the letters on a board, and letting the child draw his stylus along the grooves. This is preferable to wax. All combinations of letters, even the most difficult, must be learned systematically at first, and not be left to puzzle us when they occur. Good reading is taught by beginning slowly and quickening by degrees.⁵⁵

⁵³Eby and Arrowood, op. cit., p. 276.

⁵⁴Grace M. Fernald, Remedial Techniques in Basic School Subjects (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Incorporated, 1943), p. 21.

⁵⁵Oscar Browning, An Introduction to the History of Educational Theories (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1882), p. 28.

Quintilian believed that reading should progress very slowly and that the child should fully understand every step before progressing to another. He felt that reading was retarded by haste.⁵⁶ He stressed good oral reading habits, emphasizing good breath control and a well modulated voice. He suggested various ways to show expression in oral reading by variation of speed and pitch.⁵⁷ Quintilian's methods were the forerunners of today's graded series of books, progression to new material only after the student fully comprehends the underlying principles, and the use of manipulative materials in making certain concepts more meaningful. Quintilian assumes a very important place in the development of education and in methods of instruction because he delved into the problems of teaching more deeply than any of his predecessors. He sensed the importance of methodology in teaching. He had respect for the specific qualities of childhood and understood that they could not be expected to behave like adults. He helped to change teaching from a process of hardship to one of self-development.⁵⁸

IX. THE ROMANS (100-200 A.D.)

Cubberly describes life in Rome during the first and second centuries A.D. as one of the happiest ages in all human history. It was a

⁵⁶William M. Smail, Quintilian on Education (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1938), p. 19.

⁵⁷H. E. Butler, The Institutio Oratorio of Quintilian (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 147.

⁵⁸Robert Ulich, Three Thousand Years of Educational Wisdom (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Harvard University Press, 1948), p. 102.

period in which the country was ruled by competent emperors who engendered a general atmosphere of peace and tranquility among the people.⁵⁹ However, he points out that during the third and fourth centuries A.D. barbarian hordes from the north swept over the country, plundering and destroying everything in their paths. After their invasions had ceased, the countries of Europe were in a dire state of ignorance and lawlessness. The Roman schools gradually began to die out.⁶⁰ By the sixth century A.D., after a long period of degeneration and decay, they finally closed.⁶¹ A Bishop of the sixth century described the conditions thusly:

Woe to the present age, which has seen the study of letters perish, and in which nobody any longer knows how to preserve for the future the records of events . . . everything is on the decline, is at the point of death. Therefore I beg that you will excuse my errors of letter or syllable - I have been so badly educated.⁶²

X. CHARLEMAGNE (742-814 A.D.)

During this period of cultural darkness the name of Charlemagne rose to eminence. Charlemagne (742-814), A.D. king of the Franks and emperor of the Holy Roman Empire; ruled, and had a deep respect for education and because of his influence, learning did not completely perish in his empire as it had done in other parts of the world.⁶³ Charlemagne could read, but could not write. He tried to learn after he was in

⁵⁹Gubberly, op. cit., p. 109.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Good, op. cit., p. 58.

⁶²Rogers, op. cit., p. 102.

⁶³Ibid., p. 101.

advanced years and found it impossible to master. Because of his failure to accomplish this skill, he decided that he could have learned to write had he been taught as a child. Out of his own disappointment of not being able to learn the art of writing, he desired that all children in his kingdom have a chance to attend school.⁶⁴

For the teacher in his school, he called upon a monastery for the services of one of their monks, a man called Alcuin. In the year 782 A.D., Alcuin arrived at the palace of Charlemagne and was appointed his minister of education. His instruction was a question and answer type of instruction. Both the questions and answers were prepared by him before the class convened and both had to be learned by the pupils.⁶⁵

Alcuin not only taught the children in the palace school, but also developed an alphabet of lower case letters. It was customary at that time to begin a sentence with a capital letter and then to write the remaining letters in smaller capitals. Alcuin designed an alphabet of "small letters" which he named "Caroline" in honor of Charlemagne.⁶⁶

When the palace school proved to be successful, Charlemagne established more schools and made the following proclamation in the year 802 A.C.: "Everyone should send his son to school to study letters and the child should remain at school with all diligence until he should become well instructed in learning."⁶⁷

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Cubberly, op. cit., p. 141.

⁶⁶Rogers, op. cit., p. 104.

⁶⁷Cubberly, loc. cit.

Even though Charlemagne's attempts at providing education for the children of his realm were negligible in comparison with the accomplishments of the educators who succeeded him, he had a lasting influence on the schools that were to follow. He checked the decline in learning, reawakened a desire for study, and provided an important stimulus toward the study of letters.⁶⁸

XI. THE INVENTION OF THE PRINTING PRESS (1438 A.D.)

Reading and reading instruction progressed very slowly up until the fifteenth century, due to the scarcity of reading material. All books that were available had to be copied by hand by the few people who knew how to write. Books were very costly to own and only a few people knew this luxury. In the year 1423 A.D., a Dutchman named Coster made a great step forward when he made the first engraved single page of writing by means of a printing press.⁶⁹ In 1438, Gutenberg, a German printer, capitalizing upon Coster's idea, invented movable wooden types which completely revolutionized educational techniques and materials.⁷⁰ At about the same time the printing press was invented, paper manufacturing was developed. With the combination of paper and a printing press with which to turn out printed materials, textbooks became more plentiful for

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 143.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 255.

⁷⁰Ibid.

the masses. Visual instruction was now as important as hearing.⁷¹ The invention of the printing press changed teaching from a reading-by-the-professor method to a textbook method.⁷²

During the period between the years 1400-1500 A.D., the children had to learn their ABC's from the local priest or in an elementary school known as a song school.⁷³ These schools were for the primary purpose of training boys as choristers, but since the skill of reading was needed by the boys in reading their choral selections, it became necessary to teach the rudiments of reading and writing as well. Chaucer describes in his book Prioress's Tale what the boys learned at such a school:

to syngen and to rede
as smale children done in hir childhede.⁷⁴

XII. MARTIN LUTHER AND THE REFORMATION (1500 A.D.)

Eby points out that there was a tumultuous upheaval among the people of the western world during the sixteenth century which affected every phase of human life.⁷⁵ He describes it as "the most far-reaching and profound awakening in the history of western civilization."⁷⁶ This

⁷¹Craig R. Thompson, Schools in Tudor England (Washington, D.C.: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1958), p. 5.

⁷²Cubberly, op. cit., p. 281.

⁷³Thompson, op. cit., p. 2.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Frederick Eby, The Development of Modern Education (New York: Prentice-Hall, Incorporated, 1952), p. 1.

⁷⁶Ibid.

transformation of civilization is usually called the Reformation, and the most notable participant in this reformation was Martin Luther.⁷⁷

Before the Reformation, the church had the responsibility of providing schools, but because of Martin Luther, the control of the schools was transferred from the church to the state.⁷⁸ Up until this time, very little emphasis had been placed on education for girls and only a few nuns of the Roman Church and a few noble or wealthy women had an education. Luther changed this practice however, and advocated education for everyone regardless of his sex or station in life.⁷⁹ He also emphasized the teaching of reading in the schools so that a child might be better equipped to read the scriptures which he thought to be so important.⁸⁰ It is difficult to assess the value of Martin Luther's contribution to education, but he did set in motion a desire for knowledge and a restlessness among the people.

According to Taylor, the ABC method had been the principal method used to teach reading up until the 1500's.⁸¹ With this method, the child had to learn the ABC's in an isolated manner with no relationship to anything he knew in his realm of life. In the year 1534, Ickelsamer of Germany, published a primer in which he protested against the Alphabet

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 62.

⁷⁸Good, op. cit., p. 158.

⁷⁹Eby, op. cit., p. 72.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 75.

⁸¹Joseph S. Taylor, Principles and Methods of Teaching Reading (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1915), p. 116.

Method and advocated a new method known as the Phonic Method.⁸² Instead of the name of the letter, the child first learned its sound. Next to each letter was printed the picture of an animal whose voice or cry resembled the sound of the letter, thereby giving the child something with which to relate the abstract letter.⁸³ For example, under the picture of a dog was placed the growling "r" and with a picture of a bird, the twittering "z".⁸⁴ Unfortunately, Ickelsamer's reform was not successful and the people gradually lapsed back into their old methods of teaching reading. For several centuries, nothing more was heard of the phonic method.⁸⁵

XIII. THE "PETTY SCHOOL" (1500 A.D.)

In sixteenth century England there emerged the "petty school." William Shakespeare attended the petty school when he was a child and Thompson considers that this school can probably be attributed with influencing much of his later writings.⁸⁶ A child entered the petty school at the age of four, probably already with some knowledge of reading which he had acquired at home.⁸⁷ He learned the twenty-six letters of the alphabet by their configuration. After this skill was mastered, he

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Graves, op. cit., p. 255.

⁸⁵Taylor, loc. cit., p.

⁸⁶Thompson, op. cit., p. 9.

⁸⁷Ibid.

learned to sound the letters by their proper names and to join them together, the vowels with vowels in diphthongs and digraphs, and the consonants with vowels in other syllables.⁸⁸

The boys learned these letters and syllables from a hornbook, a wooden tablet with a handle which could be hung around his neck. The tablet was covered with a sheet of parchment or paper containing the alphabet, over which was placed a plate of transparent horn. When the material in the hornbook was learned, the child proceeded to the ABC With the Catechism and the Primer. With these text-books he received advanced training in reading and also acquisition of the religious tenets that he was expected to know.⁸⁹ Emphasis here was placed on memorization and constant drill.⁹⁰

⁸⁸Thomas Whitfield Baldwin, William Shakespeare's Petty School (Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 1943), p. 9.

⁸⁹Thompson, loc. cit.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 16.

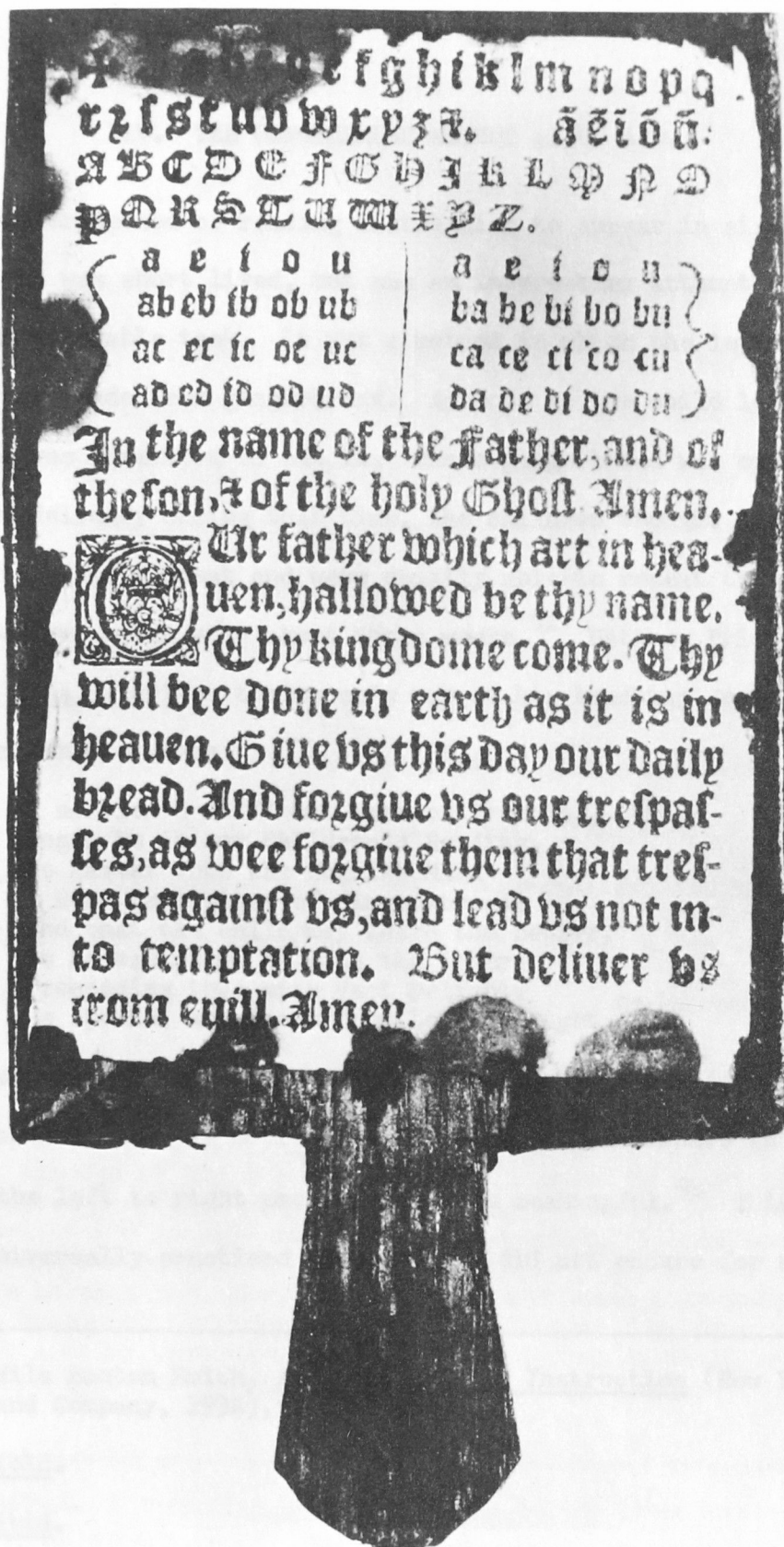


FIGURE 2

A HORNBOOK OF THE KIND USED IN ELIZABETHAN PETTY SCHOOLS AND LATER USED IN THE EARLY SCHOOLS OF NEW ENGLAND

*Craig R. Thompson, Schools in Tudor England (Washington, D. C.: The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1958).

XIV. THE GINGERBREAD METHOD (1500 A.D.)

Another method of reading instruction to appear in sixteenth century England was short lived, but was an interesting attempt to make reading an enjoyable task. It was a method in which the letters of the alphabet were made from gingerbread. As soon as the child learned the letter, he was permitted to eat it. Since gingerbread was considered to be a great delicacy during that time, the children thought that learning their letters was a treat and were usually able to repeat the entire alphabet from memory in only about three weeks.⁹¹ Matthew Prior in Canto II of his Alma describes the nurse's use of his teaching device in teaching Master John to read:

I mention'd diff'rent Ways of Breeding,
Begin We in our Children's Reading.
To Master John the English Maid
A Horn book gives of Ginger-bread:
And that the child may learn the better,
As he can name, he eats the Letter;
Proceeding thus with Vast Delight,
He spells, and gnaws from Left to Right.⁹²

According to Smith this method accomplished two major aspects of reading instruction. It motivated the pupil to participate in the lesson and made the left to right progression more meaningful.⁹³ This method was not universally practiced however, and did not endure for very long.

⁹¹Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction (New York: Silver Burdette and Company, 1934), p. 7.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid.

XV. THE EARLY SCHOOLS OF NEW ENGLAND

In the year 1620, the English were successful in establishing a colony in Massachusetts and by so doing, expanded the frontiers of education. The people who comprised this group of colonists were known as Puritans. They were a religious people and were very much concerned with providing religious training for their children. They came to America to secure religious freedom, and it was only natural that they wished to perpetuate their faith by means of education. They wanted their children to be able to read the Bible for themselves. According to Finney, this emphasis placed on being able to read for one's self was due to their belief that "The Bible was the guide of life and the right to read and interpret it a test of religious liberty."⁹⁴

The need for schools was already being realized and with this thought dominating the mind of the colonial leaders, a law was drawn up in the year 1647 known as the Old Deluder Satan Act. It read:

It being one chief point of that old deluder, Satan, to keep men from the knowledge of the Scriptures, as in former times, by keeping them in an unknown tongue, so in these latter times, by persuading from the use of tongues, that so at last the true sense and meaning of the original might be clouded by false glosses of saint-seeming deceivers, that learning might not be buried in the grave of our fathers in church and commonwealth, the Lord assisting our endeavors. -- It is therefore ordered that every township in this jurisdiction, after the Lord hath increased them to the number of fifty householders, shall then forthwith appoint one within their town to teach all such children as shall resort to him to write and read.⁹⁵

⁹⁴Ross L. Finney, The American Public School (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921), p. 3.

⁹⁵Nila Banton Smith, loc. cit., p. 13.

The passage of the Old Deluder Satan Act was a great accomplishment for the new nation. It reflected the people's interest in education and their understanding of its value. Finney says, "It marked the beginning of our American system of that free, secular, universal education which we now understand to be so necessary to democracy."⁹⁶

After the schools were established, knowing how to read became a pre-requisite for admission to a school. It was during this time that the "dame school" was introduced into the colonies. It was a school for the very young children of pre-school age. It was usually conducted by a woman in the neighborhood who taught a reading lesson while she continued to do her household chores. Records show that these schools existed as early as 1651.⁹⁷ The course of study included learning the Lord's Prayer, the Apostle's Creed, and the alphabet. The common text was the hornbook, brought from England.⁹⁸ Finney describes the dame schools of the sixteenth century as follows:

An old maiden lady was employed occasionally a short time to teach children their letters and to spell out words. Her school was kept one month in my barn. She did what she could to teach the young ideas how to shoot, but was quite incompetent. I visited her school on one occasion and she had a small class advanced to words of three syllables in the spelling book, and when they came to the word "ancedote," she called it "a-neck'-dote" and defined it to be a "food eaten between meals."

When I was three years old, I began to attend a child's school in the immediate neighborhood of my father's house. I recollect distinctly holding to my sister's apron as a protection against the cattle in the road. I also remember that the blue paper coverning had been torn . . . My patient and faithful instructress

⁹⁶ Finney, op. cit., p. 5.

⁹⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁹⁸ Eby, op. cit., p. 267.

taught me to read before I could speak plain; considerably mingling the teacher and the nurse, she kept a pillow and a bit of carpet in the corner of the schoolroom where the little heads throbbing from a premature struggle with the tall double letters and ampersand, with Korah's troops and Vashti's pride, were permitted, nay, encouraged to go to sleep.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Rinney, op. cit., p. 11.



FIGURE 3

A DAME SCHOOL

*Ross L. Finney, The American Public School (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1921),
p. 10.

The earliest schools were poorly equipped, with all of the materials theological in nature.¹⁰⁰ Good teachers were difficult to find and a great deal of improvement in teaching methods was needed.¹⁰¹ Teaching methods of that period were characterized by individual instruction, drill and memorization, and severe discipline.¹⁰² In the individual method, each pupil was taught as if he were being taught all alone.¹⁰³ For example, during a writing lesson, the master would pass from desk to desk, sharpen each pupil's quill pen, and then set a copy for him.¹⁰⁴ This method of teaching was very wasteful and it can be readily seen that discipline problems and boredom would arise in a situation of this type.

The major aim of the school was to indoctrinate the pupils with the church doctrines and to attempt to teach the skills of the three R's. The teacher told the children what to learn and emphasized memorizing the assignments. This method of teaching was practically the only one in existence until the early 1800's.¹⁰⁵ The influence from these schools had a far reaching influence on the schools which were to follow and many of the traditional methods that were practiced there are still practiced in schools today. Betts says that during this period of educational

¹⁰⁰Edgar W. Knight, Education in the United States (New York: Ginn and Company, 1929), p. 99.

¹⁰¹Finney, op. cit., p. 16.

¹⁰²Edgar W. Knight, Twenty Centuries of Education (New York: Ginn and Company, 1940), p. 99.

¹⁰³Finney, op. cit., p. 18.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 16.

¹⁰⁵Knight, op. cit., p. 392.

development "instruction fell into a lock-step which is still to be broken."¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: American Book Company, 1946), p. 15.



FIGURE 4

OLD TIME METHOD OF INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

*Samuel Chester Parker, A Textbook in the History of Modern Elementary Education (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1912), p. 101.

XVI. THE ABC METHOD

All of the children were introduced to the reading process by the alphabetical method. This was the only reading approach known at this time.¹⁰⁷ The child had to learn the ABC's by rote, forwards and backwards, and had to be able to point out any letter of the alphabet that might be asked him. After he had mastered the alphabet, he was introduced to the syllabarium, which were vowel and consonant combinations.¹⁰⁸ Hoole described the reading method in this way:

The common way to teach a child to spell is, after he knows the letters of the Alphabet, to initiate him into those few syllables, which consist of one vowel before a consonant, as, ba, be, bi, bo, bu, etc., in the Horn Book, and thence to proceed with him little and little to the bottom of the book, hearing him twice or thrice over till he can say his lesson and then putting him to a new one.¹⁰⁹

After the child had learned the alphabet and syllabarium, he began reading in earnest. He had to memorize selections such as the Psalms and Thanksgiving and Prayers from the Common Book of Prayer. At this time, the subject matter of the reading instruction was a much more important consideration than was the method of teaching reading. A great deal of emphasis was placed on oral reading at this time since reading the scriptures to groups of people comprised a great part of the social life of that day. The masses of uneducated people looked to those who could read for the pleasure of hearing the Word of God read to them.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁷Nila Banton Smith, op. cit., p. 34.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Charles A. Hoole, New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching School (Syracuse, New York: C. W. Bardeen, 1912), p. 39.

¹¹⁰Nila Banton Smith, loc. cit.

XVII. THE NEW ENGLAND PRIMER

The New England Primer, a book of about eighty pages, was the primary text book of Colonial America, and was considered by Eby to be the most interesting textbook ever published in America.¹¹¹ It had its origin in England and illustrated the religious character and purpose of colonial education.¹¹² It contained the alphabet, a page of easy syllables, and five short word lists. The first list was composed of words of one syllable and the last list was composed of words of five syllables. Other writings in the book were the Alphabet of Lessons for Youth, consisting of scripture texts, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, and the Ten Commandments.¹¹³ The illustrated alphabetical rhyme reflected the religious influence of that period and was an adaptation of the Orbus Pictus of Comenius.¹¹⁴ It began:

In Adam's Fall
We Sinned all.

and ended,

Zacheus he
Did climb the tree
His Lord to see.¹¹⁵

It has been said that the New England Primer served to teach "millions to read and not one to sin."¹¹⁶

¹¹¹Eby, op. cit., p. 409.

¹¹²Knight, Education in the United States, p. 125.

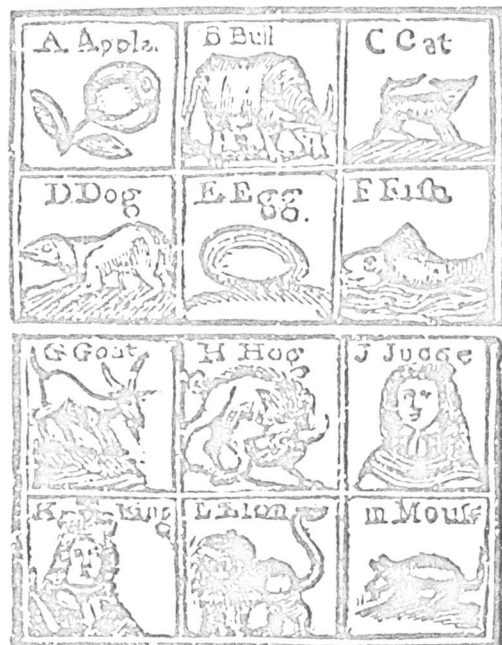
¹¹³Finney, op. cit., p. 14.

¹¹⁴Eby, loc. cit.

¹¹⁵Finney, op. cit., p. 13.

¹¹⁶Knight, Education in the United States, p. 73.

He that neer learns his A, B, C,
For ever will a Blockhead be ;



But he that learns these Letters fair
Shall have a Coach to take the Air.

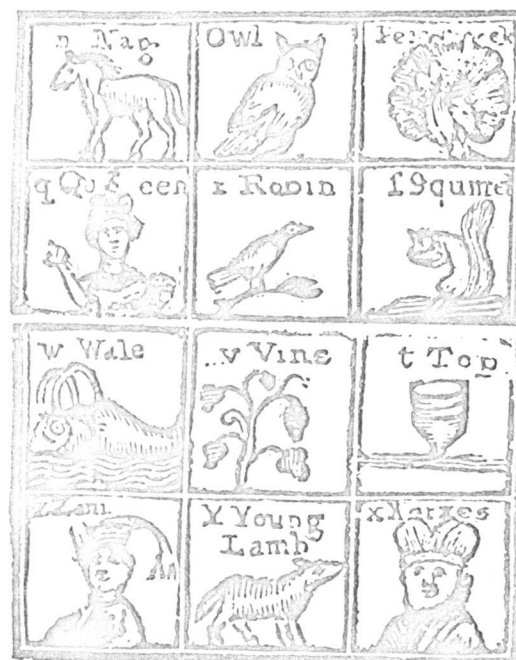


FIGURE 5

TWO PAGES FROM ONE OF THE EARLIEST NEW ENGLAND PRIMERS - PRINTED ABOUT 1785 IN BOSTON.
THIS WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST OF THE AMERICAN SCHOOL BOOKS.

*Myron Johnson, Early American School Books (Scotia, New York: Americana Review, 1960).

XVIII. JOHN LOCKE

Even though the colonies in the New World were trying to assume an independent attitude in administering their own schools, they were unmistakably influenced by contemporary educational leaders in European schools. This is evidenced by the fact that during the same period that the schools of the New England colonies were getting established, John Locke of England was introducing a new method of teaching reading. Locke had been influenced by the writings of Montaigne, a French essayist and critic of education who had lived in the fourteenth century. Montaigne himself did very little to improve teaching methods, but his work was carried on through the efforts of John Locke more than a century later.¹¹⁷ Locke, like Montaigne, believed in instruction by experience and action.¹¹⁸

He advocated teaching the alphabet as well as words by means of dice which had letters pasted on them. The game began by seeing who could throw certain letters, then certain words. He made learning to read a game for the children because he believed that learning should be fun.¹¹⁹ He advocated illustrated books for the children to read and the use of entertaining stories as opposed to the religious reading material which was so predominant in the schools of that period.¹²⁰

¹¹⁷Eby, op. cit., p. 102.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 106.

¹¹⁹John Gill, Systems of Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1889), p. 34.

¹²⁰Samuel Chester Parker, A Textbook in the History of Modern Elementary Education (New York: Ginn and Company, 1912), p. 157.

XIX. ST. JEAN-BAPTISTE de LA SALLE

In 1684, St. Jean-Baptiste de La Salle, Canon of Rheims, awakened an interest in elementary education.¹²¹ He organized a school for Brothers of the Catholic faith who were planning to go out into the field to teach the poor.¹²² In his teaching methods he advocated grouping of students and the teaching of children as a class as opposed to the individual method that was so popular in the schools of Europe and the colonies.¹²³ Parker gives the following description of a typical class being taught under the La Salle Method:

While one reads, all the other children in the class follow the words in their books. The master must watch very carefully to see that all read to themselves, what one is reading aloud, and from time to time he must call on some of them, to read a few words, that he may take them by surprise, and make sure that they are really following the reading.¹²⁴

It has been said that the schools of the Christian Brethren were without doubt the most effective elementary schools in existence before the French Revolution of 1789.¹²⁵ To have graded the children and to have introduced class instruction at this time was a remarkable achievement for La Salle. Even though he represented a religious sect, his contributions to teaching and methodology make him an integral part of the foundation of the more progressive school.¹²⁶

¹²¹Seeley, op. cit., p. 227.

¹²²Eby, op. cit., p. 223.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Parker, op. cit., p. 100.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Cubberly, op. cit., p. 348.

XX. JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU

Another prominent educator in Europe who had an influence on reading instruction in the colonies was Jean Jacques Rousseau. In the centuries prior to his life, all theories of education had been determined from the adult's standpoint. There was no mention of what the child thought or how he felt. Rousseau placed the emphasis on the child's needs and activities and for the first time put an end to the traditional conception of a child as a miniature adult. He showed that he was a creature of nature that acts and grows in accordance with her laws.¹²⁷ He believed that children could reason and that premature memorizing of words before they were understood formed in the child's mind wrong connections and would bring about bad habits which subsequent education would not be able to rectify.¹²⁸ Boyd points out that Rousseau did not encourage early reading and did not believe in forcing a child to learn to read. He believed that the teacher should create within the child the desire to read and he would learn to read without having to have "gadgets" to help him achieve his goal.¹²⁹ He believed that if this attitude was assumed, that any method the teacher used would be effective.

XXI. THE NATIONALISTIC PERIOD (1776-1840)

During the years from 1776 to 1840, there was a weakening in

¹²⁷Eby, op. cit., p. 335.

¹²⁸Parker, op. cit., p. 197.

¹²⁹William Boyd(ed.), Emile For Today (London: William Heinemann Limited, 1956), p. 52.

religious control over education and there was a new emphasis being placed on politics. This change in intellectual interest can be credited to the combined effects of the break with Great Britain and the establishment of a New Nation.¹³⁰ The major goal of the schools was to build a strong nation and to make good citizens who would be loyal to their nation, its traditions, and institutions, and who would have high moral values.¹³¹

The leaders of the New Nation knew that their country could prosper and thrive only if its people were educated. Thomas Jefferson reflected his beliefs in these words:

It is an axiom in my mind that our liberty can never be safe but in the hands of the people themselves, and that, too, of the people with a certain degree of instruction. This is the business of the state to effect, and on a general plan.¹³²

Jefferson knew that if the people were going to have the power to control the government by their votes that they must be able to read in order to have some knowledge of the subjects they would have to vote on.¹³³

Reading was expected to purge the American language of the varied dialects that it had acquired from the colonists who had come from different parts of Europe. The first step toward unifying the country was to teach the people to speak and understand a common language.¹³⁴ The main purpose of reading during this formative period, was to unify the

¹³⁰Nila Banton Smith, op. cit., p. 36.

¹³¹Ibid., p. 39.

¹³²Finney, op. cit., p. 38.

¹³³Ibid.

¹³⁴Kathleen B. Hester, Teaching Every Child to Read (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), p. 4.

colonists by developing a national consciousness and a national language.¹³⁵ With this purpose in mind, teachers began to emphasize oral reading and speaking of the English language.¹³⁶ A great deal of emphasis was placed on the rules and exercises used in correct pronunciation and enunciation.¹³⁷ Increased attention was given to elocution as an art necessary in the life of a people who were governed by a representative type of government. This type of government called upon every man to speak well, so that he might be recognized and respected. This new emphasis being placed upon the oral aspect of the reading process was significant in influencing reading methods, in that it brought about the teaching of the sounds of the letters as well as the names of the letters.¹³⁸ Elocution stressed proper accent, emphasis, and cadence. It brought out the fact that every word in the English language of more than one syllable has, at least, one accented syllable. It stressed the rules of accent and the phonetic principles. It also stressed rythmical reading and expressive oral reading.¹³⁹

During this period of nationalization, the new reading textbooks reflected the nationalistic movement. Books with titles such as The American Spelling Book, An American Selection of Lessons in Reading and

¹³⁵Lillian Gray, Teaching Children to Read (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 44.

¹³⁶Hester, loc. cit.

¹³⁷Nila Banton Smith, op. cit., p. 38.

¹³⁸Ibid., p. 69.

¹³⁹Ibid., p. 70.

Speaking, A History of the American Revolution, were some of the typical books to be written at this time.¹⁴⁰ About the year 1790, Noah Webster published a book entitled the Institutes of the English Language, which later became known as the "Blue-Backed Speller."¹⁴¹ It was the most famous of all the spelling texts and was not only used for teaching spelling, but also as a primer, reader, and moral guide.¹⁴² The "Old Blue Back" was usually the first book a child received when he entered school and was many times the only book he ever studied. As a result of this book, "spelling bees" became popular and spelling itself became a fad.¹⁴³

The nationalistic trend had a profound influence not only on the content of the reading textbooks, but also on the methods used in teaching reading. During this period, the pupil was initiated into the reading process by spelling. Learning the alphabet was still considered to be a pre-requisite to any other reading instruction. There were some new techniques introduced at this time, but they did not replace the memorization of the alphabet.¹⁴⁴

Finney says that the children of this period were taught to read "in the good old-fashioned way."¹⁴⁵ The little children were called up to the teacher one by one. The teacher held the book on his knee, upside

¹⁴⁰Ibid., p. 37.

¹⁴¹Finney, op. cit., p. 50.

¹⁴²Knight, Education in the United States, p. 424.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Nila Banton Smith, op. cit., p. 69.

¹⁴⁵Finney, op. cit., p. 51.

down, so that it would be right side up to the child. First, he pointed out the letters to the child, naming each of them for him. After having named the letters, he would choose a letter at random and ask the pupil to name it. If the pupil guessed right, they proceeded to another, but if he missed the letter, he was drilled on it again. It usually took about three weeks for a child to learn the alphabet in this manner. After he had learned the letters, he was taught to spell and to recognize short sentences. This method continued in use until almost the close of the 19th Century and is used in some backward places even today.¹⁴⁶

XXII. JOHANN HEINRICH PESTALOZZI (1746-1827)

During this nationalistic period of American history, the name of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi came to be known in America. Pestalozzi was an educational reformer who lived in Switzerland in the years 1746-1827. His principles and methods of object teaching became known in the United States by means of his former pupils and by associates of his who visited the United States and lectured about his work. Among these disciples of Pestalozzi's were William C. Woodbridge and Horace Mann of New England and Edward A. Sheldon of the Oswego Normal School of New York.¹⁴⁷

In his educational report to the Legislature of North Carolina in 1817, Archibald D. Murphey called attention to Pestalozzi's work, and heartily endorsed his work and methods as being very effective and worthy of consideration.¹⁴⁸ Murphey thought that Pestalozzi's methods had been

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Knight, Twenty Centuries of Education, p. 360.

¹⁴⁸Ibid.

the most successful "in the application of new methods to the instruction of children." He brought out the fact that his methods were different, and they excited the curiosity of the children.¹⁴⁹

Pestalozzi advocated a type of phonic method of teaching reading to replace the alphabet-syllable procedure.¹⁵⁰ The type he used was exceedingly mechanical however, and did not encourage creativity in the child. It was a word-building method, which began with a single letter and by prefixing or adding other letters, formed a series of words (a, an, and, land). This method was purely phonic and did not require words as the result of the successive buildings (g, ge, geb, geba, gebad, gebade, gebadet.)¹⁵¹ Even though this method of teaching reading was not completely effective, it was progress toward developing a more effective system of phonetics.

XXIII. THE LANCASTERIAN PLAN

For a long period of time after the close of the Revolutionary War, the church of England's ideas were not popular in the United States. As a result of this feeling, the Lancastrian Plan of teaching was brought to this country and popularized.¹⁵² The man who started this system of

¹⁴⁹Ibid.

¹⁵⁰Kathleen B. Hester, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁵¹Taylor, op. cit., p. 117.

¹⁵²Cubberly, op. cit., p. 662.

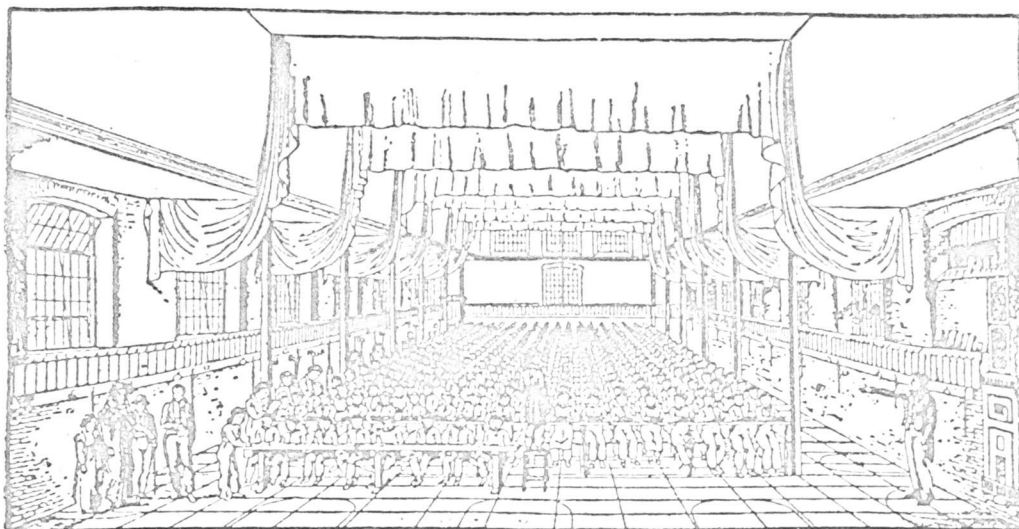
teaching was Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker schoolmaster.¹⁵³ He established his system in a poor London district in order to lower the cost of educating the masses of poor children living there and to increase their educational opportunity. In his system, he used the older students as assistants, or monitors.¹⁵⁴

The pupils were sorted into rows with a monitor assigned to each row. The teacher first taught the monitors a lesson from a printed card and then each monitor took his row to a "station" by the wall and proceeded to teach the other children what he had just learned.¹⁵⁵ The first class of children were taught to write the printed alphabet and to name the letters when they saw them. One day a student would trace the form of a letter and the next day he would be required to tell the name of the letter when he was shown it. This method gave the student some means of associating the two processes in his mind which helped him to remember what the letter was. In the same manner he learned syllables and words; writing them one day and reading them the next. After the students had learned to read, they would go to the schoolmaster one by one and read for him. While the schoolmaster was occupied with the individual students, the monitors led the rest of the class in their writing and spelling exercises. He would call out a word to the class which the students wrote down on their slates. All of the class was busy at the same time. This

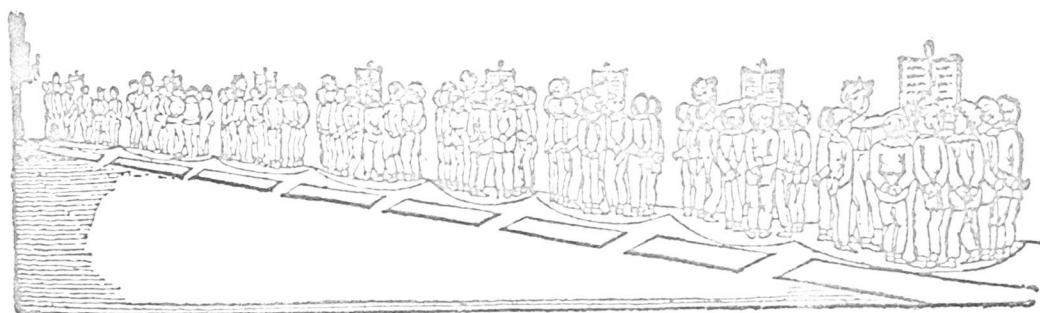
¹⁵³Ibid., p. 624.

¹⁵⁴James Mulhern, A History of Education (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1959), p. 398.

¹⁵⁵Cubberly, op. cit., p. 628.



A MONITORIAL SCHOOL, WITH THREE HUNDRED PUPILS AND BUT ONE TEACHER



PUPILS RECITING TO MONITORS



MONITOR INSPECTING SLATES

FIGURE 6
THE MONITORIAL SYSTEM

system was an economical one as far as books were concerned, since a modicum of books was required in its administration. Twenty or thirty students would stand in a semi-circle around a card suspended on a nail on which the letters of the alphabet were printed in very large letters. The boys practiced naming the letters with the monitor observing the group.¹⁵⁶

The alphabet was grouped into a series of lessons, with the simplest letters preceding the others. When the alphabet was learned in its entirety, all possible combinations of two letters, a vowel and a consonant, formed another series.¹⁵⁷ Each lesson was prepared on the individual method. It was first written, then spelled from the book, and then spelled with the book closed. After this initial step had been completed, the children assembled in class. There the lesson was read, first word by word in turn, then by sentences or lines. The students then were required to close the books and the lesson had to be spelled in its entirety, after which it was written on slates. One proponent of this method of teaching said,

Children so taught will not be able to learn by rote and henceforth they will be able, with little trouble, to read any book put into their hands.¹⁵⁸

In the United States where there also existed the problem of educating great masses of people, many of whom were very poor, the monitorial plan became rapidly popular. According to Mulhern, it was first introduced

¹⁵⁶ Ellwood P. Cubberly, Readings in the History of Education (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1920), p. 523.

¹⁵⁷ Gill, op. cit., p. 172.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 173.

by the Free School Society of New York City in the year 1806.¹⁵⁹ During the first quarter of the nineteenth century it served as a pattern for the schools in New York and Pennsylvania.¹⁶⁰ Other schools of this type appeared as far north as New England, as far south as Georgia, and as far west as Detroit.¹⁶¹

In the year 1832, Joseph Caldwell, President of the University of North Carolina, in his Letters on Popular Education called attention to this method of teaching and advocated a similar system for North Carolina.¹⁶² Cubberly states that in the same year, a formal proposal was made to the North Carolina Legislature for the adoption of this system, but it failed to pass.¹⁶³

The system proved to be weak in many ways, particularly since it depended too much on rote and mechanical responses.¹⁶⁴ The people began to clamor for trained teachers for their children and were not satisfied having them taught by the monitors.¹⁶⁵ This system was soon discarded, but some of its methods did influence the schools and methods of teaching in the years to come. Betts states that even though the Lancasterian system had many advantages, it "represented one of the highest forms of mechanical regimentation, against which leaders in education are still fighting."¹⁶⁶

¹⁵⁹Mulhern, op. cit., p. 399.

¹⁶⁰Parker, op. cit., p. 103.

¹⁶¹Harold Rugg, American Life and the School Curriculum (New York: Ginn and Company, 1936), p. 111.

¹⁶²Knight, Twenty Centuries of Education, p. 360.

¹⁶³Cubberly, The History of Education, p. 663.

¹⁶⁴Gill, op. cit., p. 166.

¹⁶⁵Mulhern, loc. cit.

¹⁶⁶Betts, loc. cit.

Up until the year 1850, the primary method of teaching reading was by a "word calling" process. The mechanics of reading were emphasized at the expense of reading for understanding. After 1850, there was more devotion to the interpretation of the reading material for its meaning and less emphasis on the mechanics of reading.¹⁶⁷ In the South, in the ante-bellum period, reading occupied a major part of the curriculum. The schools' ambition was to assist young people to read correctly and effectively, to improve their language, and to teach them the most important principles of virtue.¹⁶⁸

The beginning reading books were printed with pictures. With each picture there was connected several words which rhymed with the name of the object represented in the picture. The advantage of this method as stated by the educators of that time was "in learning to spell, the sounds of the letters and the forms of the words as the chief object of recollection."¹⁶⁹ Here again, phonics was beginning to infiltrate the reading methods.

¹⁶⁷Rugg, op. cit., p. 141.

¹⁶⁸Edgar W. Knight, Public Education in the South, (New York: Ginn and Company, 1922), p. 274.

¹⁶⁹Ibid.

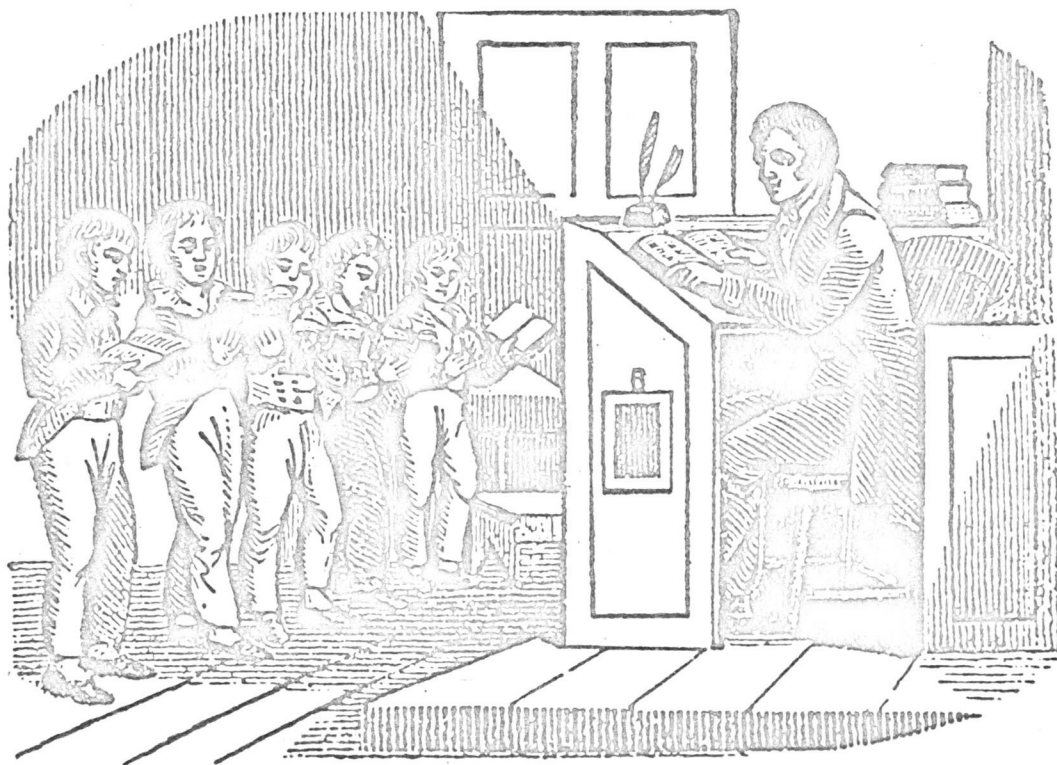


FIGURE 7

READING INSTRUCTION IN THE EIGHTEEN FORTIES IS PICTURED IN THIS FRONTIS-
PIECE FROM COBB'S JUVENILE READER, NO. 1 (1841).

*Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction (New York: Silver
Burdett and Company, 1934), p. 55.

XXIV. WILLIAM H. MCGUFFEY

It was during this pre-Civil War period that William H. McGuffey produced the first real graded series of readers for the elementary grades.¹⁷⁰ The old moralistic readings were still in evidence, but the patriotic writings of the previous period had almost disappeared. McGuffey's readers stressed the social virtues, condemning intemperance and immorality.¹⁷¹ McGuffey departed somewhat from the religious and adult content that previous moralistic authors had in their books. He selected more appropriate material for the children and wrote about realistic situations in the child's background.¹⁷²

In his books, McGuffey still used the alphabet method as his introductory method. He saw the need for repetition of sounds on the primary level and used exercises of this type to drill the youngster:

Is it an ox?
It is an ox.
It is my ox.¹⁷³

This method of drill proved to be an undesirable means of teaching by repetition since the response merely echoed the previous statement and also, it lacked the narrative element that children enjoy so much. Today's

¹⁷⁰Nila Banton Smith, op. cit., p. 105.

¹⁷¹Richard David Mosier, Making the American Mind (Columbia University, New York: King's Crown Press, 1947), p. 126.

¹⁷²Lillian Gray and Dora Reese, Teaching Children to Read (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1957), p. 38-39.

¹⁷³Ibid.

readers have stories with humor that hide the fact that they are even concerned with phonetic drill.¹⁷⁴ Even though these readers have been criticized, they were a definite improvement over the previous textbooks and they helped pave the way for today's basal reading texts.

XXV. HORACE MANN AND THE GREAT EDUCATIONAL AWAKENING (1835-1861)

The period in American History between the years 1835 and 1861 has been called the period of the Great Educational Awakening.¹⁷⁵ It was a period in which there was great territorial expansion and industrial development. It was a period in which the people of the United States aspired to great heights of human achievement. The growth of democracy called for an improvement in education.¹⁷⁶ In considering the most influential person of this period of history, Finney sees the whole Educational Awakening epitomized in the life and work of one person, Horace Mann.¹⁷⁷

Horace Mann, a leader among the educational reformers in the United States, made a noble attempt to change some of the archaic practices and methods used in the public schools of his day. His insight into the teaching of reading and spelling were remarkable for the period in which he lived.¹⁷⁸ He saw the need for motivating a child to give him

¹⁷⁴Ibid.

¹⁷⁵Finney, op. cit., p. 115.

¹⁷⁶Ibid.

¹⁷⁷Ibid., p. 116.

¹⁷⁸Lawrence A. Cremin, The Republic and the School (Columbia University, New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, 1957), p. 9.

the incentive to want to read. He thought that the child should learn his earliest words as wholes, and not by beginning with the alphabet or syllables as had been customary in the past. He contended that a knowledge of phonics was mandatory all through the teaching of language.¹⁷⁹

He condemned meaningless oral reading as "a barren action of the organs of speech upon the atmosphere."¹⁸⁰ At this time it was the practice every day to have children stand and read orally a page or a paragraph from his book. Horace Mann said that this procedure neglected comprehension of the reading material. He suggested that teachers, "put questions to the children, directing them to read silently until they had located the answer."¹⁸¹ After following this procedure, the child should then stand and read only the pertinent part of the selection. Mann believed that questions directed toward content caused the children to think as they read. The current procedure of motivated oral reading preceded by directed silent reading can be traced back directly to Horace Mann's philosophy of reading instruction.¹⁸²

XXVI. THE PRUSSIAN INFLUENCE

Horace Mann visited the schools of Prussia and advocated that many of their methods be incorporated into the American schools. In 1838, in his Seventh Annual Report to the Board of Education of Massachusetts, he

¹⁷⁹Ibid., p. 10.

¹⁸⁰Gray, op. cit., p. 48.

¹⁸¹Ibid.

¹⁸²Ibid.

exemplifies some of the Prussian practices in regard to reading, by describing a reading lesson which he observed in a typical Prussian school:

The teacher first drew a house upon the blackboard; and here the value of the art of drawing, - a power universally possessed by Prussian teachers, - became manifest. By the side of the drawing and under it, he wrote the word house in the German script hand, and printed it in the German letter. With a long pointing rod, - the end being painted white to make it more visible, - he ran over the form of the letters in the air. In all our good schools, children are first taught to imitate the forms of letters on the slate before they write them on paper; here they were first imitated on the air, then on slates, and subsequently, in older classes, on paper.

The next process was to copy the word house, both in script and in print, on their slates. Then followed the formation of the sounds of the letter of which the word was composed, and the spelling of the word. Here the names of the letters were not given as with us, but only their powers, or the sounds which those letters have in combination. The letter h was first selected and set up in the reading-frame, and the children, instead of articulating our alphabetic h (aitch), merely gave a hard breathing, - such a sound as the letter really has in the word house. Then the diphthong au (the German word for house is spelled haus) was taken and sounded by itself in the same way. Then the blocks containing h and au were brought together and the two sounds were combined. Lastly, the letter s was first sounded by itself, then added to the others, and then the whole word was spoken.

Sometimes the last letter in a word was first taken and sounded, - after that the penultimate, - and so on until the word was completed. The responses of the children were sometimes individual and sometimes simultaneous, according to the signal given by the master.

In every such school, also, there are printed sheets of cards containing the letters, diphthongs, and whole words. The children are taught to sound a diphthong, and then asked in what words that sound occurs. On some of these cards there are words enough to make several short sentences, and when the pupils are a little advanced, the teacher points to several isolated words in succession, which when taken together make a familiar sentence, and thus he gives them an agreeable surprise, and a pleasant initiation into reading.¹⁸³

¹⁸³Nila Banton Smith, op. cit., p. 77.

In order to make his points more impressive to the group that he was addressing, Mann gave the following description of a typical American reading lesson of the same period:

Compare the above method with that of calling up a class of abecedarians, - or what is more common, a single child, - and while the teacher holds a book or card before him, with a pointer in his hand, says, a, and he echoes a; then b, and he echoes b; and so on until the vertical row of lifeless and ill-favored characters is completed, and then of remanding him to his seat, to sit still and look at vacancy. If the child is bright, the time which passes during the lesson is the only part of the day in which he does not think. Not a single faculty of the mind is exercised expecting that of imitating sounds; and even the number of these imitations is limited to twenty-six. A parrot or an idiot could do the same thing . . . As a general rule, six months are spent before the twenty-six letters are mastered, though the same child would learn the names of twenty-six playmates or twenty-six playthings in one or two days.¹⁸⁴

The Prussian influence was definitely felt in the United States' schools, and the years following 1840, the schools began to reflect these influences.¹⁸⁵ As an outgrowth of dissatisfaction with the reading methods used in the schools, new books began to appear at this time. The reading content covered a wide range of informational subjects and the methods of teaching underwent a radical change.¹⁸⁶

With the increased emphasis being placed upon words and phonetics, the syllabarium disappeared as a means of inducting children into reading. There was more attention placed upon the principle of "proceeding from the simple to the complex." There was more attention given to asking questions on the content of the reading material, and attention was given to the

¹⁸⁴Ibid., p. 78.

¹⁸⁵Ibid., p. 82.

¹⁸⁶Hester, op. cit., p. 4.

definitions of words. Fewer words were introduced in the early pages of the primers and there was a great deal more repetition of words to facilitate learning.¹⁸⁷

Gray states that even though Mann's Word Method of teaching reading represented a great improvement over the alphabet method, it encouraged the children to form the habit of reading word by word and did not give them independence in recognizing new words.¹⁸⁸

XXVII. JOSIAH BUMSTEAD

A contemporary of Horace Mann, Josiah Bumstead, also assisted in the protest against the ABC method. In the year 1840, he published a book called My Little Primer, which was the first reader to be based on the word method. He thought it better to begin the reader with familiar and easy words instead of rows of meaningless letters. After the child had learned a sizable list of words, he began the study of spelling and phonetics. Bumstead advocated silent reading of an exercise previous to the class discussion. During the period of silent reading the child was to look up words in the dictionary that he did not know and learn their definitions.¹⁸⁹ Bumstead's books radically changed the subject matter as well. Even though he still had selections dealing with moralistic subjects, he devoted a great part of his third reader to subjects

¹⁸⁷Nila Banton Smith, op. cit., p. 85.

¹⁸⁸Gray, loc. cit., p. 47.

¹⁸⁹Ibid., p. 90.

concerning family relationships, experiences of child life, and selections about nature.¹⁹⁰ This change in the subject matter was a great step toward the development of the readers of today in which a child can identify himself with the situations he finds in the stories.

In the 1880's, emphasis was placed on reading comprehension. Understanding what a story was about became one of the major objectives in reading instruction. It was at this time that reading became a cultural asset. During this period, the whole-sentence-and-story method evolved from the word method.¹⁹¹ Teachers theorized that if a word accompanied by a picture caused children to learn to read more quickly and more meaningfully, then the presentation of a whole sentence at a time would be that much more effective. A study by Cattell in 1886 brought out the value of learning to read by this method.¹⁹² At this time, elaborate phonetic methods were introduced. There was a great deal of stress placed upon learning all the sounds that an individual letter could have and the rule that governed each sound. Alphabet and spelling methods were discarded at this time and more emphasis was placed on a child's interest in reading and his appreciation of reading.¹⁹³

XXVIII. THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

By the beginning of the Twentieth Century, the old alphabetic method

¹⁹⁰Ibid., p. 93.

¹⁹¹Hester, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁹²Ibid.

¹⁹³Ibid.

of teaching reading was used much less frequently, and the word and sentence methods had come into general practice. Educators had begun to realize that children were interested in words and sentences, rather than meaningless, isolated letters. They realized also that the child gradually came to understand that the letters were symbols of sounds, just as the printed words were symbols of things. They felt that when a child had reached this stage of maturity and understanding, that he was ready for phonic drill.¹⁹⁴

It was suggested by some people, that "the sounds, the sound symbols, the analysis of sounds into words, should be taught as soon as possible. We wish to put into the hands of the children as soon as possible that key to our language, phonics."¹⁹⁵

During this period there was less attention paid to oral reading and more emphasis placed on silent reading. It was thought that silent reading helped the child get the meaning more rapidly than did the oral reading. Teachers emphasized rapid sight reading and extended reading in a variety of areas.¹⁹⁶ Generally speaking, the alphabet—syllable method gave way to the word-sentence method of teaching reading.¹⁹⁷

In the years immediately following World War I, reading for utilitarian purposes predominated in the schools. Emphasis was placed on the

¹⁹⁴Finney, op. cit., p. 226.

¹⁹⁵Eugene B. Sherman and A. A. Reed, Essentials of Teaching Reading (Chicago: The University Publishing Company, 1909), p. 84.

¹⁹⁶Henry R. Sanford, "Suggestions on Teaching Reading," Journal of Education, LXVII (April 23, 1908), p. 459.

¹⁹⁷Finney, op. cit., p. 267.

student's skill in rapid comprehensive silent reading. This skill would permit the student to read the great mass of materials that he was expected to read in school, and to understand their content as well.¹⁹⁸

A testing movement had begun and standardized tests and scales were devised. It was very difficult to devise a test for reading, due to the fact that the oral reading procedure was the only one in general use at that time, and the subject of reading was difficult to analyze into elements which seemed significant enough for testing.¹⁹⁹ Testing methods were finally developed which would determine possible weaknesses he might have. Testing programs showed that even though pupils could pronounce difficult words through their use of the elaborate phonic systems in use at that time, their comprehension of the reading material was very poor. These findings caused a strong reaction against oral reading and the use of phonics, and there began to be almost exclusive emphasis upon silent reading.²⁰⁰ The test results also indicated that teaching methods needed to be varied to meet the needs of individual children.²⁰¹

In the year 1925, reading was stressed for several reasons. The objectives of reading were broadened to include the development of habits and attitudes, and to extend the experiences of pupils through reading activities. It was during this time that the preprimers became popular,

¹⁹⁸ Nila Banton Smith, op. cit., p. 185.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 156.

²⁰⁰ Hester, op. cit., p. 5.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p. 275.

as well as the use of a large variety of supplementary material. Reading was no longer taught as an individual subject, but was integrated with other subjects in the curriculum. Educators realized at this time that they might have tended to overemphasize silent reading in the past decade. Oral reading was needed in the classroom and teachers began to bring it back. As a result, phonics began to be presented again, but was done so very cautiously.²⁰²

By the 1930's, a new method appeared known as the experience method.²⁰³ In this method of teaching, reading instruction was taught for the primary purpose of preparing a child for well-rounded living with his fellow man.²⁰⁴ The teachers had become more concerned with the child's natural development. They began to teach reading as an integral part of everything else that the child studied in school, and capitalized on his interests in deciding what type of material they would use. They began to be less rigid in their method of teaching and let their method and materials vary according to the particular group they were working with.²⁰⁵ They made use of many supplementary readers and other books which corresponded with the children's interests. At this time, the elaborate phonetic systems of the past were discarded and the new functional phonics program was implemented in some of the schools.²⁰⁶

²⁰²Ibid., p. 6.

²⁰³Nila Banton Smith, op. cit., p. 229.

²⁰⁴Ibid., p. 185.

²⁰⁵Ibid., p. 229.

²⁰⁶Hester, op. cit., p. 7.

In 1961, Sheldon published what he considered to be the eclectic approach in choosing the method of teaching reading in the present day schools. He considered the best organizational procedure for teaching reading in the elementary school as the one which combined the sequence and continuity of a good basal reading series, used in flexible groupings. He advocated a perceptive teacher who could encourage a **rich**, diversified program of independent reading among her students. He suggested a good reading method of word-attack in which a knowledge of phonetic and structural analysis skills were presented in meaningful context, the skills of which would ultimately lead the child to independence in his ability to use the words he learned in reading and speaking. Sheldon's last requisite for a good reading program in any school which underlies all the other requirements, was the qualified teacher who thoroughly understood the process of reading and who was constantly aware of and in touch with current research that supported knowledge of that process.²⁰⁷ In 1941, Dr. W. W. Charters gave this expression of his ideas regarding the role of reading in the modern school:

Reading is a man's most potent skill. Without reading his world is circumscribed by his neighbors. All he learns is what he picks up in conversations, information garbled in its transmission, delayed by the slow seepage of news through word of mouth. He is provincial by geography and ignorant by isolation. His knowledge of what is happening in the great and complicated world is confined to what he can learn from the radio, if he has time to listen to it, or to sound newsreels if he can afford to see them. The world of newspapers, books, magazines, and bulletins is closed against him by the massive walls of ignorance.

²⁰⁷William D. Sheldon, Influences Upon Reading Instruction in the United States (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1961), p. 59.

Reading is the keystone of the arch of intelligence that the schools have been established to construct. Place the mastery of reading on one plan of the balance, and all the other subjects of the curriculum on the other, and the others will hit the beam. A man can pick up enough arithmetic for ordinary purposes outside of school. He learns to talk before he enters school. The pattern of his character is set in his home. It does not matter greatly if he cannot write. His knowledge of history, literature, and politics he can pick up for himself if he knows how to read. Strip the curriculum to its bare essentials and three R's do not remain. There is only one supreme essential R - the ability to read with speed and comprehension.²⁰⁸

In the more progressive schools of today, reading is taught as an art of thinking; a process of cultural self-evaluation. Teachers do not want students to answer their questions with a memorized answer which requires little or no thought on the part of the student. Critical thinking is encouraged and students are urged to accept nothing without proof of its validity. In the world in which today's schools operate, it is imperative that the boys and girls learn to distinguish fact from fiction; truth from propaganda. They are barraged every day via television, books, movies, and radio, with propaganda of every description, which is aimed directly at their impressionable minds. If they are to withstand this attack upon themselves and their country, they must be capable of responding to various situations with definite thoughts and understandings that originate within themselves.²⁰⁹

Soloman once said, "There is nothing new under the sun." This statement is very significant in regard to the development of reading and reading instruction as it has undergone its metamorphosis through the centuries.

²⁰⁸Betts, op. cit., p. 69.

²⁰⁹William B. Ragan, Modern Elementary Curriculum (New York: The Dryden Press, Inc., 1956), p. 76.

All of the methods of teaching reading that are used in the schools of today are traceable to cultures and peoples long past. Man has progressed a long way from the crude pictograms he inscribed on the walls of his cave to the controlled reader's image he has projected on the walls of his classroom, but because of man's unending search for knowledge and for newer and better ways of accomplishing his aims, he will not be satisfied with a "status quo" in the realm of education. If he is to understand what is currently happening in the field of education and to evaluate its effectiveness, he must look in retrospect at what has gone before, for only through modification and improvement of previous methods can a truly effective method of teaching be devised for the future. It has been said, "You can go forward only when you have looked back to see where you've been."

CHAPTER III

CONTRASTS BETWEEN THE TRADITIONAL CLASSROOM AND THE MORE PROGRESSIVE CLASSROOM

As the development of reading instruction has been traced throughout the ages, many aspects of the traditional approach to teaching have been in evidence. Some of the archaic methods practiced in early Greece still remain in the schools of today. Betts states that only a few years ago superstitions were rampant in the United States with people being burned at the stake for supposedly practicing witchcraft.¹ These ideas seem very far removed from the minds of the citizens of the United States of today, but many superstitions still exist among the people. There are many parents and teachers who believe that basal reading texts, phonics, and a systematic method of instruction are relics. People with ideas such as these make educators wonder just how far education has really progressed.

The traditional classrooms of the past differed very slightly from the traditional classrooms of today. They were usually poorly ventilated and poorly illuminated. These classrooms had bolted down desks, allowing for little or no change in seating arrangements. This situation brought immediately to mind an image of strict regimentation. This regimentation described not only the physical atmosphere of the classroom but also the

¹Emmett Albert Betts, Foundations of Reading Instruction (New York: The American Book Company, 1946), p. 15.

instructional atmosphere that prevailed there.

Reading was taught as a separate subject involving no correlation with the other subjects of the curriculum.² This practice went so far as to involve a break-up of the other language arts areas as well, so that reading, writing, spelling, and speaking were all taught as separate subjects. In the primary grades, learning to read was emphasized. Reading instruction was based on the idea that if a child participated in enough drill in reading that he would automatically learn to read when he reached the upper grades. By emphasizing so much reading instruction in the primary grades, it minimized the need for reading instruction in the intermediate grades and systematic reading instruction was terminated at the third grade level or at least by the sixth grade level.³ Betts concludes that this emphasis on drill has caused reading to be one of the most disliked subjects in the elementary school.⁴

Betts describes the typical traditional classroom in the following way:

Instruction was provided on the assumption that every child was to climb the same curriculum ladder. Objectives were set up in terms of grade levels. Each grade level represented one rung in the curriculum ladder. The goal of the teacher was to get the class ready for the next rung of the ladder. Some children had to stand on a rung with the rest of the class and go through "educational" setting-up exercises in spite of advanced achievement. Those who could not reach the next rung were kept on the same one by a device called nonpromotion. Others who could just reach an upper rung were boosted on the device called "passed on

²Ibid., p. 83.

³Ibid., p. 24.

⁴Ibid., p. 26.

condition." Quite often, the teacher and the upper 40% of the class were the only ones "to cover the course of study."⁵

In classrooms today there are many cases of children that are six years old who are not ready for the work that is forced upon them. They are seated in the long rows of desks with very poor overhead lighting and are expected to perform the difficult task of reading, which in itself requires a high level of eye coordination, sustained attention to details of abstract symbols, and an interpretation of the written language. Needless to say, a tense situation exists in a classroom of this type and is not conducive to the child's emotional development. As John Mansfield once said, "Things not touched with joy drop dead out of memory."⁶

To counteract the traditional classroom with its strict regimentation, a movement for a more progressive situation was launched. According to Joseph Ratner the most important single force in the progressive education movement was John Dewey.⁷ Dewey was and still is a very controversial figure in the field of education. Many people have misunderstood Dewey's philosophy because many of them have misinterpreted it. Where the traditionalist had said, "Education is preparation for life," Dewey said, "Education is life itself."⁸ Dewey felt that education equipped a child to live his life now and that it did not necessarily prepare him for some arbitrary date in the future. He believed that a

⁵Ibid., p. 24.

⁶Ibid., p. 23.

⁷John Dewey, Education Today (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1940), p. vii.

⁸Ibid., p. ix.

child was not innately bad or good, but that he was a product of a social environment in which he lived. The experiences he encountered in school and at home determined his development.⁹

Dewey was misunderstood and criticized by many people, and even though he did not accomplish a great deal toward achieving his goal during his lifetime, he was able to sow the seeds of his philosophy in the minds of men, and today there is evidence of his philosophy in many of the schools.

In the progressive school there is an enriched program of music, art, science, language activities, and dramatizations for the five and six year olds.¹⁰ Attention is given to pupil growth in each major phase of reading achievement. There is a greater flexibility in reading habits and a greater deal of emphasis placed on vocabulary and the adaptation¹¹ of reading skills in other subject areas. Reading experiences are pleasant and inviting, thereby helping to establish permanent interests in reading and cultivating tastes and appreciations for good books. The literary content of modern textbooks reflect this movement.¹²

In the more progressive schools the reading program is diversified and well-balanced. It is based on the idea that reading is not a subject, but a process. Reading is thought of as a social tool to be used by the

⁹Ibid., p. x.

¹⁰Betts, loc. cit., p. 83.

¹¹Paul Witty, Reading in Modern Education (Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1949), p. 11.

¹²Ibid., p. 4.

child for living in a democratic society and it emphasizes critical interpretation.¹³ The child is motivated in such a way that he desires to acquire the skills and abilities that he needs to live in his environment.

The reading program as evidenced in the schools of today has taken a long time to evolve. It has been a slow and gradual process, but these changes have brought about improved reading methods and materials of instruction. Witty concludes that the principles have not been put into practice as soon as they might have been because many teachers have failed to stress reading as a meaningful skill.¹⁴ In order to overcome the traditional classroom organization the teacher must re-organize her basic concepts and thinking processes.¹⁵ She must re-appraise her philosophy of education and decide which is more important, the child or the subject.

¹³ Betts, loc. cit., p. 98.

¹⁴ Witty, loc. cit., p. 15.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 35.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

After studying the records of 323 fifth grade children in the Greenville City Schools, Greenville, North Carolina, taking into consideration several criteria, which included; average I.Q. range of 90-110, socioeconomic background, and whether they had attended the same school for five consecutive years, ten pairs of children were selected upon which this study has been based.

The achievement test scores recorded at the end of the fourth grade were compared with the scores recorded at the end of the fifth grade. The test employed in this study was the Stanford Achievement Test, Intermediate Battery. At the end of the fourth grade, Form L of this test was administered. The areas measured in these tests were: (1) paragraph meaning, (2) word meaning, (3) spelling, (4) language, (5) arithmetic reasoning, (6) arithmetic computation, (7) social studies, (8) science, and (9) study skills.

TABLE I
ACHIEVEMENT TEST SCORES OF TESTS GIVEN AT THE END OF THE FOURTH GRADE
TRADITIONAL GROUP

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
Paragraph Meaning	4.3	6.1	4.8	6.5	4.3	4.8	5.5	5.8	4.1	6.2	5.24
Word Meaning	4.1	5.5	4.2	5.3	4.8	4.5	5.9	5.3	4.7	5.9	5.02
Spelling	4.6	4.7	4.2	5.9	5.5	5.6	4.9	5.0	4.3	4.8	4.95
Language	4.1	5.6	5.1	4.5	5.1	6.1	5.2	4.6	6.2	5.1	5.16
Arithmetic Reasoning	4.6	5.3	5.1	5.1	5.1	6.6	3.8	4.7	4.6	4.9	4.98
Arithmetic Computation	4.3	4.6	3.7	5.0	4.6	5.0	3.4	5.0	4.6	3.9	4.41
Social Studies	4.6	5.8	4.8	6.3	5.1	5.4	5.7	5.8	5.1	4.5	5.31
Science	3.5	5.2	5.6	7.1	4.0	5.2	6.3	7.9	4.5	7.4	5.67
Study Skills	4.4	6.9	5.7	4.2	5.5	6.2	4.1	6.5	4.4	6.2	5.41
Class Norm	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	

TABLE II
ACHIEVEMENT TEST SCORES OF TESTS GIVEN AT THE END OF THE FOURTH GRADE
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Aver- age
Paragraph Meaning	5.1	4.3	5.5	4.9	5.0	5.9	5.7	5.7	6.2	4.9	5.32
Word Meaning	5.3	5.2	5.7	4.4	5.1	6.0	5.3	4.5	5.1	5.3	5.19
Spelling	5.9	4.7	5.3	5.5	5.4	6.4	4.5	6.9	5.5	3.6	5.37
Language	4.0	6.4	4.8	4.4	4.5	7.0	5.1	7.1	6.8	6.8	5.69
Arithmetic Reasoning	4.5	3.8	5.3	5.3	4.3	4.7	4.9	5.1	4.3	4.8	4.69
Arithmetic Computation	4.5	3.9	5.0	4.9	4.5	4.3	4.2	5.0	3.7	4.2	4.42
Social Studies	5.4	4.1	5.1	5.4	4.7	5.9	4.9	4.5	5.0	5.8	5.08
Science	6.5	4.8	5.0	6.5	5.2	3.8	4.3	4.8	4.8	5.4	5.11
Study Skills	5.3	3.6	4.2	5.3	5.3	4.7	4.0	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.69
Class Norm	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	

TABLE III
DIFFERENCES IN AVERAGES OF FOURTH GRADE TEST SCORES

	AVERAGES		Difference
	Traditional	Experimental	
Paragraph Meaning	5.24	5.32	.08
Word Meaning	5.02	5.19	.17
Spelling	4.95	5.37	.42
Language	5.16	5.69	.53
Arithmetic Reasoning	4.98	4.69	.29
Arithmetic Computation	4.41	4.42	.01
Social Studies	5.31	5.08	.23
Science	5.67	5.11	.56
Study Skills	5.41	4.69	.72

TABLE IV
ACHIEVEMENT TEST SCORES OF TESTS GIVEN AT THE END OF THE FIFTH GRADE
TRADITIONAL GROUP

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Average
Paragraph Meaning	6.0	5.5	6.8	8.2	5.6	6.4	6.2	6.4	6.4	8.2	6.57
Word Meaning	5.6	6.3	6.5	8.0	5.6	5.9	6.1	7.2	5.6	7.7	6.45
Spelling	4.9	6.4	5.2	6.4	7.3	6.1	6.7	5.9	6.5	5.0	6.04
Language	5.4	5.4	7.0	6.1	7.0	6.1	7.0	4.8	5.1	6.7	6.06
Arithmetic Reasoning	5.6	6.7	6.7	8.1	5.2	7.4	4.9	4.8	5.9	5.5	6.08
Arithmetic Computation	6.2	6.8	5.2	6.0	5.2	5.8	5.8	5.2	5.5	5.0	5.67
Social Studies	6.7	7.1	6.6	8.1	5.1	6.1	6.9	7.8	5.7	7.3	6.74
Science	8.6	5.8	7.3	7.5	5.1	6.4	8.6	7.0	5.8	9.7	7.18
Study Skills	8.6	5.7	7.6	7.6	5.6	7.3	5.7	7.6	5.5	6.5	6.77
Class Norm	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	

TABLE V
ACHIEVEMENT TEST SCORES OF TESTS GIVEN AT THE END OF THE FIFTH GRADE
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Aver- age
Paragraph Meaning	5.0	5.3	6.2	5.9	5.5	5.3	6.6	4.5	6.2	7.3	5.78
Word Meaning	5.6	6.1	6.5	5.8	6.5	6.3	7.7	6.5	7.0	6.3	6.43
Spelling	7.3	6.5	6.8	7.9	7.1	7.5	5.4	9.0	6.5	5.6	6.96
Language	7.0	7.0	7.0	8.0	7.8	7.2	6.1	7.0	8.0	6.7	7.18
Arithmetic Reasoning	5.2	4.7	5.9	7.2	5.6	6.1	6.1	6.7	7.2	6.9	6.19
Arithmetic Computation	6.4	5.5	5.8	5.5	6.2	6.1	5.2	6.6	5.3	6.1	5.87
Social Studies	6.5	5.8	5.6	6.2	6.1	5.3	6.2	5.3	6.9	6.1	6.00
Science	6.6	5.5	5.5	5.3	5.8	6.4	7.3	7.3	6.6	7.3	6.36
Study Skills	6.5	5.2	7.3	6.1	5.3	5.0	6.1	6.7	6.3	6.1	6.06
Class Norm	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	

TABLE VI
DIFFERENCES IN AVERAGE OF FIFTH GRADE TEST SCORES

	AVERAGES		Difference
	Traditional	Experimental	
Paragraph Meaning	6.57	5.78	.79
Word Meaning	6.45	6.43	.02
Spelling	6.04	6.96	.92
Language	6.06	7.18	1.12
Arithmetic Reasoning	6.08	6.19	.08
Arithmetic Computation	5.67	5.87	.20
Social Studies	6.74	6.00	.74
Science	7.18	6.36	.82
Study Skills	6.77	6.06	.71

TABLE VII

GAINS OR LOSSES MADE BY THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE TRADITIONAL GROUP

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Paragraph Meaning	1.7	-.6	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.6	.7	.6	2.3	2.0
Word Meaning	1.5	.8	2.3	2.7	.8	1.4	.2	1.9	.9	1.8
Spelling	.3	1.7	1.0	.5	1.8	.5	1.8	.9	2.2	.2
Language	1.3	-.2	1.9	1.6	1.9	---	1.8	.2	-1.1	1.6
Arithmetic Reasoning	1.0	1.4	1.6	3.0	.1	.8	1.1	.1	1.3	.6
Arithmetic Computation	1.9	2.2	1.5	1.0	.6	.8	2.4	.2	.9	1.1
Social Studies	2.1	1.3	1.8	1.8	---	.7	1.2	2.0	.6	2.8
Science	5.1	.6	1.7	.4	1.1	1.2	2.3	-.9	1.3	2.3
Study Skills	4.2	-1.2	1.9	3.4	.1	1.1	1.6	1.1	1.1	.3

TABLE VIII

GAINS OR LOSSES MADE BY THE INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Paragraph Meaning	-.1	1.0	.7	1.0	.5	-.6	.9	-1.2	---	2.4
Word Meaning	.3	.9	.8	1.4	1.4	.3	2.4	2.0	1.9	1.0
Spelling	1.4	1.8	1.5	2.4	1.7	1.1	.9	2.1	1.0	2.0
Language	3.0	.6	2.2	3.6	3.3	.2	1.0	-.1	1.2	-.1
Arithmetic Reasoning	.7	.9	.6	1.9	1.3	1.4	1.2	1.6	2.9	2.1
Arithmetic Computation	1.9	1.6	.8	.6	1.7	1.8	1.0	1.6	1.6	1.9
Social Studies	1.1	1.7	.5	.8	1.4	-.6	1.3	.8	1.9	.3
Science	.1	.7	.5	-1.2	.6	2.6	3.0	2.5	1.8	1.9
Study Skills	1.2	1.6	3.1	.8	---	.3	2.1	1.7	1.4	1.4

I. SUMMARY

1. Paragraph Meaning - The average of the scores made by the traditional group was 5.24 with the class norm of 4.7 for this particular grade level. It was noted that three of the students scored within a 6.1-6.5 range and three more students within a 5.2-5.8 range. Only two students scored below the class norm of 4.7. The average of the scores of the experimental group was 5.32, only slightly higher than that of the traditional group. Even though the experimental group scored higher than the traditional group as a whole, their individual students did not make as significant gains as those of the traditional group. For example, only one student scored 6.0 or over and six more students scored within a 5.0-5.9 range. One student scored below the class norm of 4.7. It is noted that only one student in the traditional group made less progress in the fifth grade than he did in the fourth grade, while three students in the experimental group showed a lower score in the fifth grade. The scores indicated that three of the students in the traditional group progressed two years or more in achievement from the fourth to the fifth grade while only one student in the experimental group made a comparable gain. The test scores further indicate that at the end of the fourth grade period, three students from the traditional group failed to score as high as the class norm, while only one student in the experimental group failed to reach the class norm of 4.7. At the end of the fifth grade period the scores for the traditional group show that two of its members failed to achieve the class norm while the scores of the experimental group show that five of its members were below the 5.7 norm.

2. Word Meaning - The average scores for this portion of the test show that the scores for both groups were very nearly the same. At the end of the fourth grade six members of the group scored higher than the class norm while eight members of the experimental group scored above the norm of 4.7. At the end of the fifth grade seven members of the traditional group scored above the class norm and nine members of the experimental group scored higher than the norm of 5.7.

3. Spelling - The average scores of the spelling portion of the test indicate that the experimental group made more progress in this particular area than did the traditional group. Nine members of the experimental group made a gain of a year or more while only six members of the traditional group made a comparable gain. Three members of the experimental group made at least a two-year gain and only one member of the traditional group progressed by a two year margin. It is noted that none of the students in either group regressed in their achievement levels.

4. Language - The test scores reveal that the traditional group as a whole scored lower than the experimental group at the end of the fourth grade and the fifth grade. This area showed the greatest difference between the two groups. The greatest gain made by a member of the traditional group was 1.9. The greatest gain made by a member of the experimental group was 3.6. It is further noted that three members of the experimental group improved three years or more in achievement level within the one year span. Both groups had two students to regress in achievement level at the end of the fifth grade.

5. Arithmetic Reasoning and Computation - The scores for this portion of the test indicate that at the end of the fourth grade the achievement level of the traditional group was slightly higher than that of the

experimental group. At the end of the fifth grade however, the experimental group made higher scores as a whole. All of the students in both grades made some progress with none of the group regressing in achievement level.

6. Social Studies - At the end of both the fourth and fifth grades the average scores in this area reveal that the traditional group scored higher than the experimental group. It is noted that at the end of the fifth grade, three members of the traditional group progressed two years or more in achievement level, while none of the experimental group made as great a gain. Two members of the traditional group made less than one year gain while five of the experimental group fell below a one year gain.

7. Science - At the end of both the fourth grade and the fifth grade the traditional group made a greater achievement in this area than the experimental group, however, the difference between the two groups was more pronounced at the end of the fifth grade. At the end of the fourth grade three members of the traditional group fell below the class norm of 4.7 and only two members of the experimental group fell below the norm. At the end of the fifth grade one member of the traditional group dropped below the class norm and three members of the experimental group fell below the norm. At the end of the fourth grade it is further noted that three members of the traditional group scored 7.1-7.9 while none of the experimental group reached this level of achievement. At the end of the fifth grade only one student in the traditional group fell below the class norm while three members of the experimental group were seen to regress. It is noted that one member of the traditional group scored as high as 9.7 at the end of the fifth year and two others who scored 8.6. The highest

score made by one of the experimental group was 7.3.

8. Study Skills - In this area, the test scores at the end of the fourth grade indicate a higher achievement for the traditional group. Four members of the traditional group scored 6.2-6.9 with a class norm of 4.7. The highest score made by a member of the experimental group was 5.3. At the end of the fifth grade the traditional group again placed higher than the experimental group. The highest score made by a student in the traditional group was 8.6 while the highest score made by a student of the experimental group was 7.3.

In summary, neither method appeared to be superior in the entirety. The experimental group showed significant gains in spelling and language, while the traditional group excelled in paragraph meaning, science, social studies, and study skills. Therefore, it is concluded that no one method is superior and both methods can be used effectively under different circumstances.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. CONCLUSIONS

The collected data led to several conclusions. It appeared that the weakest areas within the experimental group were the areas of paragraph meaning and study skills. It is believed that this weakness was due in part to less directed study in the experimental school than in the traditional school; directed reading and study being necessary for a development of these skills.

Higher scores were noted in the areas of social studies and science in the traditional group at the end of the fifth grade. It is believed that the unusually high achievement in these areas was due in part to the teacher, who according to the Assistant Superintendent of the Greenville City Schools, was a person who stressed these particular areas. Eight members of the group were in her class.

It was also concluded from this study that there is no one best way to organize groups for instruction. It is a highly flexible situation and must depend upon the skillful teacher who plans the course of action according to the needs of the students.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since it is evident that neither school nor its methods of instruction has proven to be best in all areas, it is not justifiable to recommend one of the two schools as having the best approach to the teaching of reading.

From the results of this study the following recommendations are made:

1. This study consisted of a small sampling since it was difficult to find more than ten pairs of children who had attended the same school for five consecutive years or more. A larger study could be made in which more pairs of students might be compared and analyzed, thus indicating trends in a broader scope.

2. It would be interesting to study children in a less selective situation. For example, children in this study attended a school system in which a high percentage of its students go to college. A similar study conducted within a community whose population is more heterogeneous might reveal different results.

3. All of the children involved in this survey were from good to moderate income families. This fact indicates good facilities and adequate reading materials at home. It would be interesting to conduct a similar survey among a lower socio-economic group and see how important a part the environment plays in a child's achievement in school.

4. The majority of the students chosen from each school had the same teachers in their respective schools. Another study could be made in which the students who were chosen had a wide range of teachers, thus discounting the influence that one teacher can exert on an entire group.

5. The first criterion by which these children were chosen for this study was by I.Q. level. In this case it had to fall within 90-110, a range considered to be the average I. Q. of about 54% of the school population. A similar study could be made among the slow learning groups with I.Q.'s of 80 and below or among the gifted or accelerated groups with

I.Q.'s of 115 and up. It would be interesting to note how these groups reacted to the different approaches to the teaching of reading as discussed in this study.

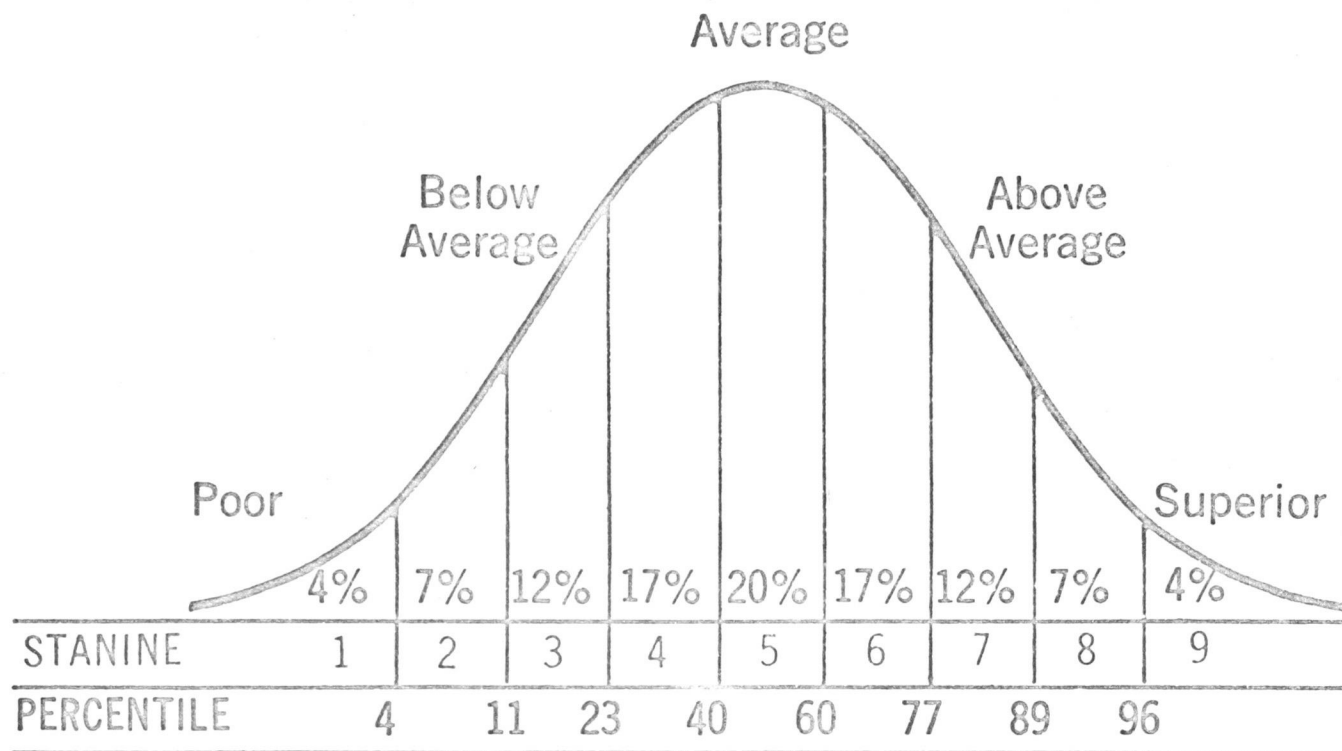


TABLE 9

The percentage of cases at each stanine level in the norm group. It can be seen on this table that 54% of the group will fall within an average range.

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